U S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA07-010
Date Opened: 08/08/2007
Principal Investigator: D. Scott Yon
Subject: Accessory Floor Mat

Manufacturer: Toyota Motor Corporation
Products: MY 2007 Lexus ES350
Population: 98,454

Problem Description: The accessory floor mat may interfere with the throttle pedal.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	17	31	40
Crashes/Fires:	5	7	8
Injury Incidents:	6	6	7
# Injuries:	10	6	12
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
# Fatalities:	0	0	0
Other*:	35*	4**	39

*Description Of Other: * - Reports from survey conducted by VRTC; ** - Related warranty claims

Action: Open this Engineering Analysis.

Engineer: *D. Scott Yon* 8/9/07 Date: *08/08/2007*
Div. Chief: *Jeffrey L. Quandt* Date: *08/08/2007*
Office Dir.: *Kathleen C. DeMeter* Date: *08/08/2007*

Summary: Complainants interviewed by ODI stated that they applied the throttle pedal to accelerate the vehicle then experienced unwanted acceleration after release. Subsequent (and sometimes repeated) applications of the brake pedal reduced acceleration but did not stop the vehicle. In some incidents drivers traveled significant distances (miles) at high vehicle speeds (greater than 90 mph) before the vehicle stopped (ODI notes that multiple brake applications with the throttle in an open position can deplete the brake system's power [vacuum] assist reserve resulting in diminished braking).

The subject vehicles have an engine control button instead of a traditional ignition key. Some drivers reported that their attempts to turn the engine off by pressing the control button were unsuccessful. In these cases it appears the drivers were unaware that the button's functionality changes when the vehicle is in motion requiring that it be depressed for 3 seconds (instead of momentarily) to stop the engine.

ODI has observed that an unsecured Lexus accessory all weather floor mat can trap the throttle pedal in an open position resulting in significant unwanted acceleration. Unsecured floor mats have been found in the majority of incident vehicles. In addition, ODI has inspected two incident vehicles documenting brake damage due to overheating.

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In the five ODI crash incidents the operators allege they experienced unwanted acceleration and were unable to stop the vehicle to avoid the collision. Four of the five crashes are multi-vehicle (one involving 7 vehicles) and two resulted in total loss damages (one involving a fire). One injury, which resulted from a roll-over crash, was significant and the injured person continues to show symptoms. One injury incident is not crash related (complainant alleges a knee injury due to overexertion during brake application).

In their response to ODI's April 5, 2007 information request letter, Toyota acknowledges that some of the alleged incidents are likely related to improper installation of the driver side all weather floor mat resulting in interference with accelerator pedal movement. Toyota describes various changes to the labeling of the all weather mat (including a sticker for the bottom of the mat and enlarging the statement on the visible surface) and the packaging used for sales of the mats, and has notified ODI of an owner mailing to subject vehicle owners' warning of the dangers of improper mat installation. Toyota believes the subject vehicles and the all weather mat do not contain a safety related defect and that the actions they have taken are sufficient to address any future concerns.

This investigation has been upgraded to an Engineering Analysis to further investigate this issue and to assess the actions taken by Toyota.

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