



Customer Focus on Loss Control

Innovative Safety and Health SolutionsSM

Air Bag On/Off Switches

Air bags save lives and minimize injuries!! The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that the combination of seat belts and air bags is 75% effective in preventing serious head injuries and 66% effective in preventing serious chest injuries. Due to their rapid deployment, air bags do often cause minor injuries such as cuts or bruises, but these are far less severe than the skull fractures and brain injuries that might otherwise result.

There are, however, conditions under which some drivers and passengers are seriously “at risk” due to the air bag deployment. In consideration of these situations, NHTSA has passed a regulation to permit the installation of “On/Off” switches in certain vehicles, to be done by auto dealers and service outlets.

How to Avoid Air Bag Risk Without a Switch

- Always place an infant in a rear-facing infant seat in the back seat
- Always transport children ages 1-12 in the back seat.
- Always buckle your seat belt.
- Adjust your seat so there is 10 inches between your breastbone and the center of the air bag cover.

Who Should Consider Using On/Off Switches

- People who *must* transport:
 - infants riding in rear-facing infant seats in the front passenger seat (due either to limited rear-seat capacity or medical monitoring requirements of the child)
 - children ages 1-12 in the front passenger seat (due to limited seating in back seats for all children).
- Drivers who, because of their stature, must sit within 10 inches of the steering wheel (due to inability to adjust seating position to permit this space).
- People whose doctors say that their medical condition warrants the risk of a deactivated air bag.

How Do Qualified Persons Obtain the Switches?

In order to have a qualified auto dealer or repair shop install an On/Off switch, you must first complete a request form (OMB No. 2127-0588) from NHTSA and receive their approval that you are qualified. On this form you will be required to:

1. Certify that you or a passenger of your vehicle is a member of a “risk” group as explained above,
2. Identify the group,
3. Certify that you have read the NHTSA information brochure discussing all of the aspects of the On/Off switch,
4. Designate which air bag(s) need to be equipped with a switch.

This form may also be obtained from an automobile dealer, repair shop, NHTSA Hotline (1-800-424-9393), or NHTSA website (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/airbags/>)

Precautions for Vehicles With On/Off Switches

Once an On/Off switch is installed, in order to deactivate an airbag, the operator must use a key to turn the switch off, and later to turn it back on when the need for a deactivated airbag no longer exists. It is critical that air bags be re-activated to provide protection to others who may be using the seating position, once the infant, child or small adult is not sitting in the deactivated seating spot. Failure to do this places future passengers or drivers at increased risk of injury. When the On/Off switch is turned on to deactivate the air bag, a light will come on indicating “DRIVER AIR BAG OFF” or “PASSENGER AIR BAG OFF”. This will stay on until the key is used to re-activate the air bag.

Prevention is the Best Protection.

In a motor vehicle collision, seat belts and air bags can significantly reduce your risk of injuries. However, you



must wear your belts all the time, and your air bag must be activated whenever possible.

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