

# **Supervision of the safety of airbags and other pyrotechnic systems of motor vehicles**

## **State of play of the situation in France on TAKATA problem**

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# Background (1)

**The French authorities highlighted last WP.29 the problem of premature ageing of certain airbags present in vehicles** in France and other countries (see document WP.29-195-21)

Manufacturers have experienced and are still experiencing a massive **safety problem linked to airbags**, from the supplier Takata, which were fitted to vehicles approved according to current regulations, and are still in circulation in France (metropolitan and overseas) and other countries.

## Background (2)

**Cause of this safety issue is a chemical degradation of the active ingredient**, which is composed of ammonium nitrate in a stabilized phase, which is sensitive to moisture.

**This degradation is accelerated by high temperature and humidity conditions, which can cause faster than expected gas generation when the airbag inflator deploys** in the event of an impact.

**This results in overpressure causing the gas generator to burst and metal fragments to be released.** In addition to destroying the protective function of the airbag, which increases the risk of injury in the event of an impact, the **projection of metal components at very high speeds can significantly injure the driver or occupants** of the vehicle, which can be fatal.

# Update of the situation

**After discovering accidents with fatalities for some (43 crashes with injuries caused by Takata airbags, amongst which 18 were deadly), in Caribbean Islands , and more recently in south of Europe, actions were taken :**

- **to recall the concerned vehicles as soon as possible, with “stop drive” actions by manufacturers :**
  - At the beginning, vehicles in north of France were not concerned by « stop drive » action (only recall), but one fatal accident last week let FR Gvt to ask manufacturers to extend « stop drive » measures;
  - around **2 millions vehicles** are being recalled in France;
- **To facilitate the efficiency of recall measures :**
  - by **facilitating the contact between manufacturers and car owners** (through insurance contacts, through PTI contacts – in process); by **imposing a VIN checker**, by **relaying information campaigns**, by **informing during PTI,...**;
  - By **minimizing the difficulties linked to the airbag replacement** (courtesy vehicles,...)
  - FR gvt is working on imposing a **PTI re-inspection** if the vehicle is still being recalled.

# Request of action

**Last WP.29, FR asked for UN action to prevent any similar risk in the future**, with an initiative to ensure, or even supervise the safety of airbags (and by extension, of **all pyrotechnic systems** in vehicles).

**Working Party on Passive Safety (GRSP)**, at its 77<sup>th</sup> session (05-09 May 2025), **started exchanges of views on the need to implement** a new regulation and requirements specific to pyrotechnic products meant to be installed as original equipment on new vehicles in order to guarantee their durability and their maintenance over time (doc GRSP-77-32)

However, very few interested parties have presented their views and proposals on that question, whereas addressing this issue is key. **FR requests colleagues to express their position during next GRSP meeting in December, in order to have a decision on the way to proceed.**

**=> We have a responsibility to ensure an adequate supervision of the safety of airbags**