

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research shows that some aftermarket items mounted in the passenger compartment can interfere with air bag deployment or can be propelled into occupants, causing moderate to severe injuries.



The National Center for Statistics and Analysis's Special Crash Investigations Program has discovered several situations in which laptop computers have caused injuries to police officers. These injuries are occurring due to communication terminals, warning devices, etc., mounted in the deployment path of passenger-side air bags. The deployment of the air bag causes objects in the deployment path to become flying projectiles.

Any piece of aftermarket equipment mounted to, in front of, or on top of the instrument panel of an air-bag-equipped vehicle poses a risk of interfering with the normal deployment path of the air bag, decreasing its effectiveness, or becoming a projectile inside the passenger compartment.

Because of these risks, it is imperative that the parties responsible for installing aftermarket equipment in emergency services vehicles, public utility vehicles, and other service vehicles check with the appropriate manufacturers' representatives to get guidance for safe mounting locations and practices. Directions for obtaining some of this information from two suppliers of law enforcement/emergency services vehicles are given below.

Ford:

For information regarding mounting or locating equipment in the front seat/dashboard area for Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor vehicles to avoid air bag deployment zones, consult the police/fleet owner guide supplement in the glove box or go to www.fleet.ford.com.

- Click on the "Products" tab and a drop-down menu will offer: "State & Local Government."
- Click on "State & Local Government" and a drop-down menu will offer "General Information."

- Click on “General Information” and a page will come up with multiple topic references.
- Click on “Police Vehicles Equipment Installation Guide” on that page to bring up the information about mounting or locating equipment

Alternatively, call the Ford Fleet Hotline at 800-34-FLEET.

GM:

For information on mounting or locating equipment in the front seat/dashboard area for Chevrolet Impala, Camaro, or Tahoe Police Interceptor vehicles and the Express Van and Hummer platforms to avoid air bag deployment zones, consult the police/fleet owner guide supplement in the glove box, or go to www.gmfleet.com.

- Click on the “Site Map.”
- Scroll down to “Specialty Vehicles.”
- Click on “Law Enforcement.”
- Scroll down to “Safety Information.”

Alternatively, call GM’s Fleet Operations at 800-353-3867.

For other manufacturers, contact the appropriate fleet services program.