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Toyota recalls 55,000 floor mats

They can slip and trap accelerator pedal

September 26, 2007

BY JUSTIN HYDE
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

Toyota Motor Co. will recall 55,000 floor mats due to complaints of unintended acceleration caused by the mats sticking underneath the accelerator pedal, federal safety officials and the automaker said Wednesday.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration took the unusual step of highlighting Toyota's recall announcement, advising owners of other Toyota models – including the Prius hybrid and Avalon sedans – to ensure their floor mats are properly installed.

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"We have also received complaints about the RAV 4 (crossover) and Tacoma (pickup)," said Rae Tyson, a spokesman for NHTSA. "We will continue to monitor all of the other Toyota vehicles not involved in the recall."

As the Free Press first reported last month, NHTSA had opened an investigation into the floor mats after amassing 40 reports of unintended acceleration in 2007 Lexus ES 350 sedans, including eight crashes and 12 injuries. Since then, NHTSA has received complaints from owners of other Toyota models about the problem.
In several of the original complaints, drivers said the vehicles only stopped after an accident.

One driver told the agency the vehicle had hit speeds of 100 m.p.h. over a 6-mile stretch of freeway due to the problem. A Michigan woman said the problem caused her to lose control of her Lexus, triggering a rollover crash on I-75 that totaled her car.

Because some ES 350s are sold with stop/start buttons rather than traditional ignitions, some drivers said they were unable to shut off the engine by pressing the button as the car accelerated.

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At the time, Toyota told safety officials identified an optional all-weather floor mat that if not properly secured by clips to the floor could stick under the accelerator pedal; in some cases, Toyota said owners had simply put the rubber mat over the standard floor mats. The company contended it had dealt with the problem through a mailing to customers earlier this year.

Toyota said Wednesday the recall involves 30,500 mats for the ES 350 and 24,500 mats for the 2007 and 2008 Toyota Camry. Owners will be told of the recall in October, and offered replacement mats in November. It also warned drivers to check their floor mats and make sure that only one was installed.

Sudden and unintended acceleration cases carry a stigma in the U.S. auto industry, due to the collapse of the Audi brand in the late 1980s following a "60 Minutes" report alleging runaway cars. Federal safety officials later cleared Audi, but it took years for the company to rebuild its reputation.

While some auto safety advocates maintain that several models still suffer from sudden acceleration, NHTSA has investigated hundreds of such complaints over the past two decades but rarely found any defects. Most of the complaints have been blamed on drivers mistaking the accelerator for the brake.

*Contact **JUSTIN HYDE** at 202-906-8204 or jhyde@freepress.com. Alejandro Bodpo-Memba contributed to this report.*

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[redacted]

LOL. Floor mat recall?

I don't buy it. This is just a front so they can get the cars in the dealerships so they can fix the problems with the faulty electrical systems.

Posted: Wed Sep 26, 2007 1:17 pm

[redacted]

Bet they blame the customers who don't clean under the mats! Damn french fries!!!!!

Posted: Wed Sep 26, 2007 12:48 pm

[redacted]

I love it...they HATE it when recalls are not addressed solely through the mail and actually make it into the public domain.

Posted: Wed Sep 26, 2007 12:36 pm

[redacted]

Hmmm. Not sure if this is an iundutry first or not but I'd guess that Toyota can now also lay claim to leading the industry in floor mat recalls.

Posted: Wed Sep 26, 2007 12:19 pm

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