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## Key Research Findings on Consumers and Auto Safety Recalls

Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national online survey in August 2015. The survey was involved 1500 motor vehicle owners, including more than 1000 who received a recall notice in the past 1-2 years.

**Topline results:** 64% of motor vehicle owners who received a recall notice in the past 1-2 years reported repairing their recalled vehicle, while 31% had not repaired the vehicle yet but intended to, while 5% had no plans to participate in the recall.

### What influences recall repair?

- **The more concerned respondents are about the recall they received, the more likely they are to get it fixed.** Of those extremely/very concerned about the recall on their motor vehicle, 76% completed their recalls; of those not concerned, 55% did so.
- **The perceived severity of the recall safety risk affects participation rates.** Survey respondents were asked to evaluate three levels of severity in actual recalls and how they would respond. Results showed that 90% of respondents said they would be likely to get the severe risk recall (*steering may malfunction while driving*) fixed, compared to 61% who would be likely to respond to the moderate risk recall (*sunroof may inadvertently close*) and 44% who would repair low risk recall (*certification label is missing tire information*).
- **People who have a relationship with a dealer participate in recalls more often.** Those who bought their vehicle new are more likely to report getting their recall fixed 68% compared to 56% among those who bought their vehicle used. People who service their vehicles at a dealership respond to safety recalls more (74% report getting their recall fixed) than those who take their vehicle for service elsewhere (55% report getting their recall fixed).

**Who repairs vehicles most?** Of those reporting open recalls, those extremely/very concerned about the recall (76%); ages 35-44 (73%) or 65+ (67%); household income \$80K+ (68%); purchased vehicle new (68%); college educated or higher (67%); primary vehicle is SUV/CUV (67%); perceived safety risk of recall was viewed as extremely/very serious (67%).

**Reasons why they fix recalls?** “It is better to be safe than sorry.” Other reasons cited: The repair was free. The vehicle was at the dealership for maintenance. The automaker recommended the repair. The vehicle had experienced the problem noted in the recall. It is important to take care of your vehicle. Repair avoids worries about being responsible in an accident or voiding a warranty.

**Who repairs vehicles least?** Of those reporting open recalls, those who bought their car used (55%); ages 18-34 (45%); not concerned about the recall (45%); household income under \$40K (42%); Midwest region (39%); high school education or less (39%).

**Reasons why they don't fix recalls?** The top reasons are "the parts needed to fix the issue are not yet available" or the owner had not had time to make the repair. Other reasons cited: The recall is "not a big deal." The vehicle has not yet experienced the issue. The owner lives too far away from the dealer. It is inconvenient to make an appointment and go in to a dealer.

**Effective ways to improve recall repair rate?** The most effective items tested are ranking the severity of recalls (64% said very effective, 96% total very/somewhat effective); a bold mailer notice that stands out and mentions a free repair (52%; 89%); and a reminder on car insurance notices (38%, 83%).

**State laws:** If it became state law that people were only allowed to *renew their vehicle's registration* if all safety recalls have been completed, 72% supported the law vs. 28% opposed. If it became state law that people were not allowed to *register the sale of a used car unless there were no open recalls*, 77% were in support vs. 23% opposed.

**Awareness of recalls:** Motor vehicle owners who received a recall notice in the past 1-2 years overwhelmingly reported being made aware of the safety recall from a letter or email from the manufacturer or dealership (84%). Another 8% learned of the recall upon taking their vehicles to a dealership for service. Others became aware of the recall from the news (4%), a telephone call from the manufacturer or dealership (1%), from family or friends (1%), or from a government website providing recall information (1%).

**NHTSA's recall website:** About four in 10 vehicle owners reported being aware of NHTSA's website. When asked how often respondents would log onto the website to check for open recalls, 41% said "a few times a year," 21% said once a year, 10% said every few years, and fewer than 20% of vehicle owners said they would check it monthly or weekly.

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Public Opinion Strategies is one of the nation's leading public opinion research firms specializing in political, public affairs, public policy, and corporate positioning research. The research was sponsored by the Auto Alliance and the Association of Global Automakers.