

TOYOTA

PRODUCT SUPPORT DIVISION

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: All Region/Private Distributor General Managers/Vice Presidents
From: Bob Waltz 
Vice President, Product Quality and Service Support
Subject: NHTSA - Consumer Advisory on Counterfeit Airbags

Recently, Law Enforcement officials apprehended a counterfeit Airbag ring in North Carolina. The arrests lead to the confiscation of over 1,500 counterfeit airbags for a variety of manufacturers and vehicle models. Counterfeit airbags are an industry wide problem and not limited to Toyota.

On Wednesday, October 10, 2012, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is expected to issue a Consumer Advisory on Counterfeit Airbags and what consumers can do to protect themselves.

Based upon the Consumer Advisory, it is possible that customers will contact dealerships requesting to have their vehicles inspected. There is not a method for inspecting for and identifying counterfeit airbag assemblies. While some counterfeits may be obvious, this may not always be the case.

The following guidelines may be used to assist customers:

- If the vehicle has never had the airbag(s) replaced, there is no need to be concerned.
- If the airbag was replaced by a Toyota dealer under warranty, there is no need to be concerned.
- If the customer previously had the airbag(s) replaced at any other repair facility, the customer should request that repair facility to provide documentation that a genuine Toyota replacement airbag was used.
- If a customer purchased a used vehicle and suspects he/she may have a counterfeit airbag, the customer should contact the seller to determine if a genuine Toyota replacement airbag was used.
- If the airbag(s) was previously replaced but the customer is unable to return to the repair facility, he/she should be directed to www.safercar.gov for additional information.
- Depending upon the quality of the counterfeit, it may not be possible to determine if an airbag is genuine or not by a visual inspection.
- Counterfeit airbags may have resistors installed to mimic an OEM airbag and prevent the airbag warning light from remaining illuminated. Under no circumstances should a dealer attempt to test an airbag resistance with an ohm meter. This may deploy an airbag causing injury to the technician.
- Toyota Certified Used Vehicles (TCUV) go through an inspection process to ensure they meet our standards. During this process, the dealership verifies* the vehicle's airbag(s) are present with no evidence of deployment. Airbag deployment or any signs that airbag covers have been painted renders the vehicle permanently ineligible for certification.

**This includes running a vehicle history through CARFAX.*

- If the customer determines the vehicle's airbag is counterfeit and requires replacement, the repair will be at customer expense.
- Customers should always wear seatbelts as they are the primary restraint system in the vehicle; the airbag system is designed to be a supplemental vehicle restraint system.

If a consumer is about to have an airbag replaced, the following tips may assist in assuring he/she purchases a good, reliable airbag.

- Purchasing a Toyota Original Equipment (OE) Airbag from a Toyota dealer will ensure that the right airbag designed for the vehicle is used.
- Always demand that the repair facility provide proof that the right airbag is being used.
- Never buy an airbag with a questionable history (e.g., airbags sold on the internet).
- If the price is too good to be true, it is probably a counterfeit.

The attached Q&A is also available to respond to any customer questions.

Toyota would also like to remind dealers and associates to immediately report any suspicious airbag related activity to the local law enforcement officials.

If a customer has further questions, please direct the inquiry to the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-800-331-4331.

Thank you.

cc: Region/Private Distributor Assistant General Managers
 Region/Private Distributor Customer Service Operations Managers
 Region/Private Distributor Service Managers/Directors/VPs
 Region/Private Distributor Parts Managers/Directors/VPs
 Region/Private Distributor Customer Services Field Managers
 Region/Private Distributor Technical Services and Training Managers
 Region/Private Distributor District Service and/or Parts Managers
 Region/Private Distributor Customer Relations Managers
 Region/Private Distributor PDC Managers
 Region/Private Distributor Field Technical Specialists
 Region/Private Distributor Service Training Specialists
 Region/Private Distributor Vehicle Operations Managers
 All NAPC General Managers
 All TMS Sales Administration Managers
 All TMS Product Quality & Service Support Managers
 All Field Product Engineers

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