

Our Perspective

Honda Going Door-to-Door to Complete Alpha Inflator Recalls – 8/29/2017

The owner of a 2001 Honda Civic was surprised to find a “Honda Recall Pit Crew,” attending the yard sale in his driveway. But the Honda crew wasn’t there in search of furniture or children’s toys; they wanted the owner to complete the recall of the defective Takata airbag inflator in his Honda car, and save him from potential injury or death.

Within a few hours, our team had taken the vehicle to an authorized Honda dealer, where it was quickly repaired and then returned to the customer before the yard sale was finished.

How did this team of Honda associates end up in this customer’s driveway? After more than 100 million attempts to reach affected customers by conventional means such as first class mail, email, phone calls and social media, Honda decided to pilot a unique door-to-door outreach effort to reach the owners of certain older model vehicles who had not responded to multiple recall notices.

Based on learnings from this pilot program, we are now expanding the grassroots outreach effort nationwide to local communities across the United States. It is our latest initiative as part of a comprehensive effort to repair or account for all Honda and Acura vehicles with Takata “Alpha” inflators and thereby protect the safety of owners who are at the greatest risk.

Approximately 11.4 million Honda and Acura vehicles in the U.S. are subject to a recall related to Takata airbag inflator ruptures, and we are working hard to repair every one. But our particular focus is on a smaller subset of about 130,000 of these vehicles where there is a greater sense of urgency to complete the free recall repairs.

These so-called “Alpha” inflators were originally installed in certain 2001 – 2003 Honda and Acura models and have an alarming rupture rate of as high as 50 percent in a crash, according to NHTSA and Takata, the maker of the inflators. In addition to original Takata manufacturing defects, the passage of time and exposure to hot and humid conditions makes these older inflators at higher risk of rupture.

The only place an “Alpha” vehicle should be driven is to an authorized dealer for repair. This repair is free – there is no cost to the owner. If the driver is uncomfortable or unable to drive their car in for repair, we will pay to tow it (even a non-running vehicle) to the nearest dealer for **free**.

Through extensive research by Honda and third party databases, we have determined to the best of our ability that about 130,000 unrepaired Alpha vehicles remain on the road. That’s about 12 percent of the total Alpha vehicle population that remain

unrepaired. Other Alpha vehicles exist, but are no longer in operation; these will be eligible for free recall repairs if they ever return to service.

Honda has confirmed 11 tragic deaths and more than 190 injuries in the U.S. related to ruptures of Takata airbag inflators. Honda sincerely apologizes to all individuals impacted by this issue, and extends our deepest, heartfelt sympathies to the families of those who have lost loved ones. Because of the risk, we are going after the remaining unrepaired Alpha vehicles with the grassroots campaign.

We're assembling a team of more than 500 people dedicated to work on this nationwide grassroots effort. These positions will work in each community where "Alpha" owners live to determine the best methods to reach those owners. Many of these teams are already hard at work, knocking on doors and attempting to facilitate repairs. Combined with our customer relations team, Honda now has more than 700 enthusiastic associates dedicated to our customers and to fixing these flawed Takata airbag inflators.

But you can help as well. If you know of anyone with a potentially affected vehicle, please share this "Our Perspective," and provide the embedded links – which instruct customers how to get their free repair. You may just save a life.

We continue to encourage all Honda and Acura vehicle owners to immediately check for open recalls at www.recalls.honda.com and www.recalls.acura.com and contact an authorized dealer as soon as possible to schedule the free repair. We have secured plenty of inventory, so no customer will have to wait for a part.

With recall completion rates of over 60 percent for the total number of recalled Honda and Acura vehicles – and over 76 percent for the higher risk "Alpha" vehicles – Honda clearly leads the industry in the repair of vehicles affected by Takata airbag inflator recalls. Nonetheless, despite the more than 135 million individual outreach attempts we have made related to Takata airbag inflator recalls, many owners of affected vehicles have yet to complete the free recall repairs.

So, Honda is committed to seeking new solutions to reach the owners of "Alpha" vehicles until we replace or account for 100 percent of the defective inflators. The safety of our customers – saving lives – remains our top priority and we will not rest until this matter is fully resolved.

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