

3/23/26, 1:14 PM

USDOT Mail - RE: DTN research



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

RE: DTN research

1 message

Thu, Dec 18, 2025 at 1:58 PM

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

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

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Bruce—

Please see the below response from my consulting expert:

I think there is some confusion involving the DTN60B static deployment project and the investigation into the field ruptures of the Malibus and Sonatas. As you know the DTN60B inflators we deployed were the ones your office acquired some time ago from the internet. We dissected 2 of them and provided the propellant to Renz for testing to determine whether it was AN based. At that point in time WISAT had little to no material on the DTN field rupture inflators.

Once we received the photos from [REDACTED] it was clear to us that the field ruptured DTN inflators were not the same inflator as the DTN60B your office had acquired. It was also clear that the field ruptured DTN inflators represented a unique type of inflator based on its construction. Unlike any inflator I have ever seen it uses a screw on cap with an o-ring seal rather than welding the base and cap together. At the [REDACTED] inspection I confirmed NHTSA's ID of the field ruptured DTN inflators as DTN60DB type. Based on this and my inspection of the [REDACTED] vehicle the only thing the DTN60B inflators has in common with the field ruptured DTN60DB is they were both manufactured by DTN and more likely than not use the same type of propellant.

With that background the static deployment testing performed on the DTN60B inflators has no bearing on the DTN field rupture investigation because of the significant differences between the DTN60B and DTN60DB inflators (See attachment). So, I would assume that NHTSA's concern that the DTN60B inflators were deployed without the entire module or cushion is based on their thinking we were deploying the DTN60DB? My first response to their suggestion that we should deploy with the entire module because the module might be impeding gas flow is that its not possible. The photo below is an exemplar 2022 Malibu module that has been cut in half to expose the area where the inflator cap sits. As you can see the gas exhaust ports are in the open space where the cushion resides. This is typical of all driver inflators.



Something else to keep in mind is that the primary method for inflator testing is tank testing which only tests the inflator. The Takata MEAF testing was tank testing of over 400K bare inflators. I have never heard of exit gas flow being restricted to a point where it causes an inflator to rupture by the module or cushion. When we force an inflator to rupture by blocking multiple exit ports with threaded plugs they still allow some gas to escape so to think the module, cushion or cushion clamping ring could restrict the gas flow enough to over pressurize the housing is farfetched. It should also be noted we usually have to plug at least 50% of the exit ports to cause a rupture.

I believe the failure mode we will eventually find responsible for these DTN60DB inflator ruptures will be related to its unique design – the threaded cap and base along with the o-ring. To date we have not been able to purchase any counterfeit modules that have the DTN60DB inflators nor have we been able to purchase the inflators without the modules.

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

Sent: Thursday, December 18, 2025 6:27 AM

To: [REDACTED] Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>

Subject: RE: DTN research

Thanks [REDACTED] I appreciate it.

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: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 4:23 PM

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

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

Subject: RE: DTN research

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Bruce—

Understood. Our consulting expert is going to have a full response for you re the below before cob tomorrow.

Best,

[REDACTED]

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

Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 4:04 PM

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

Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>

Subject: RE: DTN research

Hi Katherine,

With most inflators like Takata etc., that would normally be the case. But given that 6 ruptures have occurred on Malibu vehicles and 2 on Sonata vehicles, we are wondering if there is something to that. We suspect that DTN inflators are installed in other manufacturers vehicles. Given that fact, maybe there is something about the surrounding airbag module that is somehow impacting the exit path of the burning gas or some other impact? It just seems weird to us that the problem does not seem to impact more models?

Thank You,



Bruce York

Division Chief
Office of Defects Investigation

Department of Transportation

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1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590

Office: W48-304 • Phone: 202-738-3842

From: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>

Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 3:14 PM

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

Subject: RE: DTN research

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Spoke with Bill and he stated that there is no effect from leaving the cushion off. All the 400K MEAF tests were tank testing which is inflator only. The rupture is only based on the inflator and the condition of the propellant inside of it.

