

**STATEMENT AND Q&A REGARDING
NHTSA ENGINEERING ANALYSIS INVESTIGATION OF
SIENNA ACCELERATOR PEDAL INTERFERENCE ALLEGATIONS
(08-11-08 v16)**

Statement:

On April 10, 2008, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ("NHTSA") opened an investigation called a Preliminary Evaluation to investigate allegations of unwanted vehicle acceleration in certain 2004 model year Toyota Sienna vehicles. A Preliminary Evaluation is an early-stage inquiry to determine if further analysis (an Engineering Analysis) is warranted; this is not a recall.

During the Preliminary Evaluation stage, NHTSA became interested in a driver's side center console ("interior trim") panel. If the specific interior trim panel is not properly secured, it may interfere with the accelerator pedal movement in certain early production 2004 model year Toyota Sienna vehicles. In April 2003, it was discovered at the assembly plant that the subject interior trim panel interfered with the accelerator pedal due to a missing clip. Toyota immediately began an investigation. It was determined that this was an isolated incident. However, Toyota immediately enhanced the assembly process and, as a secondary measure, changed the shape of the panel to increase the robustness in June 2003. In order to further study the phenomenon, the agency has upgraded the investigation to the Engineering Analysis stage. This is not a recall and Toyota is cooperating fully with the agency.

Q1: When did NHTSA begin its investigation?

A1: On April 10, 2008, NHTSA opened an investigation called a Preliminary Evaluation to investigate allegations of unwanted vehicle acceleration in certain 2004 model year Toyota Sienna vehicles. The investigation was upgraded to an Engineering Analysis on August 8, 2008.

Q2: What prompted NHTSA to investigate this issue?

A2: NHTSA received one consumer complaint alleging unwanted acceleration on a 2004 model year Toyota Sienna vehicle. During the Preliminary Evaluation phase, the agency determined the original consumer complaint vehicle is equipped with a newly designed interior trim panel, therefore it is unrelated to the current focus of the Engineering Analysis.

Q3: What seems to be the source of the problem?

A3: Toyota is cooperating fully with the agency in its efforts to investigate the allegations. As NHTSA has just upgraded the investigation to an Engineering Analysis on August 8th, 2008, Toyota cannot provide further specifics at this time. We remain confident in the safety of these vehicles, but if customers have any concerns at all they should feel free to contact our Toyota Customer Experience Center.

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Q3a: NHTSA's Opening Resume states that Toyota made a production change to the center console trim panel in June, 2003. Why did Toyota make a production change?

A3a: In April 2003, it was discovered at the assembly plant that the subject interior trim panel interfered with the accelerator pedal due to a missing clip. Toyota immediately began an investigation. It was determined that this was an isolated incident. However, Toyota immediately enhanced the assembly process and, as a secondary measure, changed the shape of the panel to increase the robustness in June, 2003.

Q3b: Has Toyota received any customer complaints regarding this interior trim panel?

A3b: Toyota has received one consumer complaint which may be related to the specific interior trim panel. There is another consumer complaint counted on the NHTSA opening resume, however the complaint did not mention the interior trim panel, but rather unwanted acceleration while parking the vehicle.

Q3c: Why isn't Toyota launching a recall to inspect the installation condition of each center console trim panel?

A3c: Toyota is cooperating fully with the agency in its efforts to investigate the allegations. As the Engineering Analysis process is ongoing at NHTSA, Toyota cannot provide further specifics at this

time.

Q4: Is this a recall?

A4: No. This is not a recall, but an Engineering Analysis. An Engineering Analysis is the second stage of a defect investigation, following a Preliminary Evaluation of a possible defect. NHTSA moves to an Engineering Analysis if it has additional concerns that are not resolved at the Preliminary Evaluation level. The Engineering Analysis ordinarily takes approximately one year, and involves a more intensive review of data, engineering information, consumer complaints, peer vehicle comparisons, and other information.

Q5: Will this Engineering Analysis lead to a recall?

A5: Toyota is cooperating fully with the agency in its efforts to investigate the allegations. As the Engineering Analysis process is ongoing at NHTSA, Toyota cannot provide further specifics at this time.

Q5a: Has Toyota submitted a response to NHTSA?

