

3/23/26, 2:08 PM

USDOT Mail - RE: [REDACTED]



York, Bruce <bruce.york@dot.gov>

RE: [REDACTED]

1 message

Mon, Feb 16, 2026 at 4:20 PM

To: "York, Bruce (NHTSA)" <Bruce.York@dot.gov>, "Al-Azawi, Ahmad" <ahmad.al-azawi@hsidhs.gov>, "Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA)" <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@forthepeople.com>, [REDACTED]

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All—

Please find below information on the [REDACTED] vehicle (Ohio).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

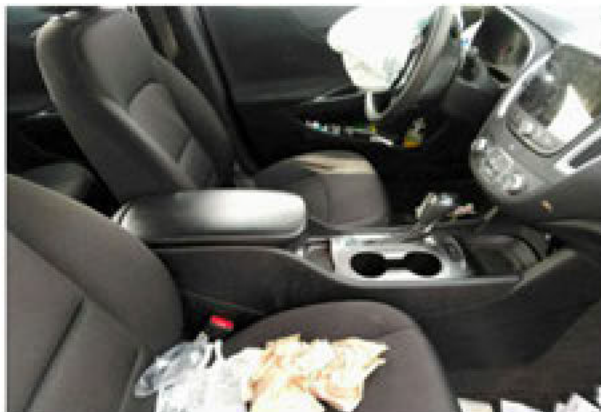
In short, the subject 2019 Malibu [REDACTED] was initially owned by Element Fleet Mgmt. (U.S.) Corp., a subsidiary of Canadian-based Element Fleet Mgmt.

Under Element Fleet:

June 2019: The vehicle was titled and registered in NY in

Feb. 3, 2022: Vehicle serviced at Paddock Chevrolet in Kenmore NY in for a warranty service campaign associated with the charge air cooler tube disconnecting from the throttle body (60,257 mi)

Feb. 17, 2023: Vehicle was in a crash in the right front. Driver's frontal impact airbag deployed.



April 5, 2023: Vehicle sold unrepaired by Element Fleet Mgmt. via IAAI Auto Auction, Buffalo NY. (91,895 mi)

Zainy Auto Sale, Inc.



June 21, 2023: Title transferred to Zainy Auto Sale, Inc., [16922 Joy R. Detroit, MI. 48228](#).

July 17, 2023: Vehicle purchased by [REDACTED]

Registrant: [REDACTED] City/State: TOLEDO, OH
Latest Plate: [REDACTED] (07/17/2023-12/29/2025)
Registrant: [REDACTED] (07/17/2023-Current) Latest MV Title: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED] TOLEDO, OH, [REDACTED] Title Transfer Date: 11/09/2023
[REDACTED]
Owner: [REDACTED] (07/17/2023-02/26/2025) Plate: [REDACTED] (OH) (07/17/2023-12/29/2025)
Address: [REDACTED] TOLEDO, OH, [REDACTED] Type: PRIVATE
[REDACTED]
Lien Holder: NAVY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
(11/09/2023)

Owner: ZAINY AUTO SALE INC City/State: DETROIT, MI
Owner: ZAINY AUTO SALE INC (06/21/2023) Latest MV Title: [REDACTED]
Address: 16922 JOY RD, DETROIT, MI, 48228 Title Transfer Date: 06/21/2023
[REDACTED]

Dec. 16, 2025: Subject Crash

Zainy Auto Sale Inc. is owned by [REDACTED] a resident of Dearborn MI

There are other [REDACTED] entities involved in the auto repair, parts, sales and [REDACTED] and his companies have ties to other individuals who are also in the auto sales, repair, salvage and parts business, including [REDACTED]

At this point, the key window of time is between when the vehicle was sold in Buffalo, NY on April 5, 2023 (unrepaired) and its sale to [REDACTED] on July 17, 2023 (repaired).

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 2:42 PM
To: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>; Al-Azawi, Ahmad <ahmad.al-azawi@hsi.dhs.gov>; Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>
Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>
Subject: RE: DTN research

Truly my pleasure. I'll keep sharing what I learn

From: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 1:57 PM

To: [REDACTED] Al-Azawi, Ahmad <ahmad.al-azawi@hsi.dhs.gov>; Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>

Subject: RE: DTN research

[REDACTED]

Thank you very much for sharing this information. It is very helpful for our investigation.

Thank You,



Bruce York

Division Chief
Office of Defects Investigation

Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590

Office: W48-304 • Phone: 202-738-3842

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 4:44 PM

To: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>; Al-Azawi, Ahmad <ahmad.al-azawi@hsi.dhs.gov>; Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>; [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: DTN research

Importance: High

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Privileged and Confidential

Bruce —

I just got off the phone with my consulting expert, Mr. Bill Williams. His investigator was able to purchase counterfeit inflators and modules from ABD Salam Repair in Arlington, Texas from [REDACTED] appears to be from [REDACTED] as depicted on his Facebook page.

I have attached a zip file containing photos of the components purchased and social media research on the owner/business.

Upon information and belief, [REDACTED] repair sold the inflator that was installed in the [REDACTED] 2019 Hyundai Sonata, VIN#: [REDACTED] 2019, (Utah [REDACTED] fatality) that I am currently litigating against the dealership, [REDACTED]

I have also added Special Agent, Ahmad Al-Azawi (DHS) to this thread. He and I connected yesterday. Thank you.

Best,

From: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 3:27 PM

To: bwiliams@teamwisat.com

Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>; [REDACTED] Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Subject: RE: DTN research

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hi Bill,

Thanks very much for sharing your thoughts on the Chinese airbag inflator issue. I agree that the market for Chinese sub-standard inflators are those companies counterfeiting the module assembly.

