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BMW recalls new Mini



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All new Minis are being recalled to BMW's Oxford factory because of a design fault that could cause an explosion when the cars are being filled with fuel.

Static electricity could cause a small spark when a petrol pump nozzle is inserted which could in turn ignite fuel vapour in a flash fire.

The problem was discovered when testers found special paint used to earth the fuel filler neck was wearing off too quickly.

Mini engineers at the plant in Cowley will fix the 500 models already delivered to customers and modify the others which are yet to be sent out to dealers.

BMW officials said there had been no explosions or injuries at any time during the launch process and that the risk was very small.

However, the company said it was aware of two cases where a build-up of static electricity had caused a localised fire.

The recall is estimated to cost the German car maker about £320,000 (\$463,000).

BMW salvaged the Mini brand and designs for the new model when it pulled out of UK car maker Rover

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a year ago, following six years of heavy investments and even heavier losses.

The Mini went on sale in the UK just a few weeks ago. It will be offered in other European countries from this month onward, and in the United States and Japan in 2002.

The Munich-based company hopes to sell 100,000 Minis around the world during the coming year.

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