



ODI RESUME

U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

INVESTIGATION: RQ99-018
SUBJECT: Inadvertent Side Impact Airbag Deployment
PROMPTED BY: IE99-089 & 99V-063
PRINCIPAL ENGINEER: **Nha Nguyen**

DATE OPENED: 9/3/99
DATE CLOSED:

MANUFACTURER: BMW of North America, Inc.
MODEL(S): M3
MODEL YEAR(S): 1997 through 1999
POPULATION: 17,000

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: The side door airbag deployed without side impact to the vehicle.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	MANUFACTURER	TOTAL
COMPLAINTS:	1	7	8
CRASHES:	0	0	0
INJ CRASHES:	0	0	0
# INJURIES:	1	3	4
FAT CRASHES:	0	0	0
# FATALS:	0	0	0
OTHER:	0	0	0

DESCRIPTION OF OTHER: None

ACTION: RQ investigation is closed. Safety recall 99V-063.001.

ENGINEER: _____ DIV CHF: _____ OFC DIR: _____

DATE

DATE

DATE

SUMMARY: On March 26, 1999, BMW of North American, Inc. recalled 32,500 1999 323i and 328i manufactured up to April 1999, for inadvertent deployment of the side airbag system in certain non-crash impacts such as contacting large pot holes or curbs at substantial speed. As a remedy, BMW will recode the air bag control module of the affected vehicles with updated software. The recall was a result of an ODI safety defect investigation.

ODI received 1 consumer complaint of a 1999 model year M3 alleging the driver side door airbag deployed without side impact to the vehicle causing one injury. The complainant alleged that the side airbag deployed when the vehicle was driven over a pot hole on the road. The vehicle was built in March 1999. The purpose of this RQ was to determine the adequacy of the scope of the recall.

SUMMARY (continue):

- Since BMW decided to conduct the safety recall, ODI agreed that a written response to the information request letter was not necessary. However, ODI requested BMW provide the summary problem experience information on the 1997 through 1999 model year M3 vehicles.
- Since November 1997, BMW has received 7 reports of unnecessary side airbag deployment in 1997 through 1999 M3 vehicles. These reports were received as follows: 2 in 1997, 1 in 1998, and 4 in 1999. Included in these reports are allegations of 3 injuries involving bruises.
- The approximate number of the vehicles potentially containing the defect is 17,000 built from March 1997 through August 1999. The 1998-99 model year M3 vehicles have the side airbag as standard equipment. The 1997 model year M3 vehicles were sold with the side airbag as an option equipment.
- On November 15, 1999, BMW submitted an amendment to the original safety recall 99V-063 Defect Information to include 1997-99 model year M3.
- BMW is expected to complete the M3 customer notification by the end of January 2000.
- ODI has assigned a safety recall identification number 99V-063.001. This RQ is closed.

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