I also believe there are multiple Chinese companies that manufacture sub-standard airbag inflators:

Jilin Province Detiannuo Safety Technology Co., Ltd.

Jiaxing Huaxing Environmental Protection Technology Co., Ltd.

Guangzhou Jashine Technology Co., Ltd

Guangzhou I-Pack Auto Parts Co., Ltd

Yoshibayashi Tokutheanol Automotive Safety Systems Co. Ltd

As far as predicting future rupture events, I think the estimate would be close to a wild guess as many of the factors cannot be determined.

Regarding the [REDACTED] case, you mentioned you have identified the supplier of the module. Can you please share that information with us?

Thank You,



Bruce York

Division Chief
Office of Defects Investigation

Department of Transportation

[National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590

Office: W48-304 • Phone: 202-738-3842

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, December 19, 2025 9:55 AM

To: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>; Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>; [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: DTN research

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Bruce—

[REDACTED]

Please see below additional analysis from my consulting expert. I believe it's very helpful.

From: bwilliams@teamwisat.com <bwilliams@teamwisat.com>

Sent: Friday, December 19, 2025 9:40 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: DTN research

Here is my current working theory on the issue of the Malibu and Hyundai counterfeit inflators:

- a. The counterfeit airbag market is based on the availability of counterfeit modules being available not inflators. The only market for counterfeit inflators are those companies counterfeiting the module assembly minus the inflator. These companies seek out low-cost inflator suppliers to complete their product. The [REDACTED] inspection provided key information that allowed us to identify one counterfeit module supplier that is providing products in the US. While we have not identified the Chinese source company, we have identified several US suppliers that could possibly provide information on the source of their products. It is important to note the counterfeit modules we obtained from the US supplier are not supplied with the DTN60BD inflator. Based on the similarities between the [REDACTED] module components and the two counterfeit modules we purchased it is quite possible that the Chinese source company uses more than one inflator supplier so it could be the supplier of some of the field rupture counterfeit Malibu inflators. It is also as likely that there is at least one other Chinese supplier of counterfeit Malibu modules equipped with DTN60DB inflators.
- b. In determining whether the current field rupture counts for the Malibu and Sonata are low or high several factors have to be taken into account. The process of estimating the number of expected field ruptures with these DTN60DB inflators would have the same methodology that has been used in predicting potential inflator ruptures of other inflators – namely the Takata PSAN family of inflators. This methodology has also been used to estimate the potential for future ARC inflator ruptures. The process considers the following factors in predicting future ruptures:
 - i. Total registered vehicles
 - ii. Abandonment Rate
 - iii. Accident rate

- iv. Percent of accidents with driver side airbag deployment
 - v. Rupture rate based on testing assigned to result of iv
- c. In order to use this process to get an idea of the number of expected counterfeit Malibu modules equipped with DTN60DB modules that might rupture we have to add in several other factors. Here is a revised version with those factors added:
- i. Total registered Malibus
 - ii. Abandonment Rate
 - iii. How many have been in a previous accident
 - iv. How many of those in a previous accident had driver side airbag deployment
 - v. How many of those were repaired and put back on the road
 - vi. Of those repaired how many of those had a counterfeit driver module installed
 - vii. Of the counterfeit driver modules installed how many were DTN60DB
 - viii. Of the vehicles put back on the road with DTN60DB driver module how many will be in a future accident (Accident rate applied to specific population)
 - ix. Of the vehicles put back on the road with DTN60DB driver module that are predicted to be in a future accident how many of those accidents involve deployment of the driver airbag? (Percent of accidents with driver side airbag deployment applied to those repaired with DTN60DB inflators which were in an accident that was the type that would deploy the driver airbag)
- d. If you would like we can run this risk analysis and get a prediction for you, but you can see after applying all the filters that the number of potential counterfeit modules with DTN60DB inflators is going to be a small number. According to NHTSA there are now 6 Malibu DTN60DB field ruptures. It is my belief that the actual rupture rate for these inflators will be at or very near 100%. A good comparison to be made would be to look at the ARC field ruptures. The current count for field ruptures of the ARC inflators is around 10. The key number here is the base population – there were 60 million ARC inflators installed and to date only 10 have ruptured. Now I did not apply all the filters in "b." above but it won't change the fact that the rupture rate is extremely low. But here we are with ONE vehicle covering 2016 to 2022 and we have 6 field ruptures. If we apply the filters in "c." above the number of Malibus with counterfeit modules equipped with a DTN60DB inflator that have been in an accident where the driver airbag deployed it will be a very small subset of the total population, yet we have 6 field ruptures.
- e. Now NHTSA may suspect that DTN inflators are installed in other manufacturers vehicles. While it may be true that there are counterfeit modules that utilize one of the other DTN variety of inflator I think there is less chance that there are many more using the DTN60DB. The basis for that is:
- i. If you accept that the DTN60DB inflators have an extremely high rupture rate that appears to be independent of the vehicle platform then it would be more likely than not there would have been field ruptures any other make/models equipped with the DTN60DB inflator involved in frontal collisions where the driver airbag deploys. To date the only models this has occurred in are the Malibu and the Sonata
 - ii. Based on our research it appears the counterfeit airbag module market caters to a small subset of the available makes/models on the road today. If you look at the various seizures that show the confiscated modules, they usually represent a few manufacturers and of those only a few models. This is apparent in the company we identified that is currently marketing a counterfeit Malibu airbag module. Their product offering is very shallow, around 26 when you remove duplicates.

I would be glad to join in your discussions with NHTSA and be of help any way you see fit. If you have questions let me know.

Bill

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2 attachments

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