

# Air Bags failing to deploy

**Frank Martinelli - 3/10/2006 11:51:34 AM**

WA FRS has had 9 incidents of high speed front end damage and the drivers side air bags have failed to deploy. The use of seatbelts in some cases is not proven as the occupants have fled the scene, but I have been unable to confirm in documentation that there is correlation between seat belt needing to be fastened and deployment of the air bag. Has anyone any links?

**Paul Jerome - 6/10/2006 8:34:12 AM**

Frank, I too have heard that some vehicles do require the seat belt to be engaged for the bag to deploy, but I have also seen many vehicles with deployed airbags (front passenger seat) post impact where there was only a driver in the vehicle. Daryl and I will raise the issue with our contacts at FCAI and DOTARS and ask them to canvas vehicle manufacturers for more information and let you know.

**Daryl Rush - 6/10/2006 11:00:15 AM**

Frank and ARRO members, Feedback from a technical representative from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) is as follows: "In general, there is no interconnection between the seatbelt being buckled and the airbag firing. However, there are some advanced systems in high end vehicles that have an occupant sensor (either pressure sensing in the seat cushion or ultrasonics) that will automatically prevent the passenger side airbag from deployment if there is no one sitting in that seating position". "It is important to stress that looking at the damage to the vehicle SHOULD NOT be used as a guide to comment on whether an airbag should have deployed. The pertinent question is: "WAS THE OCCUPANT SERIOUSLY INJURED?" If these occupants have fled the scene then obviously they were not seriously injured and the airbag deployment threshold was not reached. The front longitudinals and the bumper beam that connects them are the main load bearing and crush elements in modern vehicles. Deformation of the front guards, bonnet, plastic bumper facias and other non-load bearing parts can make crash damage look a lot worse than it actually is". "I hope this information helps". Regards Daryl Rush