

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Takata Airbag Settlement: USVI Residents Receiving Their Checks With Gladness

VIC News / **Published On June 17, 2018 10:20 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **June 17, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- Having received its share of \$1.5 million in a \$7 million [Takata airbag settlement](#) with the U.S. Virgin Islands, New Mexico and Hawaii, the V.I. Department of Justice, whose attorney general joined the class action against the airbag company (there were multiple class action suits filed against Takata), has sent its employees crisscrossing the territory making available checks of \$200 each to approximately 2,500 residents.

The effort to make it easier for those affected by the settlement started in St. John. On June 14 and 15, D.O.J. took a team to the Canegata Ballpark facility on St. Croix, where a steady stream of residents came and, without hassle, received their checks by simply

showing their driver's license and license plate number of the affected vehicle, so that D.O.J. employees could ascertain a match.

Three residents The Consortium spoke with on Friday expressed satisfaction with how simple it was to receive the money.

"I feel great [about receiving the check]. Vacation is coming up so this will help," said one recipient who requested that her identity not be revealed. "Truthfully I knew about the class action but I wasn't following up on it, and two persons called me and told me I have a check, so our attorney Claude Walker is doing a good job."

Another woman who also asked not to be named, expressed gratitude for the extra dollars. "It's the easiest check I've ever received without having to work hard to get it," she said.

On Friday, Attorney General Claude Walker told The Consortium he was pleased that his office was able to secure the funds. "I am pleased that the Attorney General's Office was able to secure a \$200.00 payment for 2500 vehicle owners who have been affected by defective Takata airbags, and most importantly, provide safety information to vehicle owners," Mr. Walker said. "It is rare, even in consumer actions brought by stateside AGs, for consumers to receive something such as this. DOJ has only begun to fight, as we will continue our lawsuit against Honda, Ford, Nissan and Toyota to hold them accountable."

D.O.J. employees will be in St. Thomas on Monday and Tuesday at the Attorney General's Office in the Government Employees' Retirement System Complex between the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Go [here](#) to see if you are eligible to receive a portion of the settlement.

The use of Takata's airbags led to the largest recall in automotive history, involving more than 40 million vehicles in the U.S. and a \$1 billion criminal plea agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, and resulted in TK Holdings filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Japan in June 2017.

"We will continue to pursue the car manufacturers – Honda, Ford, Nissan and Toyota – which we allege also played a major role in deceiving Virgin Islands drivers and their families about the safety risks posed by the airbags in the cars they sold," Mr. Walker has said. "I cannot emphasize enough that the longer that some of these vehicles stay on the road, the more dangerous they become."

There are still many vehicles in the Virgin Islands equipped with Takata's dangerous airbags. Airbags are one of the most critical safety devices in a car, and Mr. Walker has alleged that Takata airbags exposed a car's occupants to serious dangers.

More than 200 Takata airbags have exploded violently, sending shrapnel throughout the vehicles and causing severe injuries and more than 20 deaths worldwide. A Virgin Islands resident was gravely injured when her Takata airbag ruptured while she was driving with her children in her car on St. Croix.

Virgin Islands residents are particularly at risk from Takata airbags because of the high temperatures and high humidity in the islands' tropical climate that can accelerate the breakdown of the chemical propellant used in Takata airbags -- causing them to explode.

For this reason, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration has required automakers to prioritize the recall of affected vehicles in the Virgin Islands and other jurisdictions with high heat and high humidity.

Feature Image: A gentlemen poses for a picture on Friday at the Canegata Ballpark Facility in Gallows Bay after receiving his \$200 check from the Takata airbag settlement. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

© Viconsortium 2026