

## SIX AIRBAGS IN CAR ORDER



### Issue

A draft notification has been approved by the government to make six airbags compulsory for cars having a capacity of up to eight passengers.

### Background

The government has not given any particular timeline for implementation of the new order.

### Details

- The government has asked automakers in India to provide at least six airbags as standard equipment on all variants of each model they produce.
- Currently, dual airbags for drivers and front passenger has been made mandatory for all vehicles from this January.

### Vehicles covered under order

- The order will be applicable for the 'M1' vehicle category, to minimise the impact of "frontal and lateral collisions" to the occupants seated in both the front and rear compartments.
- Airbags deployment will be compulsory for two side or side torso airbags, and two side curtain or tube airbags, covering all outboard passengers.

### Categories under homologation rules

- The 'M' category of vehicles covers motor vehicles with at least four wheels, used for carrying passengers.

- The subcategory M1 defines a motor vehicle used for the carriage of passengers, comprising not more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat.

### Homologation

- Certifying particular vehicle as roadworthy is known as homologation. They have to match certain specified criteria laid down by the government for all vehicles.
- Vehicles have to undergo tests to ensure that vehicle matches the requirements of the Indian market in terms of emissions, and safety and roadworthiness.

### Need for more airbags

- In case of accidents, airbags prevent occupants from coming into contact with the steering wheel, dashboard, front glass, and other parts of the automobile.
- Indian cars are poor when it comes to offering safety measures. In addition, India's road safety is one among the poorest in the world.
- The price competitiveness in India has made car-makers to cut down on safety features while launching vehicles in the country.

### Challenges

- The deployment of frontal airbags will raise the cost of vehicles by up to 5,000 to 10,000. This will further increase if airbags are provided at back.
- Many models have been designed especially for Indian markets and deployment of airbags will involve re-engineering and redesigning.

### Concerns

Automakers provide safety features for only top end models and bundle them with unnecessary additional features to increase the cost substantially, discouraging buyers.

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