



Reference: NPSB/12-063

Date: October 11, 2012

TO: All NISSAN DEALER PRINCIPALS
All NISSAN DEALER SERVICE MANAGERS
All NISSAN DEALER PARTS MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Federal Government Announcement about Counterfeit Air Bags

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) yesterday issued a consumer alert warning of the dangers of counterfeit air bags. Customers should be reminded that counterfeit replacement air bags and used or salvaged air bags are a potential serious safety problem in the event of a crash. These parts may not be made to the exacting standards of quality, reliability and durability of Genuine Nissan parts. Only new original equipment replacement air bags should be used in a repair to ensure that the vehicle performs as designed in the event of a crash.

If you receive customer inquiries, the following Customer Question & Answer list will assist you in answering customer questions regarding counterfeit air bags.

CUSTOMER Q & A

Q. Is my Vehicle Affected?

A. Not if you bought your car new and the air bags have never been replaced or were replaced under warranty using original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts or your air bag was repaired at a Nissan dealership.

If you purchased a used vehicle, a commercial website such as Carfax may be able to identify if your vehicle has been in an accident and is possibly affected.

If you confirm your vehicle had air bags replaced somewhere other than a Nissan dealership you should contact your repair shop or insurance company directly to find out if genuine OEM parts were used in your vehicle's repair. If you purchased a replacement air bag online or through an auction site you should contact the seller.

Q. I heard NHTSA made an announcement on the topic of counterfeit air bags. Is this a recall?

A. No, this is not a recall. There is no safety issue with original equipment Genuine Nissan air bags that came with your Nissan vehicle, or that were used in any repair of your Nissan/Infiniti vehicle.

Q. What then is the issue with counterfeit air bags?

A. NHTSA has become aware of a small, but increasing, number of counterfeit air bags being sold and distributed in the United States over the last three years.

If the air bags in your vehicle have not been repaired or replaced, you need not worry about this issue. Likewise, if the air bags in your vehicle were serviced or replaced at your Nissan

authorized dealer, you likely need not worry about this issue, though you can call your Nissan dealer for confirmation that it used Genuine Nissan parts. Finally, if the air bags in your vehicle were replaced elsewhere there is a small chance your vehicle would be affected,

Q. What is a counterfeit air bag?

- A. Nissan, as an original equipment manufacturer ("OEM"), produces and distributes for sale through its authorized dealers Genuine Nissan parts for use in repairs. A "counterfeit" air bag, means an airbag that bear without authorization a mark identical with, or confusingly similar to, the genuine mark of the manufacturer.

Q. What are the risks of counterfeit air bags?

- A. According to NHTSA, while counterfeit air bags look nearly identical to Nissan Genuine Parts, their testing showed that they pose a serious safety risk. Specifically, a counterfeit air bag may fail to deploy, or deploy improperly which could increase the risk of a serious injury.

Q. Are "counterfeit" parts the same as "aftermarket" parts?

- A. Aftermarket parts are produced and distributed by companies other than OEMs such as Nissan. However, aftermarket parts are marketed and sold under their own distinct brand. These parts do not seek to pass themselves off as Genuine OEM parts.

Q. How can I tell if I am risk to have counterfeit air bags in my car?

- A. Whether you are at risk, depends on your unique vehicle history.
1. If your vehicle was purchased new from an authorized Nissan dealer, and the air bag in your vehicle has not been replaced or serviced, this issue does not affect you and you do not need take any action.
 2. If you purchased your vehicle new, and the vehicle has had an air bag repair or replacement at an authorized Nissan dealer, your risk level is low as authorized Nissan dealers typically buy their service parts directly from Nissan. If you would like confirmation about the specific replacement parts used in a repair in your vehicle, we recommend you contact the authorized dealer that performed the repair directly.
 3. If you purchased the vehicle new, and the vehicle has had an air bag repair or replacement at an independent location, there is a small chance the air bags in your vehicle may be affected. We recommend you contact your insurance company or the independent repair shop directly, as they are in the best position to confirm the source of the parts used in the repair.
 4. If you purchased the vehicle used and do not know the vehicle history, or cannot contact the independent repair facility to confirm the source of replacement parts used, Nissan recommends that you obtain a vehicle history report (such as Carfax) to help determine if the vehicle had previously been in an crash where air bags deployed.

