

Jimenez, Alberto

10117139

From: Evans, Peggy
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 12:44 PM
To: Jimenez, Alberto
Subject: air bag deployment

Al

have two consumers with similar questions regarding air bag deployment.

The questions:

what type of an accident must you have in order for the air bags to deploy properly? [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Atlanta Beach, Fl [REDACTED], [REDACTED] - 03 Dodge 1500 Quad Cab

*had a head on collision and air bag on driver's side did not deploy but the passenger side did deploy. Why was that? [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Soorissant, MO [REDACTED], [REDACTED]*

Could someone please respond to these two gentlemen?

Thank you



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

[REDACTED]
Atlanta Beach, FL [REDACTED]

MAR 28 2005

Dear [REDACTED]:

This is in response to your call of March 28, 2005 to the DOT Auto Safety Hotline requesting information concerning air bag deployment.

NHTSA is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain serious safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, sufficient data must exist to warrant the expenditure of agency resources. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

Each manufacturer designs its vehicles so the air bags will deploy if the severity of a crash exceeds a certain threshold. However, there is no Federal requirement establishing a particular threshold. Most manufacturers design their air bags to deploy when the crash severity is in the range of an 8 to 14 mph crash into a fixed solid barrier. This severity is about the same as a crash into another vehicle of equivalent weight at 16 to 28 mph. In lower speed crashes, where the air bag does not deploy, occupant protection is provided by the design of the interior surfaces in the vehicle, as well as by the safety belts provided at each seating position.

A number of factors, other than crash severity, can affect whether an air bag will deploy in a given crash; e.g., the angle of impact, the speed of the other vehicle, and the amount of force absorbed by the other vehicle or object that is impacted. Only an expert in crash reconstruction can provide an educated opinion as to whether the air bag in a vehicle should have deployed in a specific crash. Your insurance agency may be able to provide you with the name of an expert in crash reconstruction. Additionally, NHTSA's Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov has information that may interest you.

Sincerely,

Alberto A. Jimenez, Chief
Correspondence Research Division
Office of Defects Investigation
Enforcement



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236