

Toyota's Recall Nightmare Continues to Expand

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On Wednesday, Jan. 27, Toyota expanded its defective accelerator recall further, adding another 1.3 millions cars to the massive effort. When added up, the total recall now includes almost 6 million Toyota cars and trucks. The danger to drivers of Toyota cars is not immediately apparent, but has millions of motorists concerned.

In the original recall, the models affected were: the 2009-2010 RAV4, all 2009-2010 Corollas, all 2009-2010 Matrix models, the 2005-2010 Avalon, some models for the 2007-2010 Camry, the 2010 Highlander, all 2007-2010 Tundras and all 2008-2010 Sequoia.

In the Wednesday announcement, Toyota added another five models to the recall – the 2008-2010 Highlander, the 2009-2010 Corolla, the 2009-2010 Venza, the 2009-2010 Matrix and the 2009-2010 Pontiac Vibe.

The giant automaker, number two in the U.S. and number one worldwide, has already ceased to sell the popular models until the problem is solved and corrected, leaving many dealerships in potential financial disasters. On Feb. 1 the manufacturer will shut down all production of the affected models in plants in the U.S and Canada.

The closing of 5 plants means more will be added to the ranks of the unemployed, however brief that unemployment might last. The effort has become the most massive recall in automotive history, affecting millions of Americans and motorists around the world.

Consider the fact that Toyota models are, in many areas, the leading seller, the spillover from plant closures and recalls could be disastrous for many local economies, creating even more layoffs and higher levels of unemployment.

Toyota's Division GM, Bob Carter indicated that the company is trying to correct the situation as quickly as possible. However, there are some who report that the problem remains a mystery with the giant automaker.

In order to aid those who drive the affected vehicles, the manufacturer has offered up some Q & As which appear below:

What is the condition that has prompted Toyota to take this action?

In rare instances, there is a possibility that certain accelerator pedal mechanisms may, mechanically stick in a partially depressed position or return slowly to the idle position.

What is the likelihood that my vehicle will experience this condition?

The incidence of this condition is rare and occurs gradually over a period time. It can occur when the pedal mechanism becomes worn and, in certain conditions, the accelerator pedal may become harder to depress, slower to return or, in the worst case, stuck in a partially depressed position.

What should I do if I believe my vehicle is affected by this condition?, i.e. I have noticed that my accelerator pedal is hard to depress, slow to return or is unsmooth during operation.

The vehicle should be driven to the nearest safe location, the engine shut off and a Toyota dealer contacted for assistance.

What if you experience a sticking accelerator pedal while driving?

Each circumstance may vary, and drivers must use their best judgment, but Toyota recommends taking one of following actions:

- If you need to stop immediately, the vehicle can be controlled by stepping on the brake pedal with both feet using firm and steady pressure. Do not pump the brake pedal as it will deplete the vacuum utilized for the power brake assist.
- Shift the transmission gear selector to the Neutral (N) position and use the brakes to make a controlled stop at the side of the road and turn off the engine.