

Bulletin – March 5, 2010

Toyota recalled 4.2 million vehicles in September 2009 over concerns that certain floor mats could interfere with the electronically controlled accelerator pedal and cause unintended acceleration.

An additional 2.3 million vehicles were recalled in January 2010 to address gas pedals that can jam even without floor mats present. This recall focused on gas pedals manufactured by American-based CTS Corporation and used in Toyotas since 2005. The CTS pedal design differs significantly from the previously used Denso pedals, which have not been subject to a recall investigation.

NHTSA reports that 2,262 complaints of Toyota unintended acceleration events since 1999 prompted the recalls. NHTSA first investigated reports of “surging” in Toyota Camrys in 2006, but found no defect.

Consumer Reports analyzed the NHTSA safety complaints database and found 166 cases of unintended acceleration for model year 2008:

Manufacturer	2008 model year complaints	% of total	Ratio
Toyota	52	41%	1 in 50,000 cars
Ford	36	28%	1 in 65,000 cars
GM	7	5%	1 in 500,000 cars

Some observers suspect that an unidentified electronic flaw is the cause of some of the unintended acceleration cases. Further study is necessary to confirm or deny these suspicions. Many mechanical and electrical systems interact to control the throttle, and any of these systems can potentially be defective.

Toyota claims that it has never found an incident of unintended acceleration caused by the vehicle’s computer/electronic control unit. NHTSA’s investigation was unable to determine that an electronic defect exists.

Many officials, including Toyota, are reluctant to blame complaints of unintended acceleration on driver error.

A test performed by *Car and Driver* found that a Toyota Camry took 190 feet to stop from 70 mph at full throttle, compared to 174 feet with a closed throttle. Nearly every car on the road is equipped with brakes that can overpower the engine at full throttle, even at speeds of up to 100 mph.