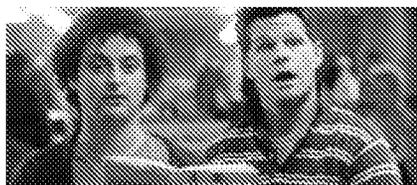


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Owners Report Problems With Toyota Tacomas

Foresthill Man Says His Truck Lunges

POSTED: 5:58 am PDT November 1, 2007

UPDATED: 6:41 am PDT November 2, 2007



FORESTHILL, Calif. -- A growing number of people are complaining about their 2007 Toyota Tacomas.

Problems with the vehicle include a sudden acceleration, even when drivers said they pressed on the brakes.

Working with NBC station WSMV of Nashville, Tenn., KCRA 3's Lynsey Paulo found more than 20 complaints about the Tacoma have been filed with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and a federal investigation into the problem is now under way.

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fifth gear, the RPM stays up ... and it makes it lunge ... and other times when you decelerate coming off a freeway it will tend to want to keep going," Downin said.

Frank Visconi of Dover, Tenn., crashed his 2007 Toyota Tacoma after it suddenly accelerated.

"It brings back some real bad memories," Visconi said.

While traveling down a highway this summer, Visconi hit the brakes, but the truck did not slow

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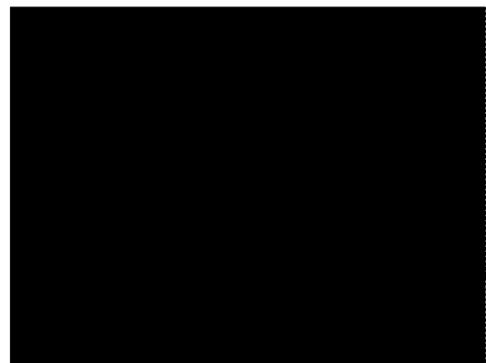
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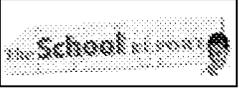
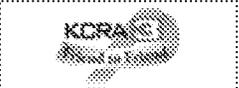
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- **Document: Tacoma Complaints**

Victor Downin of Foresthill has a fully loaded 2007 Tacoma and said he is afraid to drive it.

"I really don't like driving the car," Downin said. "It's uncomfortable."

Shortly after driving his Tacoma off the car lot, he noticed it had a surging problem.

"As you can tell, when I shift from fourth to fifth gear, the RPM stays up ... and it makes it lunge ... and other times when you decelerate coming off a freeway it will tend to want to keep going," Downin said.

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down.

"I was stretched out as far as I could, and it just wouldn't stop," Visconi said.

The next thing he knew, he was in a rollover accident, with his truck crashing down an embankment.

"What was going through my mind was, 'I am dying today,'" Visconi said. "I am going to die."

In Boston, Mass., another Tacoma owner claims her truck took off as if it had a mind of its own.

"I just accelerated like normal to pass someone and the truck just surged forward out of control," Alex Pratt said. "I was pressing the brake as hard as I could."

Former NHTSA director Joan Claybrook reviewed complaints received this year regarding Tacomas.

"I think what you have uncovered here is a safety defect of significant proportions," Claybrook said.

NHTSA has confirmed it will begin testing the Toyota Tacoma acceleration system.

"I am sure Toyota knows what the problem is and they don't want to deal with it," Claybrook said.

Toyota spokesman Bill Kwong said, "Once NHTSA notifies us of a preliminary investigation, we will submit all in-house data. It's an open book."

Downin tried to work directly with the local Toyota dealership to solve his problem.

"I come back the next day, and they say there is nothing they can do with it, that's just the way it is designed (to) operate," Downin said.

Downin took his truck to three different Toyota dealerships for an inspection. All three told Downin his Tacoma was operating as designed.

"I don't know of anybody else that has to live with buying something new and people telling them ... it malfunctions but you have to get used to it," Downin said.

Downin took his complaints to the California Dispute Settlement Program but said he did not get anywhere.

"Both the Toyota man and the arbitrator saw the problem and realized it was there," Downin said.

Again, a surging problem was noted but deemed normal operating procedure.

A document from the CDSP said, "... there was a slight jerking motion felt when the transmission engaged into fifth gear."

"There was no indication the vehicle was out of control," Downin said. "I just gave up. I could see where I was fighting a losing battle."

Downin filed a report with NHTSA.

"I think the problem should be known so other people don't get stuck the way I am," Downin added.

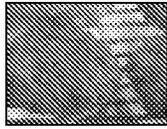
Downin is now waiting for results from the NHTSA investigation.

For the second part of this story, watch KCRA 3 Reports at 11 p.m. Friday.

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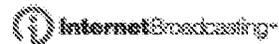
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