

Honda says U.S. driver seriously injured in Takata inflator rupture

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Honda Motor Co Ltd ([7267.T](#)) said on Wednesday a driver of a 2002 Accord was seriously injured after a faulty Takata air bag inflator ruptured during a March 3 crash in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The logo of Takata Corp is seen on its display at a showroom for vehicles in Tokyo, Japan, February 9, 2017. REUTERS/Toru Hanai

The Japanese automaker said the inflator had not been installed by a dealer but likely was a salvaged part from a junk yard.

Honda said it has purchased more than 60,000 salvaged Takata Corp 7312.T air bag modules in an effort to prevent similar incidents.

The victim, 18, suffered a puncture wound to her trachea in a rear-end crash, according to a police report.

The inflators, which can explode with excessive force and unleash metal shrapnel inside cars and trucks, are blamed for at least 16 deaths and more than 180 injuries worldwide. The safety defect has prompted an international recall of about 100 million inflators by more than a dozen major automakers.

In June 2016, federal regulators said inflators in 2001-2003 model Honda and Acura vehicles have up to a 50 percent chance of a dangerous air bag inflator rupture in a crash.

Takata said in a statement it strongly urges all consumers to check a government website to see if their inflators have been recalled.

Honda has said at least 10 deaths and more than 150 injuries in the United States are linked to the inflators in its vehicles.

This month, a federal judge in Detroit said he plans to name former Federal Bureau of Investigation director Robert Mueller to oversee nearly \$1 billion in Takata restitution funds as part of a U.S. Justice Department settlement.

In January, Takata agreed to plead guilty to criminal wrongdoing and to pay \$1 billion to resolve a federal investigation into its inflators.

As part of the settlement, Takata agreed to establish two independently administered restitution funds: one for \$850 million to compensate automakers for recalls, and a \$125

million fund for individuals injured by its airbags who have not already reached a settlement.

With the criminal settlement and penalties set in the United States, where most of the air bag-related fatalities and injuries have occurred, Takata is continuing its search for a buyer or financial backer, a process that has dragged on for a year.

Automakers have recalled 46 million Takata air bag inflators in 29 million U.S. vehicles. By 2019, automakers will recall 64 million to 69 million U.S. inflators in 42 million vehicles, regulators said in December.

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