

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Citing Lack Of Local Movement On Airbags Replacement By Honda, A.G. Issues Stern Warning

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ST. THOMAS -- Attorney General Claude Walker moved with haste to warn the territory's drivers operating vehicles affected by the Takata airbag recall of the dangers of operating them. He also urged local Honda and Acura vehicle owners to visit any local dealership to replace the airbags, promising that Honda would cover all costs.

But local Honda dealers said they are not aware of Honda's promise, leaving the affected Honda and Acura owners in a quandary.

Mr. Walker, displeased with the situation, issued a stern warning to Honda via letter, asking that immediate steps be taken to correct the matter, and scolded the automaker

for failing take action when he first brought the issue to Honda's attention.

"This is not the first time that Honda's shortcomings in handling its recall in the U.S. Virgin Islands have been brought to my attention. On May 31st, after the U.S. Virgin Islands filed suit against Takata and Honda, we communicated to you that Virgin Islands consumers who contacted Honda dealers to replace their Takata airbags were given the run-around -sent to the national Honda helpline, then to Honda Puerto Rico, and then back to Honda dealers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. At the time, we were assured that Honda had corrected that problem," Mr. Walker wrote.

Following an urgent plea by federal regulators on Thursday that airbags in more than 300,000 Honda and Acura vehicles were at an unacceptably high risk of exploding, and should be replaced immediately, Mr. Walker on Friday asked Honda and Acura owners in the territory to stop driving the affected vehicles and get them repaired immediately. But with local dealers stating that they haven't received correspondence from Honda, the situation serves as an embarrassment to Mr. Walker's office.

"This is an urgent safety issue, but so far, Honda has demonstrated a clear lack of attention to the U.S. Virgin Islands. Honda has failed to repair or replace unsafe vehicles in the Virgin Islands and such neglect is treacherous and unacceptable. Honda seems all too willing to sell cars in the U.S. Virgin Islands, but not to protect its customers who drive those cars," Mr. Walker added.

Laboratory tests underway on airbags collected from recalled vehicles indicate that Takata airbags in certain 2001-3 Honda and Acura vehicles had "as high as a 50 percent chance of a dangerous airbag inflator rupture in a crash," the U.S. transportation secretary, Anthony Foxx, [said in a bulletin](#).

"I am insisting on the implementation of immediate measures by Honda to address these significant shortcomings in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and let me know immediately how and when you plan to ensure that Honda vehicles in the U.S. Virgin Islands are made safe for drivers," Mr. Walker concluded.

The at-risk vehicles are:

? 2001-2002 Honda Civic ? 2001-2002 Honda Accord ? 2002-2003 Acura TL ? 2002 Honda CR-V ? 2002 Honda Odyssey ? 2003 Acura CL ? 2003 Honda Pilot

The bulletin adds new urgency to the effort to recall and replace defective Takata airbags, which have been linked to at least 14 deaths and more than 100 injuries. Problems with the propellant that inflates the airbag can cause a metal part to rupture when the bag is deployed in a crash, shooting metal fragments toward the car's driver or passengers.