



# The biggest recalls in motoring history, around the world...

Published: December 27, 2017

Author: Kim Henson

Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/the-biggest-recalls-in-motoring-history-around-the-world/>

## Do you Recall these incidents?

*If you want to learn more about vehicle recalls, the new **Biggest Recalls in History** infographic from vehicle leasing company **OSV** is for you.*

When Volkswagen had to recall many of its vehicles a few years back because of the emission cheating software they had installed, you might have been forgiven for thinking that this was the biggest mistake a car company has ever made.

The truth is that car recalls are not unusual and Volkswagen's is certainly not the largest over the years.

**The new infographic from OSV** looks at the top 10 recalls in the history of the automobile.



## THE 10 BIGGEST CAR RECALLS IN HISTORY

**Ford**

**1980**

**21 MILLION VEHICLES**

Parking Issue

**Ford**

**1999**

**15 MILLION VEHICLES**

Cruise control deactivates switch issue

**TOYOTA**

**2009/2010**

**9 MILLION VEHICLES**

Sudden acceleration issue

**VW**

**2016**

**8.5 MILLION VEHICLES**

Emissions Cheating

**Ford**

**1996**

**7.9 MILLION VEHICLES**

Ignition switch issue

**TOYOTA**

**2012**

**7.4 MILLION VEHICLES**

Electric window issue

**General Motors**

**1971**

**8.7 MILLION VEHICLES**

Sudden acceleration issue

**General Motors**

**1981**

**5.8 MILLION VEHICLES**

Rear suspension bolt issue

**General Motors**

**2014**

**5.8 MILLION VEHICLES**

Ignition switch issue

**HONDA**

**2014**

**5.4 MILLION VEHICLES**

Airbag issue

**SOURCES**  
 \*Based on the NHTSA's recall data as of the date of this report.  
 \*\*Based on the NHTSA's recall data as of the date of this report.  
 \*\*\*Based on the NHTSA's recall data as of the date of this report.





## More information:

### 1. 1980: Ford

21 million vehicles had to be recalled and it wasn't just one model that was at fault. Unfortunately for the company, there was an issue with cars shifting out of parking mode and running away down the road. Ford responded to the problem by trying to issue each owner with a special warning sticker before they were eventually convinced to recall and repair.

### 2. 1999: Ford

If that wasn't bad enough, a few years later Ford again was forced to do a recall. This time it involved 15 million vehicles and was because of a potentially faulty cruise control switch that had caught fire in some cars.

### 3. 2009/2010: Toyota

More recently the Japanese car company Toyota was forced to recall 9 million cars because of a sudden acceleration issue which was down to faulty accelerator pedals. The case was complicated because the company initially misdiagnosed the problem so a second recall had to be rolled out after a small number of cars crashed.

### 4. 2016: Volkswagen

The Volkswagen problem was pretty big but it only impacted on 8.5 million vehicles, all of which needed to be recalled. This was down to software installed that gave false results on emissions, something that is against EU rules. It's expected to cost the company more than £12 billion to put right.



5. 1996: Ford

Another recall for Ford affected some 7.9 million cars in the mid-nineties and was down to the ignition switch which again caused fires in a number of vehicles.

6. 2012: Toyota

The Japanese company again hit the recall button with 7.4 million cars taken back in because of faulty electric windows. Not a major, life threatening issue but it cost the company a substantial amount all the same, although they wouldn't reveal exactly how much.

7. 1971: General Motors

After sudden acceleration problems caused by engine motor mounts, GM had to recall 7 million cars in the early 70s. This affected a large number of their vehicles and different models built in the 60s. The expensive resolution involved putting in a restraining bolt to keep the engine in place.

8. 1981: General Motors

Another 5.8 million cars were recalled in the early 80s because of a rear suspension bolt issue. The vehicles included all intermediate models that had been produced since 1978. The problem was highlighted after reports of accidents began to come through.

9. 2014: General Motors



The latest GM recall involved 5.8 million in 2014 and was down to an ignition switch issue which had a tendency to cut off the engine while driving and prevented the airbag from inflating in some cars. It's estimated that the total recall cost the company just over \$4 billion.

## 10. 2014: Honda

Last, but by no means least, Honda had to recall 5.4 million cars because of an airbag issue in the same year as GM, this one relating to about 20 different models. The fact that the bags were not inflating properly made them potentially dangerous in the event of an accident.