

BMW recall on the hot seat

Company says 75,000 of its 5- and 7- series cars have problems with the front-seat heating mats.

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FRANKFURT (Reuters) - BMW AG will recall some 75,000 of its 5- and 7-series cars after problems were discovered with front-seat heating mats, the German luxury car maker said Tuesday.

Seat mats could overheat in certain circumstances, damaging the surrounding upholstery and possibly resulting in slight burns, a spokesman said. The defect is limited to the seats and does not affect other parts of the automobile.

He put the estimated cost of the recall at €16 million (\$21.7 million).

About 69,750 sedans of the 5 series launched in mid-2003 are affected by the recall, of which more than 29,000 were sold in Germany. Of the 7 series, 5,550 cars were affected. The recall affects cars made between February 2003 and June 2004, the spokesman said.

BMW's Chinese venture with local partner Brilliance China Automotive Holdings Ltd. also said it would recall more than 1,000 of the 5-series sedans made at its Shenyang plant due to faulty heating mats.

BMW shares shrugged off the news, trading almost flat at €33.20 in morning trading in Europe.

Traders said quality issues were nothing new at BMW, which this year recalled about 4,000 of its 5-, 6- and 7-series and X5 off-road vehicles due to engine problems.

In April, BMW had recalled more than 18,000 cars in the previous 5-series in Japan. ■

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