



# Which Automaker Is Sued Most in Federal Court Over Vehicle Defect Injuries

Original analysis of 3,606 records from the Federal Judicial Center, FY2016–FY2025 (federal fiscal years, Oct. 1, 2015 – Sept. 30, 2025). Published October 22, 2026. <https://settlementinsight.com/research/vehicle-defect-injury-lawsuits-by-automaker>

**General Motors was the first-named defendant in 857 of the 3,143 new motor vehicle product liability cases filed in U.S. district courts from FY2016 to FY2025 (27%), more than Stellantis (368) and Ford (342) combined.** In FY2025 alone, Stellantis (FCA US) led with 128 cases, but 96 of them had been removed from California state courts. GM's total includes a large cluster of cases in a single multidistrict litigation, filed mostly in FY2018 and FY2019. The ranking does not account for how many vehicles each company sells.

**857**

Cases naming GM first, FY2016–FY2025

**27%**

GM share of federal vehicle product cases, FY2016–25

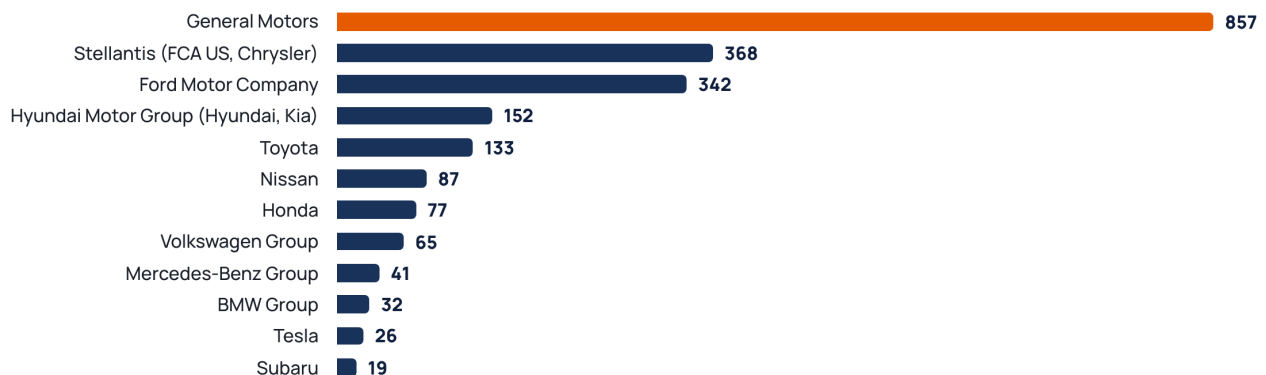
**128**

Stellantis cases in FY2025, most removed in California



## New federal motor vehicle product liability cases by first-named automaker, FY2016–FY2025

Top 12 of 22



Source: Settlement Insight analysis of data from the Federal Judicial Center

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### What the federal court data show

- 1. GM leads the ten-year ranking.** General Motors was the first-named defendant in 857 new federal motor vehicle product liability cases from FY2016 to FY2025, 2.5× as many as Ford (342). Stellantis, the parent of FCA US and Chrysler, ranked second with 368.

2. **Three companies account for most automaker cases.** GM, Stellantis and Ford together were named first in 69% of the 2,259 new cases with an automaker as first-named defendant. Hyundai Motor Group, including Kia, ranked fourth with 152, ahead of Toyota with 133.
3. **GM's lead holds without California removals.** Leaving out cases removed from California state courts and cases coded as direct filings into multidistrict litigation, GM still has 597 cases, against 248 for Stellantis and 226 for Ford.
4. **Stellantis led FY2025 on California removals.** Stellantis was named first in 128 of 341 new cases in FY2025 (38%), up from 8 the year before. Of these, 96 (75%) were removed from California state courts; outside those, Stellantis had 32 cases and GM 31.
5. **Yearly counts swing with case clusters.** New cases peaked at 566 in FY2018, when cases in a single GM multidistrict litigation and Ford cases removed in California added up. The lowest count was 203 in FY2021.

## How we measured

Data come from the Federal Judicial Center's Integrated Database (IDB) of civil cases, which compiles case filings reported by the U.S. district courts to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. We used the release imported into our database on 2026-10-10, which covers cases filed through 2026-06-30. Fiscal year 2026 is incomplete and is not included.

We selected all records with nature of suit code 355 (Motor Vehicle Product Liability) and a filing date (field filedate, not the release year) from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2025, and assigned each to a federal fiscal year (October through September). For the ranking we kept new cases only: origin code 1 (original proceeding), 2 (removed from state court) and 13 (filed directly into multidistrict litigation). Transfers between districts (5), transfers into multidistrict litigation (6), remands (3) and reopenings (4, 8) are second records of a case already counted and were left out. Some new cases appear in more than one annual release; we counted one case per district, docket number and filing date. The office code is not part of that key because it can change between releases for the same case, while a docket number alone is not unique: in one district two different cases filed on different days share the same docket number, and both are counted. This leaves 3,143 new cases, of which 2,259 name an automaker first.

