



More than 1 in 9 used vehicles at surveyed AutoNation dealerships had unrepaired recalls.



Stephanie Erdman was injured by a defective Takata airbag. She testified about her experience before the U.S. Senate in 2014.

TAKATA AIRBAG DEFECTS

LT. STEPHANIE ERDMAN

Unsafe Used Cars for Sale

Unrepaired recalled vehicles at AutoNation dealerships

AutoNation, which bills itself as “America’s Largest Auto Retailer,” is selling recalled used vehicles that contain dangerous safety defects. In a survey of AutoNation dealerships across the country, more than 1 in 9 used vehicles were found to have unrepaired recalls.

Unrepaired safety recalls put lives at risk

Vehicles with unrepaired safety recalls pose serious safety risks. These vehicles – including those with malfunctioning Takata airbags, Toyota accelerator pedals that stick and General Motors ignition switches that can turn off the car while it’s in motion – have been responsible for thousands of injuries and deaths.

AutoNation dealerships had recalled Takata airbags that have been linked to 24 deaths and more than 200 injuries globally. The airbags were recalled due to the inflator’s ability to explode in a crash, sending metal fragments flying into the vehicle’s cabin. Shrapnel from defective Takata airbags has caused blindness, brain injury, and even death.

Unsafe, recalled vehicles are for sale at many AutoNation dealerships

Researchers surveyed used vehicles for sale at 28 AutoNation locations in 16 metro areas across the nation. Out of 2,429 vehicles surveyed, 285 had unrepaired safety recalls - accounting for over 1 in 9 vehicles.

Some dealerships had a significantly greater proportion of used vehicles with unrepaired recalls than others. At the Chrysler Jeep West (CO) location, nearly 1 in 5 used vehicles had an unrepaired safety recall. At several other dealerships, more than 1 in 6 used vehicles had unrepaired recalls.

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An industry-wide problem

The sale of unsafe, recalled cars is not confined to AutoNation. In 2017, Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MASSPIRG) Education Fund and the Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety (CARS) Foundation released “Used Car Roulette,” which found that more than a quarter of used cars had unrepaired safety recalls at CarMax dealerships across Massachusetts, Connecticut and California. Previous investigations and reporting have uncovered similar problems at other dealerships across the country.

Policy recommendations

Auto dealers should not sell unrepaired recalled used cars to consumers. To help address the risks posed by AutoNation’s sales of unsafe recalled vehicles to consumers:

- The Federal Trade Commission should prohibit AutoNation and other dealers from engaging in deceptive and unfair practices, such as advertising its used vehicles as high-quality when they have unrepaired safety recalls.
- State attorneys general should investigate AutoNation and other dealers who sell unrepaired recalled used vehicles and enforce existing state laws that prohibit them from selling these unsafe vehicles to the motor-ing public.
- AutoNation should re-institute its former policy of not selling used cars with unrepaired recalls. Dealerships across the country should follow suit and implement policies that prevent the sale of used vehicles with unrepaired safety recalls.

Consumer Tips

As long as dealers continue to sell vehicles with unrepaired recalls, consumers should take precautions before buying a used vehicle.

- Before purchasing a used vehicle, check for unrepaired recalls. To check, go to www.safecar.gov and enter the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
- If you own a vehicle with an unrepaired recall, contact any new car dealer selling that brand / model of vehicle to get it repaired free of charge. If there are no parts available, insist on the manufacturer providing you with a safe loaner car while you wait for the repairs.
- Consumers or surviving family members harmed by dealers who sold unrepaired, recalled used cars should consult an attorney in their state who specializes in representing consumers in auto warranty and auto fraud litigation.