

CAR CORNER

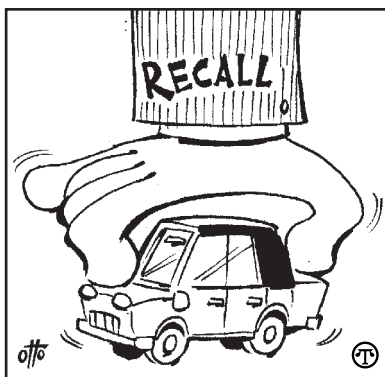
Recall: Not Necessarily A Bad Word

(NAPSA)—Recalls may sound bad at first but they may actually make you safer. They are simply an action by the manufacturer to remedy a safety or emissions-related concern regarding a vehicle defect or regulatory requirement. It may require that you return your vehicle to the dealer for service. If your vehicle is not affected, it may be because it was built at a different time or using a different part than the affected vehicles.

A safety recall can be issued on either a whole vehicle or on a piece of equipment within a vehicle, when the manufacturer uncovers a “noncompliance with a Federal motor vehicle safety standard.” In people-speak, that means when a piece of equipment in a specific line of vehicles shows a defect.

In most cases, the remedy is as simple as repairing or replacing the equipment in question. It is usually covered by the vehicle’s warranty, or the manufacturer may extend the vehicle’s warranty for the recalled part. Naturally, the sooner you have the recalled item replaced or repaired, the less you have to worry about the performance of your vehicle.

While manufacturers attempt to contact all affected vehicle owners, with some 40+ million used vehicles changing hands annually, the task can be daunting. Many car owners may not receive official notice of a recall. That’s why used-car owners and even shoppers need to be proactive in learning about existing recalls. Carfax, for example, works with a number of auto manufacturers to display information on open recalls, directly benefiting consumers. Here are some steps you might take:



Often, a dealer remedying one recall will check to see if there are any other open recalls on your car and offer to repair them as well.

- Ask the dealer. Ask him if there are any outstanding recalls on the vehicle or its parts. Often, dealers remedying one recall will check to see if there are any other open recalls on the vehicle and offer to repair them as well, but it never hurts to ask!

- Visit Carfax.com. Carfax receives recall data from several manufacturers. At www.carfax.com you can perform a free Recall Check or, for a nominal fee, you can run a detailed vehicle history report using a vehicle’s 17-character identification number (available on the dashboard and title documents) to get a more detailed look into a car’s past.

- Check with NHTSA. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration keeps a comprehensive database of recalls by make, model and year. This isn’t vehicle specific, but it gives you a road map to get there. Their Web site (www.nhtsa.com) contains a regularly updated list, or you can call them toll-free at (888) DASH-2-DOT (888-327-4236).