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State, National and Auto Industry Leaders Urge Drivers to Check, Fix Free Vehicle Safety Recalls

March 2-8 is Vehicle Safety Recalls Week



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What you need to know: State and national safety leaders are calling on drivers to check for and repair the nearly 5.5 million registered vehicles in California with open vehicle safety recalls, including 115,000 vehicles with ["Do Not Drive"](#) warnings.

LOS ANGELES – State and national organizations joined auto industry leaders today to kick off Vehicle Safety Recalls Week and urge drivers to check for and repair open vehicle safety recalls.

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), New Motor Vehicle Board (NMVB), Greater Los Angeles New Car Dealers Association (GLANCD), California New Car Dealers Association (CNCDA), National Safety Council (NSC), Alliance for Automotive Innovation (Auto Innovators) and Automobile Club of Southern California (Auto Club) held a news conference at the BMW of Downtown Los Angeles in a continuing effort to alert vehicle owners of the urgent safety risks of unchecked recalls.

“Checking for open safety recalls and bringing in your vehicle for repairs is a critical safety measure that every driver should take,” OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty said. “With our partners, the OTS is focused on making sure every California driver knows there is an easy, quick way to find out if their vehicle has an open safety recall – [ChecktoProtect.org](#). It takes less than a minute to search for any open recalls, and repairs are free at any authorized dealership. This is a potentially life-saving action for not only drivers, but their passengers and everyone on the road.”

WHY IT MATTERS: There are more than 5.4 million vehicles in California with unrepaired safety recalls, including 115,000 vehicles with a “Do Not Drive” warning due to the seriousness of the repair needed. Older vehicles and those with multiple owners are at greatest risk, as many drivers are unaware of open recalls. Nationwide, 53.2 million vehicles, or one in every five vehicles on the road, has an unrepaired recall.

TAKATA AIRBAG RECALLS

In California, more than 500,000 vehicles still have defective Takata airbags that date back to 2014. Among the California vehicles with defective airbags, four out of every five vehicles are in Los Angeles (252,000), the Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto (81,900), the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose (77,700) and San Diego areas (42,300).

The defective airbag inflators on Takata airbags could explode and spray sharp metal fragments toward the driver and passengers – like shrapnel from an exploding grenade. Owners of certain vehicles are at a substantially higher risk of having faulty Takata airbags and must replace the air bags immediately. These vehicles include certain model year Honda and Acura vehicles, Chrysler 300s; Dodge Chargers, Magnums and Challengers; certain BMW 3 Series, 5 Series and X5s; and certain 2006 Ford Rangers and Mazda B-Series vehicles.

Since the Takata Airbag Recall started in June 2014, [28 people have been killed](#) in the United States, including four people in California, due to defective air bag inflators that exploded. At least 400 people have been injured.

Between April 2024 and April 2025, California ranked No. 1 in making the most progress with 107,500 Takata Airbag replacements or recall closures, fixing nearly 15 percent of all vehicles with open recalls in a single year.

“60 seconds. That is the amount of time it takes to determine if your vehicle has an open safety recall and where you could go to get it repaired,” NMVB Assistant Director and Equity Officer Kimberlee Vaye said. “Take the time to check. You owe it to yourself and your family. Safety recalls can involve parts like brakes, tires, seatbelts, airbags and steering, putting drivers and passengers, and even pedestrians at unreasonable risk of injuries or crashes. Check to Protect for peace of mind of keeping you and your loved ones safe. Get your recall fixed as soon as possible. Contact your local car dealership today. Dealerships are obligated to repair any recall free of charge, whether you purchased your vehicle there or not. Many dealers offer free transportation, loaner cars or even mobile repair.”

What is a Safety Recall?

A safety recall is issued when a manufacturer or the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#) determines that a vehicle or its components pose a safety risk or fail to meet minimum standards.

Act Now: Check to Protect

To check for open recalls, drivers can visit [CheckToProtect.org](https://www.CheckToProtect.org) or [CheckToProtect.org/es](https://www.CheckToProtect.org/es) (Spanish) and enter their license plate or vehicle identification number (VIN) to see if their vehicle has an open recall. Nearly 80 percent of vehicles checked are repaired within 90 days.

The program encourages vehicle owners to check for any open recalls every three months and to schedule free recall repairs as soon as a fix is available.

“Road safety remains a critical priority for everyone traveling on California’s roads,” NSC Check to Protect senior program manager Lonny Haschel said. “With millions of vehicles still operating with unrepaired safety recalls, it is essential for drivers to take simple steps to ensure their vehicles are safe. We urge all drivers to visit [CheckToProtect.org](https://www.CheckToProtect.org), enter their vehicle information to check for any open recalls and schedule the free repair at an authorized dealership if one is found. When safety recalls are addressed, every roadway user benefits.”

