



**Government of the Virgin Islands
of the United States**
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs
PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact Person: Astia LeBron, Public Information Officer
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
THURSDAY, May 26 2016
Press Release 33

DLCA CONSUMER ALERT: RECALL FOR VEHICLES WITH TAKATA AIR BAGS

The Virgin Islands Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) informs the public of the recall of various motor vehicles (see list) in the Virgin Islands that contain defective air bags that were manufactured by Taketa Corporation. The front passenger air bag inflators of the effected vehicles may rupture and explode due to airbag inflator propellant degradation occurring after prolonged exposure to high absolute humidity, high temperatures. This results in the air bag deploying and releasing gas and shrapnel into occupants of the vehicle. The high temperature humid climate of the Virgin Islands presents the type of conditions where the airbags may erupt. DLCA Commissioner Devin Carrington gave a terrifying account of how this defect hit close to home. "A citizen on St. Croix almost lost her life, while driving her children, when the Takata airbag in her car violently exploded although there was no impact to the vehicle," said Commissioner Carrington.

According to estimates, the Virgin Islands has approximately 7,000 vehicles affected by the defective airbags. The recall affects various vehicles including, but not limited to, American, Japanese, German and Swedish made cars and trucks. "This is a widespread consumer product safety issue that may result in dire consequences," said Commissioner Carrington. "And while the department is not trying to cause alarm, it is our duty to advise the public of this situation in order to prevent injury or loss of life."

To find out if your car is on the list of vehicles that are subject to recall, visit the webpage of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA) at: www.safercar.gov, and look for the link to the Takata recall list. The recalled vehicles are listed by VIN number. You may also visit the DLCA website for more information.

The DLCA Commissioner further advises owners of vehicles subject to recall go to the nearest dealer of recalled vehicle as soon as possible. Regardless of whether the car was purchased from a local dealer, off island, or from an individual; the dealer should be able to provide advice on arrangements to have the airbag replaced. The replacement is free and arrangements for a loaner vehicle or the cost of a rental vehicle may be arranged depending on the dealer. The public is

"Serving Businesses and Assisting, Educating, & Protecting Consumers"



also advised to never attempt to disable an airbag without a professional and doing so poses serious risk of bodily harm.

The DLCA has determined Takata's practices to be deceptive and unconscionable after reviewing nearly 16 years of the company's manufacturing short cuts. The result has been the need to recall roughly 7,000 automobiles in the Virgin Islands. Takata ignored the safety issues posed by the use of inferior materials and continued to use these materials to inflate airbags despite knowledge of the defect. 12A Virgin Islands Code (VIC), Chapter 2 prohibits unfair, deceptive and unconscionable trade practices on the part of business entities. As a result, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA), in conjunction with the Department of Justice (DOJ) is taking action against Takata for the actual, potential and continual harm they have caused Virgin Islands consumers by placing this defective product in the marketplace and misrepresenting its safety.

###