

American Honda Motor Co, Inc  
1919 Torrance Blvd  
Torrance CA 90501

Attention: Supervisor, Customer Service

14 October 2014

Dear Sir or Madam

The authors of this letter are longtime owners of Honda vehicles who are writing you at the recommendation of our service manager (Hoffman Honda – Avon CT) for information in regard to the defective Takata airbags, as reported recently in the New York Times and other major news sources. We are respectively a chemical physicist [REDACTED] and an organic chemist [REDACTED] who have worked with toxic and explosive chemicals and regard with utmost seriousness the prospect of driving with devices that can detonate spontaneously. We ask that you reply to our queries in technical detail since we are looking for accurate and useful information, not bland assurances.

We understood from the news reports that (1) Takata air bags have been installed in nearly all Honda vehicles; (2) the bags have deployed spontaneously in a number of cases, dispersing hot shrapnel from the metal inflator canisters; and (3) the exact causes of these explosions are not known (although at one time moisture was suspected to be a contributing factor).

We have recently purchased a 2013 Fit and our son owns a 2004 Civic, neither of which is listed among the recalled Honda vehicles. Yet Honda, according to news reports, has recalled about 6 million vehicles during the past 10 years because of potentially defective Takata airbags. In this regard, we would like to know:

- a) By what criteria does Honda decide which vehicles (i.e. model & year) to recall since visual inspection does not reveal which Takata airbag canisters are defective?
- b. Does Honda replace a Takata airbag in a recalled vehicle with another Takata airbag? If so, how would Honda know whether that replacement is not also defective?
- c. Do the chemicals inside a Takata canister destabilise in time? Of the spontaneous explosions reported by the New York Times one occurred in a 10-year old Fit—that is, 10 years *after* the Takata airbags were installed in the newly manufactured vehicle. This would suggest that Takata airbags, even in new vehicles, cannot be trusted in the long term. If this inference is incorrect, please provide us a technical explanation why.
- d. What tests, if any, does Honda conduct on Takata airbags prior to installing them in Honda vehicles?
- e) It has been reported that Toyota in Japan turned off Takata airbags of recalled vehicles. Does turning off a Takata airbag eliminate the risk of spontaneous detonation? If it does, explain how, since reports indicated that defective airbags did not require electrical heating to detonate.

Thank you for your attention to our questions. We look forward to receiving a reply from you soon.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Simsbury CT [REDACTED]

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William M Rubenstein, Commissioner  
Department of Consumer Protection  
165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford CT 06106-1630

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DEPT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
2 November 2014

Dear Commissioner Rubenstein

The authors of this letter are two scientists, a chemical physicist ( [REDACTED] ) and an organic chemist ( [REDACTED] ), who are concerned, both for ourselves and the general public, about the defective Takata airbags in numerous models of cars, including our own. We are a married couple who purchased a Honda Fit about a year ago and subsequently learned through reports of the New York Times and other news sources that Takata airbags can detonate spontaneously, as well as upon vehicular impact, spewing shrapnel into the cab. Numerous injuries and an uncertain number of deaths have been reported. The true number is unknown because of confidentiality agreements forced upon litigants injured by such defective deployments.

Since both we and our son (who has a 2004 Honda Civic) own Honda models in which overly forceful explosions of Takata airbags have been reported, we wrote American Honda (in Torrance CA) with certain specific questions whose answers would help us assess whether our and our son's Hondas are safe to drive. American Honda has not replied, nor were we able to get useful information from our dealer, Hoffman Honda (Avon CT). A copy of our letter is attached so you can see what questions we are asking.

The crux of our concern is that as of the present, more than ten years after news media first became aware of serious issues with Takata airbags, Honda still does not know—or conceivably refuses to reveal—the cause(s) of these explosively defective deployments. Nor, causes aside, has it been possible for Honda to ascertain beforehand by external visual inspection which Takata airbags are prone to explode prematurely or with excessive force so as to kill or injure the driver.

It then follows as a simple scientific deduction that if there is no reliable test to determine the safety of Takata airbags, and that defective Takata airbags are turning up randomly throughout the country, then *all* vehicles with Takata airbags should be recalled so that nondefective replacements from another manufacturer can be installed. Senator Blumenthal of CT has in fact called for Honda to recall such vehicles, but Honda has so far not complied.

Here is what we request of you:

1. If in light of a potentially life-threatening defect it is within your authority to require a car manufacturer selling cars in Connecticut to recall a vehicle, we ask that you mandate a recall of all Honda vehicles in Connecticut currently carrying Takata airbags for replacement at the manufacturer's expense. If this action should be impractical (e.g. because there may be no available replacement parts), then we ask that you require CT Honda dealerships to *turn off* the Takata airbags if the car owner so chooses until such time as demonstrably nondefective replacements can be found. According to the New York Times, Toyota in Japan has already taken this action of turning off Takata airbags.
2. We ask that you please try to obtain for us answers to the five questions in our attached letter to American Honda.

Thank you for consideration of this serious matter; we hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Simsbury CT [REDACTED]

November 07, 2014

[REDACTED]  
SIMSBURY, CT [REDACTED]

File #: [REDACTED]  
Re: AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO  
INC

Dear [REDACTED]

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence concerning the above referenced company and to thank you for thinking of this office in connection with this matter. However, the nature of your complaint appears to fall under the jurisdiction of:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Services  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590  
(800) 424-9393

Please send your complaint directly to that agency and contact them if you have any questions or concerns regarding your complaint.

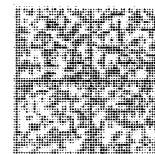
Sincerely,

**COPY**

Angie Martinez  
Consumer Information Representative  
Frauds Unit  
(860) 713-6198



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION  
165 Capitol Avenue • Hartford, CT 06106-1630



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ADMINISTRATION

400 SEVENTH STREET, S.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20590.

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