



THE FACTS ON FRAUD AIRBAGS

Supplemental Restraint Systems (SRS) or Airbags have been documented for saving thousands of lives. Airbags can also be costly to replace in vehicles that have been involved in a collision. A growing number of repaired vehicles have been found to contain altered or fraudulent airbags. These “stuffed airbags” have been known to contain paper towels, shop rags, plastic bottles, foam, aluminum cans or other filler materials. These materials are stuffed inside, and the airbag cover is then repaired. These altered airbags create a lethal danger in a collision and are hard to detect for the consumer, especially when purchasing a used vehicle. In addition, law enforcement has found the airbag module used as a concealment location for drugs, weapons and contraband. {On August 14 at the Washington D.C. Press Club, a press conference was held on fraud airbags, CNN and Fox News ran a special video from KMSP-TV/Fox News 9 with Jeff Ballion, Consumer Reporter and Dave Long, the airbag Detective from Minneapolis. }

THE AIRBAG COVER:

- ? On the drivers side, look for the label on the cover of the airbag, the words “Airbag”, “SRS” – Supplemental Restraint System, or SIS”- “Supplemental Inflatable Restraint” should be present. NO label may indicate a replacement cover or non-functioning airbag.
- ? The cover logo should match the vehicle manufacture logo; interior color and appearance of the vehicle should be consistent
- ? The cover should not be broken, torn, frayed or appear to have been pried open. Also make sure the cover is NOT glued, taped or altered in any way.
- ? The airbag cover should NOT be painted or dyed. (Unless specified by the manufacturer.)

The Airbag Light:

- ? When starting the vehicle, look for the airbag system is not working. It MUST illuminate between 5-7 seconds. After 5-8 seconds the light should stay off.
- ? The warning light indicates a working airbag system. It has completed a self-diagnostic system check and is functioning properly.
- ? If the light NEVER illuminates, the airbag system is NOT working. It is faulty and needs servicing by a technician. The vehicle should not be driven.
- ? If the warning light should illuminate and stay on, beep or chime (see owners manual), the airbag system needs servicing by a technician. The vehicle should not be driven.

FRAUD AIRBAGS:

- ? If the vehicle has been involved in a collision where the airbags should have deployed, have the airbag system inspected for possible tampering. Please note: some types of collisions do not deploy the airbag(s).
- ? Airbag systems can be tampered with electronically; bypassing he airbag system computer check, resembling a working airbag system and warning light indicator on the instrument panel.
- ? When in doubt ask the service technician to inspect the airbag computer and components.
- ? Only use new airbags in vehicles involved in collisions. Obtain a copy of the invoice with the airbag serial and part numbers. Insurance companies will not pay for salvage airbags.

READ YOUR OWNERS MANUAL FOR SPECIFIC USE OF RESTRAINT SYSTEMS!