Katherine DiMeglio
Litigation Paralegal

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20 North Orange Avenue, Suite 1600,
Orlando, FL 32801



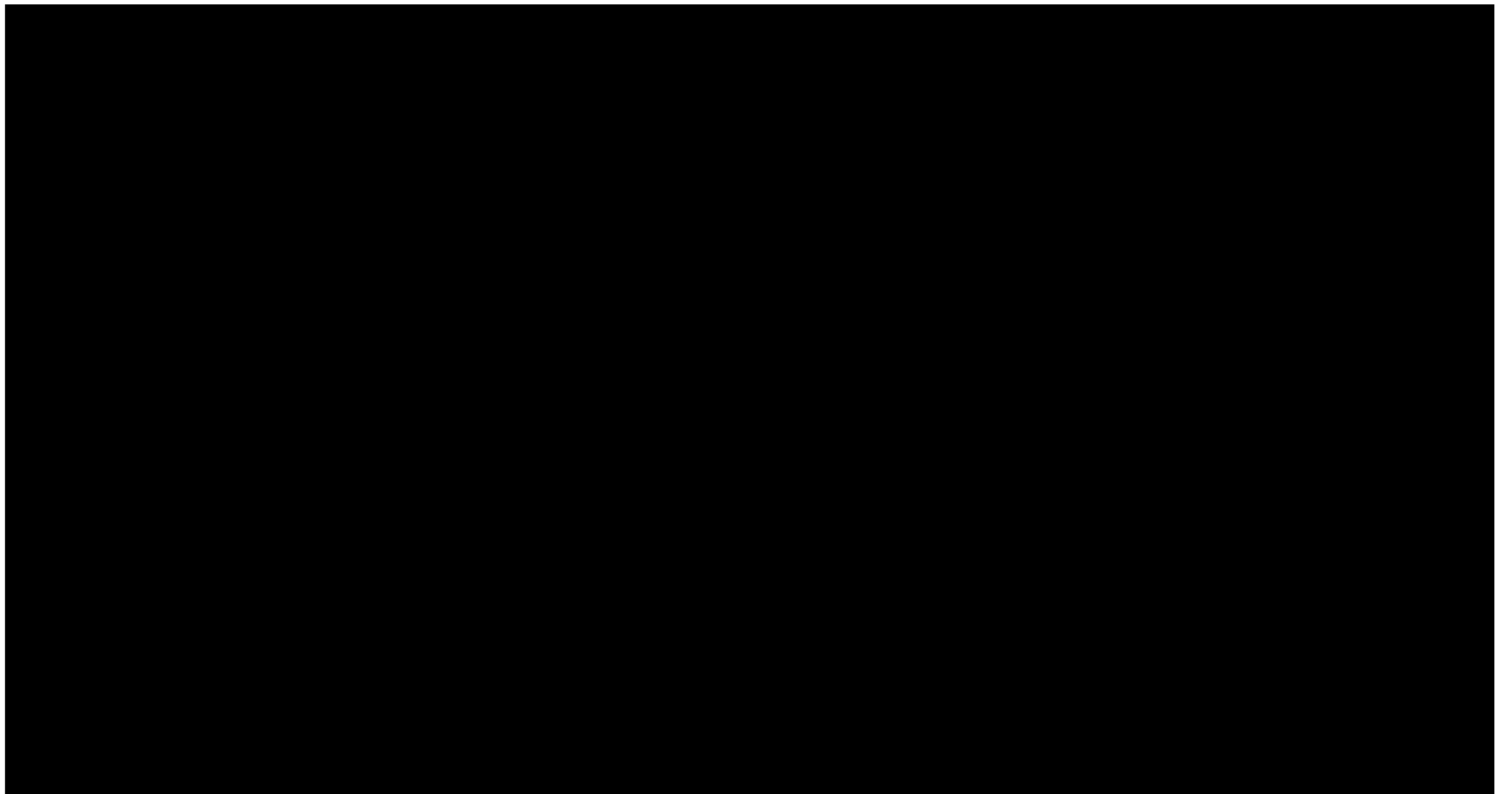
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A referral is the best compliment. If you know anyone that needs our help, please have them call our office 24/7.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 12:01 PM
To: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>; Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>; Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: DTN research

Thank you Bruce and will do.

@Katherine DiMeglio please inquire with Bill W. on the below hi-lite.



From: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 11:56 AM
To: [REDACTED] Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>
Cc: Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>
Subject: RE: DTN research

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Thanks for sharing this information. It is very helpful. We are thinking that having the entire airbag module assembly in the vehicle at the time of test might influence if the airbag ruptures or not. If you conduct more testing, I would encourage you to have the rest of the module assembly in the car. The cushion and cover etc. Not sure if it will change the outcome, but it might?