Q. If I take it the dealership, can the dealership determine if it is counterfeit?

- A. If you followed our recommendations and believe your vehicle might be affected, you may go to your authorized Nissan dealer and we will work with that dealer to help determine, to the best of our ability, whether your vehicle is affected. Unfortunately, given techniques used by modern, sophisticated counterfeiters, it may not always be possible for a dealer inspection to determine if the air bag is counterfeit or genuine.

Q. What if the dealer suspects it is counterfeit, but cannot tell for sure?

A. If there is strong doubt as to whether the air bag is Genuine based on the physical characteristics of the part after inspection, Nissan recommends that it be replaced out of an abundance of caution.

Q. Will the dealer charge me for the inspection and if so, how much?

A. Likely yes. An inspection involves time and labor, even if no repair is performed. Dealers are independently owned and operated businesses and set their own prices. This is not a recall or a warranty repair.

Q. If a counterfeit air bag is discovered, what will the dealer do?

A. The decision is yours. Nissan recommends that any counterfeit bag be replaced with a Genuine Nissan replacement air bag. **We note that the dealer will likely refuse to reinstall a confirmed counterfeit air bag into your vehicle.** Please consider this prior to the inspection.

Q. Is replacement of a counterfeit air bag with a Genuine OE air bag covered under warranty?

A. No, this is not a warranty repair.

Q. How much will replacement of a counterfeit with a Genuine Nissan air bag cost?

A. Your Nissan dealer will be in the best position to answer that question.

Q. Will Nissan pay for that repair?

A. No. This is not a warranty repair and is not a recall, and is therefore customer pay.

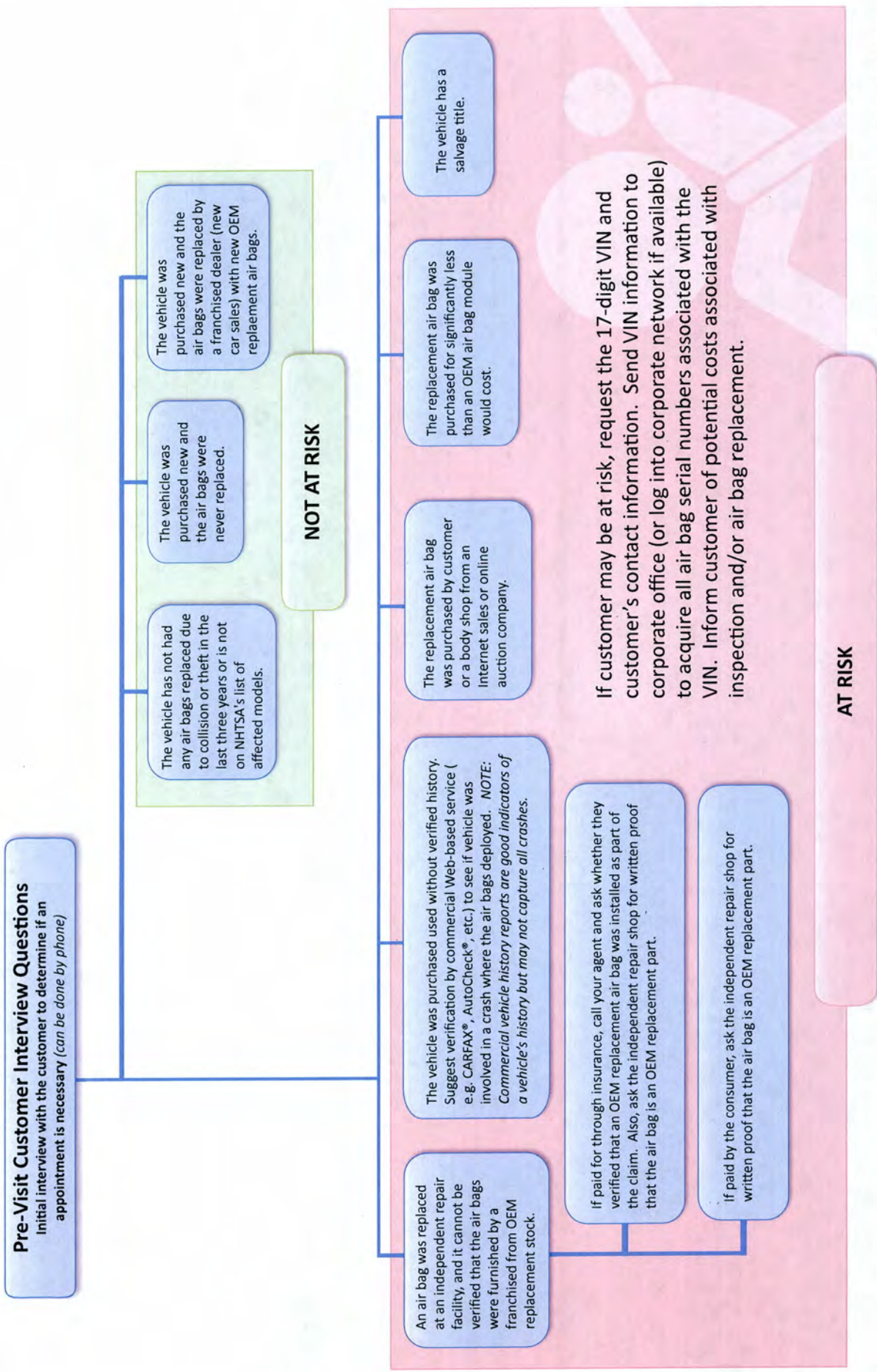
Q. I cannot afford to replace the air bag in my car. If the air bag is found to be counterfeit, what should I do?