A5a: Toyota submitted a response to the Preliminary Evaluation inquiry letter in late June, 2008. We are currently waiting for the Engineering Analysis inquiry letter to be issued by the agency.

Q6: Have there been any cases of accidents?

A6: There were no accidents related to this condition reported by NHTSA.

Q7: Have there been any cases of deaths or injuries?

A7: There were no deaths or injuries related to this condition reported by NHTSA.

Q8: How many Sienna vehicles were produced prior to the June, 2003 production change?

A8: There were approximately 23,000 model year 2004 Sienna vehicles manufactured prior to the June, 2003 production change for sale in the United States.

Q8a: How many 2004 model year Sienna vehicles have been sold?

A8a: There were approximately 216,000 model year 2004 Sienna vehicles manufactured for sale in the United States.

Q9: Is the 2004 model year Sienna equipped with a throttle cable or a throttle-by-wire system?

A9: The 2004 model year Sienna is equipped with a throttle-by-wire system that electronically modulates the throttle based on the accelerator pedal position, vehicle speed, engine operating temperature, and gear selection.

Q9a: Is there something about the throttle-by-wire system that make it more prone to unintended acceleration than the traditional throttle cable and a throttle return spring?

A9a: Compared to a traditional throttle cable, the throttle-by-wire system has redundant safety features built into the system to prevent unintended throttle applications. The system has two separate throttle position sensors, in addition to the throttle return spring. If the throttle position sensors don't provide the engine control unit with corresponding readings, the check engine light will illuminate and the throttle movement will be limited to only a few degrees from the idle position to limit engine power. If a driver experiences this condition they should visit their local Toyota dealer for diagnosis and repair if necessary.

Q10: Is NHTSA currently conducting an investigation on the 2006 and 2007 model year Toyota Tacoma for unwanted acceleration allegations?

A10: No. NHTSA has received a private citizen petition on 2006 and 2007 model year Toyota Tacoma vehicles to open a Preliminary Evaluation Investigation. The petitioner alleges an engine speed increase without accelerator application. Based upon this request, NHTSA has opened a Defect Petition to review the petitioner's claim and determine whether the claim has merit or not. This is not a Preliminary Evaluation Investigation or a recall. To date, NHTSA has not opened a Preliminary Evaluation Investigation on 2006 and 2007 model year Toyota Tacoma vehicles.

Q11: Didn't NHTSA already conduct an investigation on the Toyota Tacoma Accelerator Control System?

A11: NHTSA received consumer complaint allegations regarding the Accelerator Control System in certain 2007 model year Toyota Tacoma vehicles. NHTSA did not open a formal investigation to look into these allegations. However, NHTSA did conduct a confirmation test on the 2007 model year Toyota Tacoma for Federal Motor Vehicles Safety Standards (FMVSS) 124 Accelerator Control Systems. Toyota fully cooperated with the agency to support their testing efforts.

Q11a: How many Toyota Tacoma Accelerator Control System complaints has NHTSA received?

A11a: As this was not a formal NHTSA defect investigation, they have not formally advised us of the number of complaints they have received.

Q11b: What were the results of the FMVSS 124 Compliance tests conducted by NHTSA?

A11b: The 2007 model year Toyota Tacoma vehicle tested met or exceeded all requirements of the FMVSS 124 Compliance tests.

Q12: Didn't Toyota just recall Camry and Lexus ES 350 vehicles for an Accelerator Control System problem?

A12: The Toyota Camry and Lexus ES 350 All Weather Floor Mat Equipment recall involved the Toyota Camry and Lexus ES 350 All Weather Floor Mats designed specifically for the driver's seating position in certain 2007 and early 2008 model year vehicles. If the optional Toyota Camry or Lexus ES 350 All Weather Floor Mat (either by itself or if it is placed on top of the existing carpeted floor mat) is not secured by the retaining hooks and the mat moves forward, it may interfere with the accelerator pedal returning to the idle position. If the mat is properly secured, it will not interfere with the accelerator pedal.

Q13: What if customers have questions or safety concerns regarding this issue, should they go to their dealer?

A13: We remain confident in the safety of these vehicles, but if customers have any concerns at all they should feel free to contact our Toyota customer Experience Center.

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