The IDB records only the first-listed defendant (field defendant), shortened by the source to about 23 to 30 characters, often with ", ET AL" appended. We assigned each name to an automaker group by the company name at the start of the field, after removing extra spaces, and counted misspelled and cut-off forms of a maker's own name (for example "F C A U S L L C", "FIAT/CHRYSLER CORPORATI", "VOLSWAGEN GROUP OF AMER", "BAYERISCHE MORTOREN WER", "DR. ING. H.C. F. PORSCHE", "INFINITY AND NISSAN NORTH AMER"). Groups combine U.S. sales subsidiaries, parent companies, foreign affiliates and brands: Chrysler, FCA US, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Maserati and Stellantis form Stellantis; Kia with Hyundai Motor Group; Audi, Porsche (Porsche Cars North America and Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche AG) and Bentley with Volkswagen Group; Lexus with Toyota; Infiniti with Nissan; Lincoln with Ford; Fuji Heavy Industries with Subaru; Daimler AG with Mercedes-Benz Group; Honda Canada and General Motors of Canada with their groups; BMW Financial Services and BMW Manufacturing with BMW Group. Isuzu (including Isuzu Commercial Truck of America) and Suzuki Motor count as automakers, as do Tesla, Lucid, Ferrari, McLaren and Aston Martin. Not counted as automakers: dealerships that carry a brand name (such as Toyota of Dallas, BMW Manhattan, Hennessy Porsche), suppliers (Takata, ZF TRW, ARC Automotive, Autoliv, Continental Automotive, Toyota Boshoku, Hyundai Translead, tire makers), rental companies, insurers, used-car sellers and repair shops, makers of heavy trucks and buses (Daimler Truck, Volvo Group and Volvo Trucks, PACCAR and Peterbilt, Navistar, Motor Coach Industries, Workhorse Group), makers of motorcycles and three-wheeled autocycles (Harley-Davidson, Triumph, Victory, Vanderhall), and makers of recreational and powersports vehicles (Thor, Polaris, BRP, Kawasaki, Yamaha, Massimo). A name that does not identify a company ("MOTORS") is not assigned. Every name variant and its assignment is listed in the CSV file automaker\_name\_variants.csv.

To check the data, we recomputed the judiciary's published totals, counting all records as the judiciary does. Table C-2 of Judicial Business 2025 reports civil cases commenced by nature of suit for the 12 months ending September 30, 2024 and 2025. Our FY2025 count of 359 is 0.28% below the published figure, and our FY2024 count of 277 is identical to it.

## Checked against published figures

- NOS 355 (Personal Injury/Product Liability - Motor Vehicle) civil cases commenced in U.S. district courts, 12 months ending September 30, 2025: published 360, our count 359 (0.28% apart). [Judicial Business 2025, Table C-2: U.S. District Courts - Civil Cases Commenced, by Basis of Jurisdiction and Nature of Suit](#)
- NOS 355 (Personal Injury/Product Liability - Motor Vehicle) civil cases commenced in U.S. district courts, 12 months ending September 30, 2024: published 277, our count 277 (exact match). [Judicial Business 2025, Table C-2: U.S. District Courts - Civil Cases Commenced, by Basis of Jurisdiction and Nature of Suit](#)

## Limitations

- Only the first-named defendant is recorded. Many cases name several companies; an automaker that is the second or third defendant, for example behind an airbag or tire maker, is not counted.
- The nature of suit code is chosen by the party filing the case or removing it on the civil cover sheet and is not checked by the court. Some cases coded 355 may mainly concern warranty or other claims, and some injury cases may carry a different code. The federal data do not include the complaint itself.
- The counts cover federal district courts only. Cases filed and kept in state courts are not included.
- The ranking is not adjusted for sales, vehicles in operation or miles driven, and a lawsuit is an allegation, not a finding that a vehicle was defective.
- Courts can report cases to the judiciary late, and later FJC releases can slightly change the counts for recent fiscal years.

## Data files

- [Defendant name variants mapped to each automaker group](#) (CSV, 239 rows)
- [New motor vehicle product liability cases against GM, Stellantis and Ford by fiscal year](#) (CSV, 10 rows)
- [Federal motor vehicle product liability cases by automaker group, FY2016-FY2025](#) (CSV, 22 rows)
- [Federal motor vehicle product liability filings per fiscal year, FY2016-FY2025](#) (CSV, 10 rows)

## How to cite

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