A. Nissan recommends replacement of the air bag with a Genuine Nissan air bag at the earliest opportunity.

Q. Is my car safe to drive?

A. Based on information provided to Nissan by NHTSA, the vast majority of vehicles on the road today are unaffected, and do not have a counterfeit air bag. However, if you determine your vehicle is at risk and you are concerned, Nissan recommends that you seek confirmation that Genuine Nissan air bags were used to repair your vehicle.

Recommended Dealer Guidance for Managing Counterfeit Air Bags





Recommended Dealer Guidance for Managing Counterfeit Air Bags

continued



Driver's Side Counterfeit Air Bag Indicators

Counterfeit air bags are difficult to identify when installed in the vehicle. However, some visual clues that may indicate a counterfeit are:

- **For the air bag module still installed in the car:**
- The texture of the vinyl material used for the counterfeit air bag trim cover is different from the OEM material.
- The color of the counterfeit air bag trim cover may be slightly different from the OEM parts.
- The vinyl trim cover may not have "tear seams" or slight depressions in the vinyl material that determines where the flap doors will open during deployment (typically an "H" pattern). The trim cover emblem is generally affixed to one flap of the trim cover door so it remains intact when the flaps open during deployment.
- The letters "SRS" (Supplemental Restraint System), which are embossed or molded into the vinyl trim cover are not well-defined.
- There may be evidence that the counterfeit air bag installer shaved or trimmed the vinyl trim cover for better fit into the steering wheel housing.
- The SRS light does not illuminate during "key on" or otherwise does not function as the manufacturer intended.

For after the driver's side air bag module is removed from the steering wheel:

- The counterfeit air bag module labeling generally does not match OEM quality and quantity.
- There may be no serial number or, if present, the same serial number is repeated on different or multiple counterfeit bags. OEM serial numbers are unique to each air bag. (NHTSA will share known repeated serial numbers with the affected OEMs for distribution to dealers.)

- The inflator assembly is labeled with a different OEM name than the air bag's emblem or intended fitment.
- The model number designation on the label does not match the OEM part number for that model vehicle.
- Barcode labels are repeated on different or multiple counterfeit bag modules.
- Tool marks are visible on the fasteners and/or grind marks are visible on the air bag.
- Rivets appear to be tightened by a hand tool and do not show a consistent ring pattern. OEM rivets are machine compressed and show a consistent ring pattern.
- The "warning" labeling normally found on an OEM air bag is missing.
- The colors of the inflator wire connectors do not match the OEM colors.
- Grounding terminals or "shorting bars" of the inflator wire connectors that prevent the air bag from deploying when disconnected from the vehicle system are missing.
- The backing plate of the counterfeit air bag has numerous holes drilled into it, which allows the counterfeit air bag to be installed into a wider range of vehicles.

The counterfeit air bag may have been rebuilt from a previously deployed air bag. Look for signs that the metal parts have been weakened by pyrotechnics, including burn marks or metals that have been stretched or expanded by the gases. The previously deployed air bag may have been removed from the module assembly and only the steering wheel trim cover has been replaced. The supplemental restraint system fault detection system/warning lamp may have been deceived/deactivated using resistors or diodes. Dealers should obtain from manufacturers additional guidance for identifying genuine air bags in specific models, e.g., photographs of genuine air bags to compare with possible counterfeits.

NHTSA strongly advises technicians NOT to electrically probe counterfeit air bag connecting terminals because of the risk of detonation and possible serious injury.