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: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 11:28 AM
To: York, Bruce (NHTSA) <Bruce.York@dot.gov>; Bonilla, Pedro (NHTSA) <pedro.bonilla@dot.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED] Katherine DiMeglio <KDiMeglio@ForThePeople.com>
Subject: DTN research

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Bruce, Pedro—

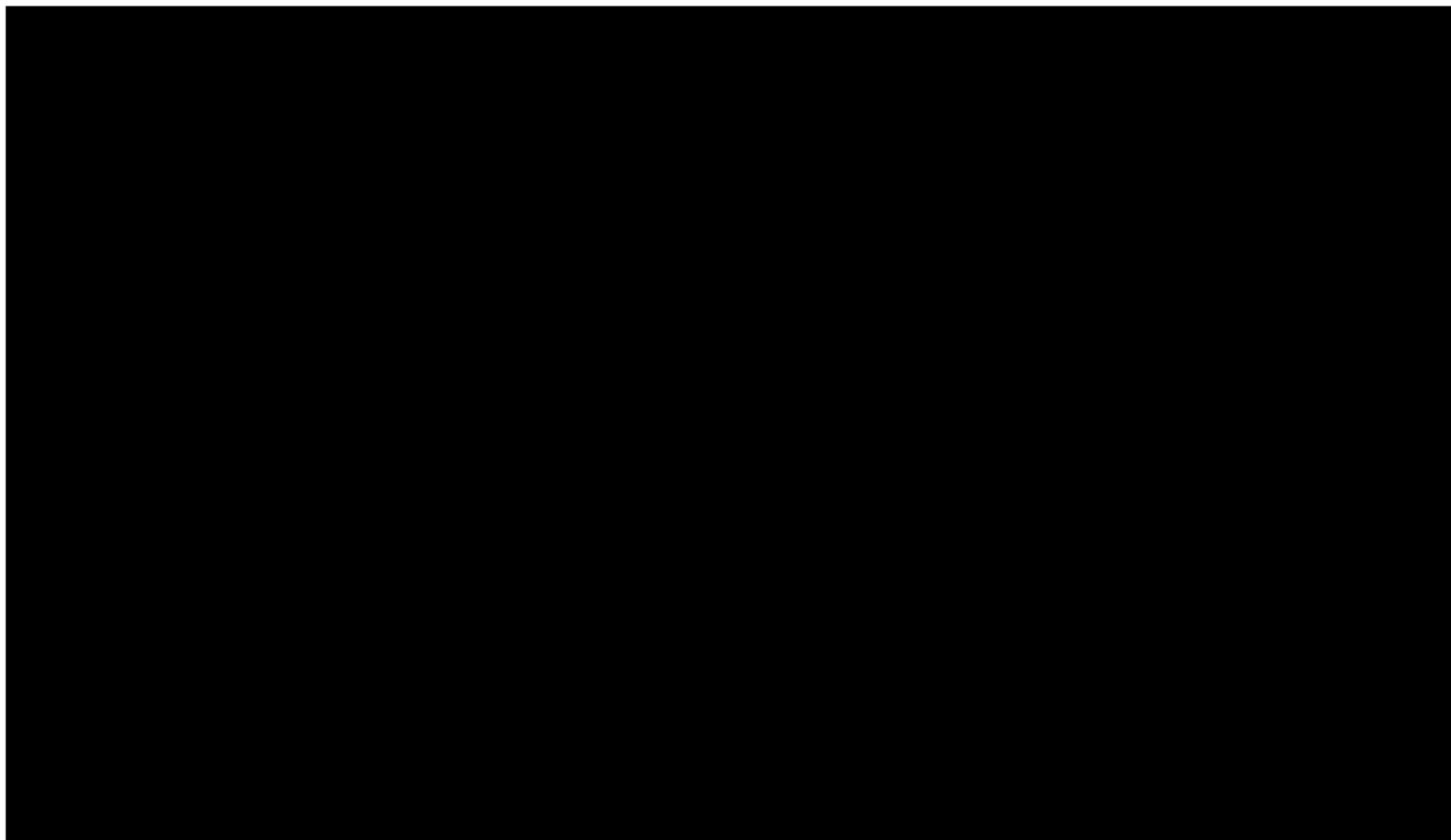
Below please find a link to certain DTN testing videos. The ones called "static testing" have a play button that you can activate in PowerPoint mode and watch the DTN inflator deployments in real time and slow motion.



I will send the other research project we are working on by the end of the week, which included certain suppliers of the inflators and the subject modules.

Please let me know your thoughts. Thank you.

Thank you.



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