“We take great pride in our member dealers offering the best, safest vehicles,” CNCDA President Brian Maas said. “All our dealers stand ready to help make sure your car is working efficiently and safely on every trip. Recall repairs are free and fixing recalls is a top priority for dealers, who want every driver in a safe car.”

“We strongly encourage drivers not to overlook recall notices,” said GLANCDA Executive Director Bob Smith. “Every vehicle owner should make it a habit to regularly check for recalls as part of their vehicle maintenance plan. Completed recall repairs are an important step in maintaining both vehicle safety and performance.”

“Vehicle recalls help ensure that all cars and trucks on our roads are safe to drive,” Auto Club Senior Public Affairs Specialist Kandace Redd said. “Driving a vehicle that has had any recalls repaired also helps protect passengers and other people who use our roads, including people walking and biking.”

“Safety is the top priority for the auto industry, and making sure every vehicle recall repair is completed is crucial to keeping our roads safe,” Alliance for Automotive Innovation senior director of state affairs Curt Augustine said. “In fact, reaching a 100 percent completion rate for recalled vehicles is a shared goal of automakers, and we hope a shared goal of all stakeholders.”

Businesses and other organizations that operate fleets can also conduct bulk recall checks on the [NSC website](https://www.NSC.org).

All recalls are repaired for free at authorized dealers, regardless of where the vehicle was purchased. For more information, visit [CheckToProtect.org](https://www.CheckToProtect.org) or [CheckToProtect.org/es](https://www.CheckToProtect.org/es) (Spanish). Additionally, you may search for vehicles, car seats, tires, and other equipment for safety recalls on the [NHTSA website](https://www.NHTSA.gov).

To learn about other helpful ways to stay safe on to go, visit www.GoSafelyCA.org.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY (OTS)

The OTS is California's designated highway safety office that awards more than \$140 million annually to approximately 500 state and local sub-recipients for education, enforcement and other innovative programs designed to improve the safety of everyone on California roads. Through federal funding made available to states by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the OTS delivers traffic safety programs that help prevent people from being killed and seriously injured in California. To learn more about the OTS, visit ots.ca.gov and gosafelyca.org. Follow the OTS on Twitter, Instagram and TikTok @OTS_CA/@GoSafelyCA, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS and www.facebook.com/GoSafelyCA and subscribe to the [OTS YouTube channel](#).

ABOUT THE NEW MOTOR VEHICLE BOARD (NMVB)

The NMVB, in its quasi-judicial capacity, is charged with the administration of Chapter 6 of the Vehicle Code, primarily applicable to new motor vehicle dealers, manufacturers and distributors participating in the new motor vehicle franchise system in California. The mission of the NMVB is to be a trusted government resource benefiting all Californians enriching relations between new motor vehicle dealers and manufacturers and delivering fair resolutions for consumers. To learn more about the NMVB consumer mediation services and legal programs, visit nmvb.ca.gov.

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA NEW CAR DEALERS ASSOCIATION (CNCDA)

The nation's largest state automobile dealer association, CNCDA represents nearly 1,200 franchised new car and truck dealers throughout California. Our members are primarily engaged in the retail sale and lease of new vehicles, and also engage in automotive service, repair and part sales. CNCDA focuses on protecting and promoting the interests of franchised new car and truck dealers before all state government and regulatory agencies. CNCDA works to create a business-friendly climate where franchised dealers can thrive, provide the best products and services to consumers and maintain gainful employment.

ABOUT GREATER LOS ANGELES NEW CAR DEALERS ASSOCIATION (GLANCD)

Established in 1907, GLANCD serves as the representative body for new car dealers in Los Angeles County. The association is dedicated to advocating for the business interests of its members, providing comprehensive educational programs to advance industry knowledge and supporting philanthropic efforts that positively impact the local Los Angeles community.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL (NSC)

The National Safety Council is America's leading nonprofit safety advocate – and has been for more than 100 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace, roadway and impairment. We create a culture of safety to not only keep people safer at work, but also beyond the workplace so they can live their fullest lives.

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION (AUTO INNOVATORS)

From the manufacturers producing most vehicles sold in the U.S. to autonomous vehicle innovators to equipment suppliers, battery producers and semiconductor makers – Auto Innovators represents the full auto industry, a sector supporting 11 million American jobs and five percent of the economy. Active in Washington, D.C. and all 50 states, the association is committed to a cleaner, safer and smarter personal transportation future.

ABOUT THE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (AUTO CLUB)

The Automobile Club of Southern California is a member club affiliated with the American Automobile Association (AAA) national federation and serves members in the following California counties: Inyo, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura. Established in 1902 by nine motor clubs with fewer than 1,500 members, today AAA provides more than 61 million members with automotive, travel, insurance and financial services through its federation of 32 motor clubs and more than 1,000 branch offices across North America. For more than 115 years, AAA has been a leader and advocate for safe mobility.

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