

Removal of Seats Fitted with Side-impact Airbags (revised)

Introduction:

Side-impact airbags are a part of the vehicle Supplementary Restraint System (SRS), which commonly includes the steering wheel and passenger dashboard airbags, side-curtain airbags, and pre-tensioner seatbelts.

These components protect the vehicle occupants in the case of an accident. Side-impact airbags specifically protect occupants from an impact into the side of the vehicle, and are commonly built into the side bolster cushion of the seat.

The inclusion of a side-impact airbag within a seat is usually denoted by a label or tag sewn onto the seat, as shown at right.

Where a seat originally equipped with a side-impact airbag is replaced with a seat that is not equipped with an airbag, LVV certification is required. LVV certification ensures that the rest of the SRS system has been retained and that all other components remain functional.



In some cases however, it will not be possible to provide LVV certification for the replacement of the original side-impact airbag-equipped seat with a sports seat. Many modern vehicles have a seatbelt pre-tensioner device attached to the seat, and this device forms part of the frontal impact protection system. LVV requirements preclude any changes to this system until the vehicle has reached 14 years of age.

Once a vehicle is 14 years old, components of the frontal impact protection system can be removed, provided that the seatbelts for any affected seating positions are replaced with brand new seatbelts. The vehicle must be LVV certified for this modification, and the relevant requirements are provided within [LVV Standard 155-30 \(Frontal Impact\)](#).

LVVTA does not recommend the removal of the side-impact airbags as it potentially makes the vehicle less safe. However, design features of modern aftermarket sports seats such as large side bolsters can offset this reduction in safety by improving lateral support, providing some additional protection to the occupant.

Certification requirements for side-impact airbag removal:

The LVV Certifier's principal responsibility is to ascertain whether the remaining SRS airbags are installed, and remain in an operational condition. The certification process will include a thorough visual inspection by the LVV Certifier. The following requirements, where applicable, must be met:

- the airbag self-check and warning system must be fully-functioning; and
- there must be no obvious signs that any other SRS-related components have been removed, altered, or tampered with; and
- any modifications to side-impact airbag wiring or any other parts of the SRS have been carried out by a professional; and
- sports seats must not interfere with the deployment of side-curtain airbags; and
- passenger seats which have a child seat sensor to prevent passenger side airbag deployment must be fitted with an airbag sensor emulator or re-programmed ECU; and
- a seat occupant sensor must be wired 'always on' if the airbag system relies on it; and
- the seatbelt must be compatible with the replacement sports seat – including that the belt path is suitable and features such as a pre-tensioner will still operate.

The LVV Certifier will require evidence from a qualified auto-electrician that any modifications to the SRS electrical system have been performed professionally, except where the only modification is the fitment of automotive resistor-plugs in place of components to prevent the trigger of a fault code.

The LVV Certifier is responsible for providing and installing warning labels in a prominent location to advise occupants that the side-impact airbags have been removed.

Finally:

If you have any queries or require any further clarification relating to this Information Sheet, contact the technical team [by email](#).

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