

Automobile Recalls Over the Past 40 years in the U.S.



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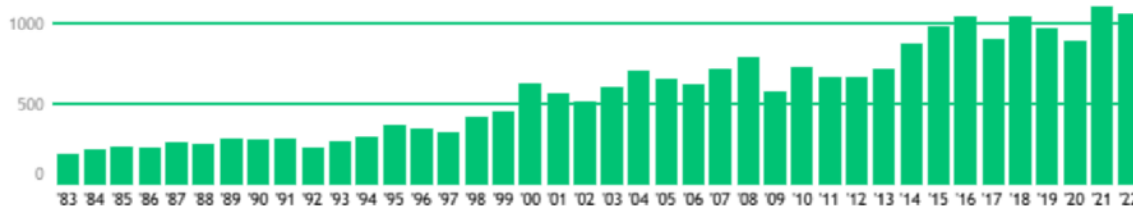
Around 8,200 older cars equipped with Takata airbags received a "Do Not Drive" warning early this month.

From 2002 to 2015, 19 different automakers, including BMW and Toyota, installed faulty airbags that can explode when deployed, causing numerous fatalities. As a result of their recall, 67 million airbags were recalled. They are known as the largest safety recall in American history.

More than 22,000 automobile recalls have occurred in the United States over the past four decades. Here in this article, we show the types of automobile recalls, the companies with the most recalls, the components that were recalled most often, and, most importantly, the impact of these recalls on people using data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Automobile Recalls (1983-2022)

Total Number of Recalls
22,651



U.S. Automobile Recalls

Recalls affect not only a few vehicle parts, but also affect the lives of millions of people. In the United States alone, 22,651 recalls have been issued over the past 40 years, involving more than one billion Americans.

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Type	Number of US Recalls (1983-2022)	People Affected
Vehicle	19,686	776.42 M
Equipment	2,303	207.51 M
Tire	442	36.53 M
Car Seat	220	60.39M
Total	22,651	1,080.84 M

Approximately 72% of these people were affected by nearly 20,000 vehicle recalls during this period, while more than 19% were affected by more than 2,000 equipment recalls. Although 96.9 million people were affected by the 442 tire recalls and the 220 child seat recalls, they were significantly fewer. Recalling these defective parts may be an inconvenience for some, but it saves many from unfortunate incidents that could have happened.

Recalls in History

One of the biggest recalls in history was made by GM in 2014. This manufacturer with the highest number of total recalls in four decades, had to recall millions of vehicles due to a faulty ignition switch. The engine would shut down while driving, compromising the functioning of safety systems such as airbags. Unfortunately, this glitch caused hundreds of deaths.

Rank	Manufacturer by Recalls	Number of US Recalls (1983-2022)
1	General Motors	1,237
2	Ford	1,056
3	Chrysler	909

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4	Forest River	480
5	Daimler Trucks	474
6	BMW	463
7	Volkswagen	435
8	Mercedes-Benz	378
9	Honda	377
10	Blue Bird	359

Sometimes, not all recalls are that serious. BMW, for example, recalled four vehicles in December last year due to a failure to install one of the screws in the driver's backrest. Thankfully, the problem wasn't severe enough to lead to more complicated repairs.

What About the Future?

Recalls of automobiles have increased dramatically over the past four decades, as have safety standards for cars.

There are risks associated with driving your car, but recalls indicate manufacturers taking responsibility for their faulty products, and affect a very small percentage of vehicles.

Towards improving automobile safety, the NHTSA proposed the New Car Assessment Program in 2022, which provides five-star safety ratings based on a vehicle's safety features, crashworthiness, and rollover resistance.