
TOYOTA RECALL: Reports of Runaway Cars

Four Dead in Dallas Crash Where Problem Floor Mats Found in Trunk

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Toyota, which launched the largest auto recall in U.S. history last fall after incidents of random acceleration resulting in fatalities, has just announced [an additional recall of 2.3 million vehicles to correct sticking accelerator pedals](#). The recall was announced late Thursday afternoon, after ABC News informed the company that the latest in a long series of ABC News investigative reports into sudden unexplained acceleration in Toyotas was about to air.

Safety expert Sean Kane tells ABC News that since last fall, when Toyota said it had solved the acceleration problem with proposed changes to gas pedals and a recall of 4.2 million cars with suspect floor mats, more than 60 new cases of [runaway Toyotas](#) have been reported. He believes this latest recall may still not be a complete fix of a problem that continues to be linked with serious accidents and deaths.

In the most tragic incident, on the day after Christmas, four people died in Southlake, [Texas](#), a suburb of Dallas, when a 2008 [Toyota](#) sped off the road, through a fence and landed upside down in a pond. The car's [floor mats](#) were found in the trunk of the [car](#), where owners had been advised to put them as part of the recall.

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"There's one thing that didn't cause the accident," said Southlake police spokesman Lt. Ben Brown.

Federal safety investigators have joined in the investigation, according to Lt. Brown.

Toyota executives had insisted in November that the recall of the floor mats in certain models and a proposed redesign of the [accelerator](#) pedal would fix the problem.

Reports of possible electronic problems or on-board computer glitches were strongly denied by the Toyota executives. "There is no evidence to support these theories," said Bob Daly, a Toyota executive.

But the continued reports of runaway Toyotas since the November recall have shaken the company's firm denials.

In another case, in New Jersey, a Toyota owner was able to make it to a local dealer with his car racing out of control, even though his foot was not on the gas pedal and the floor mats were not involved.

Kevin Haggerty, a salesman from Pittstown, New Jersey, said he had seen an ABCNews.com report

about how to control a car experiencing unexpected acceleration -- by shifting into neutral.

With his brakes smoking, and the engine racing, Haggerty summoned a Toyota manager to witness what was happening with his car.

Haggerty says after consulting with Toyota, the local dealer replaced the gas pedal and throttle and their sensors.

[READ HOW HAGGERTY BROUGHT HIS RUNAWAY TOYOTA UNDER CONTROL HERE](#)

'A Real Breakthrough Case'

"We now have that evidence right in front of Toyota, they're witnessing it and they can't walk away from it," said safety analyst [Kane](#), who is with the private firm [Safety Research & Strategies](#) .

"The Haggerty case is a real breakthrough case," he said. "It's a real problem and it points to electronic defects in the vehicle."

Dozens of other Toyota owners had made similar claims about electronic problems with their cars, unconnected to floor mates, over the last few years, but they were routinely dismissed by Toyota as unfounded.

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The latest recall, announced Thursday, affects the RAV4, Corolla, and Matrix models from 2009 and 2010, Avalons from model years 2005 to 2010, Camrys from 2007 to 2010, the 2010 Highlander, the 2007 to 2010 Tundra and the 2008 to 2010 Sequoias. About 1.7 million of the vehicles cited are also affected by the earlier recall.

The company says this action is separate from fall's recall of 4.2 million cars to replace floor mats and alter accelerator pedals. The company had blamed floor mats for many of the acceleration incidents. An ABC News investigation, however, found that many drivers and safety experts rejected this explanation, asking instead if there was an issue with the electronic components that control acceleration.

Toyota says the recall of the "sticking gas pedals" covers Haggerty's problem, but he says his gas pedal was never stuck.

In its statements, Toyota does not claim the "sticking gas pedal" recall is a complete fix and says it will continue to investigate other incidents of unwanted acceleration, including those cited by ABC News.

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