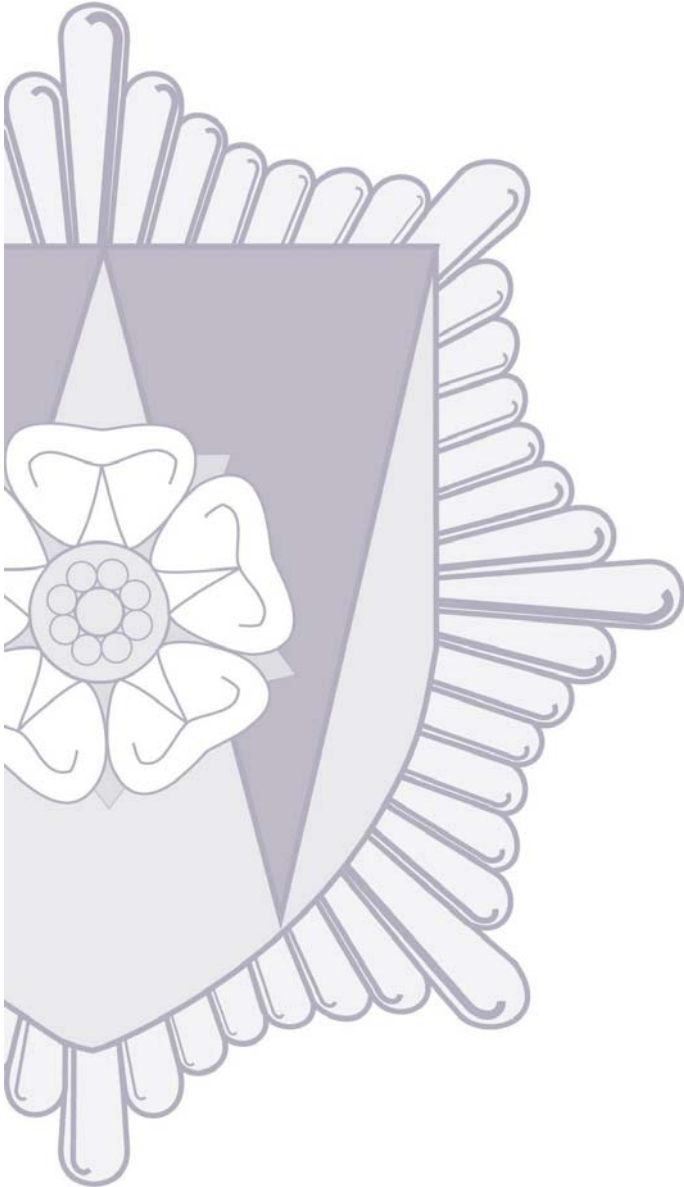


# West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

**Fire Safety - Information Note FS-INF038**

**Air Bag Inflators & Seat Belt Pretensioners**



Date Reviewed:

Sept 2007

Next Review:

Sept 2010

Ref

FS-INF038

Version

2

[www.westyorkshire.gov.uk](http://www.westyorkshire.gov.uk)

***PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING***

# West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service – Information Note FS-INF038

## Introduction

1. Air bag inflators and seat belt pre-tensioners are classed as 'explosive articles' due to the pyrotechnic composition of their initiation devices. As such they come under the control of the Manufacture & Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005 (MSER).
2. Under the provisions of MSER, the storage of these devices requires to be registered or licensed by the local authority where the net explosive content of all the units in stock exceeds of 5 kg. In practical terms, this will equate to somewhere in the region of 50 units.
3. In the West Yorkshire area, the West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority is the local authority for the purposes of administering MSER for the registered and licensed storage of pyrotechnical articles like air bag inflators and seat belt pre-tensioners.

## Registration and Licensing:

4. The registration applies for quantities between 5kg and 250 kg. For quantities between 250 kg and 2000 kg, the licensing regime applies. Where a quantity in excess of 2000 kg is stored, the Health & Safety Executive is the licensing authority.
5. It may well be the practice of some motor manufacturers to preclude their dealerships from having to keep a stock of airbags and pre-tensioners by supplying the units from a central distribution depot on an *as needed* basis. Where this policy applies and the replacement unit is immediately fitted to the vehicle, it will not be necessary to register the storage.
6. Application forms to register or licence the storage of these devices are available from the petroleum clerk at the Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters (01274 655 785). The petroleum clerk will also advise on the duration of registration/licences and the current fees.

## Hazard and Storage:

7. The major hazard from car air bags is their accidental inflation in a working area; an unrestrained car air bag may become a potentially lethal projectile. Airbags should preferably be kept in a cupboard or store room (or building) away from working areas, and away from electrical power sources, flammable materials and other dangerous goods. It is essential to leave sufficient space so that there is room for a bag to inflate. The storage of airbags in filing cabinets and similar cupboards or drawers is strongly discouraged because, if the bag accidentally expands, this could create an additional hazard from fragments of metal.
8. Where there is no suitably sized storage room or cupboard then airbags may be kept in a wire cage, again away from flammable and other hazardous materials. The cage must be sturdy enough to contain an accidentally inflated airbag.
9. Where any non deployed units are removed from vehicles undergoing repairs, they should be placed in the registered or licensed store or some other safe place until the repaired vehicle is ready for refitting or until the unit can be safely disposed of where the vehicle is being dismantled.

## Further Advice and Information:

10. Further advice about the safe storage of airbag inflators and seat belt pre-tensioners is available from a Fire Safety Inspector who can be contacted through the petroleum clerk at the Fire & Rescue Service HQ (01274 655 785)
11. More detailed information can be found in the Health & Safety Executive's publication HSG184 'Guidance on the handling, storage and transport of airbags and seat belt pr-tensioners'. ISBN 0 717615987 and the 'Approved Code of Practice and Guidance for the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives'. ISBN 0 7176 2816 7.

These publications are available from HSE Books, telephone number 01787 881 165.