



Newsletter: 612/2018  
Date: 31 October 2018  
Distribution: All ambulance members  
Contact: Your HSU Organiser



## NSWA does not have the extremely dangerous airbags fitted (but there is still a risk)

We've been holding off sending an update on the Takata airbag fiasco in the hope NSW would provide us with the risk assessment they are lawfully required to complete when a new hazard is identified.

Obviously, our update would be informed by what the employer's conclusions are as to the likelihood that its fleet contains faulty Takata airbags, and what the consequences are if one explodes, sending shrapnel at the vehicle occupants. Their risk assessment would then talk about how to control that risk to an acceptable level (e.g., moving cleared vehicles to stations that need them etc). Unfortunately NSW has confirmed that they have not undertaken a risk assessment, in breach of its [WHS duties](#). We are told that one will be completed in the near future. ACCC documents do not constitute risk assessments.

What we know from the Mercedes website is that no Mercedes vehicle in Australia was fitted with the 'Alpha' high risk inflators that were referred to in recent media reports. We did not know this at the time of writing the [original newsletter on Monday](#). Nor did 99% of Ambulance management. The only people who knew were fleet management – and they were allegedly keeping the whole thing under wraps from paramedics and management alike.

The question is, what do we do with our advice while we are waiting for NSW to assess the risk to its staff? As we said, we now know that the airbags fitted to NSW ambulances are not the high-risk alpha inflators. Meaning the immediate danger may have subsided. However, there remains a chance that some of the fleet has been exposed to prolonged sunlight and or humidity which increases the likelihood of the lower risk Takata airbags fitted to NSW vehicles – also become capable of projecting shrapnel towards vehicle occupants (they become brittle with age/humidity/heat).

Our advice remains similar to what it was Monday. Talk to your manager (and your team mates) and determine as a group the risk each of your local vehicles pose to your health and safety. If you feel one of the ambulances is too risky, do not use it. **In the absence of any formal risk assessment you are left with no choice but to make your own workplace safe.**

We'll contact NSW again and remind them that this mess needs to be sorted out immediately and that our members are not to be directed to operate in a vehicle they have themselves assessed as unsafe.

Stuart Hatter  
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