

Toyota Sudden Acceleration Background & Timeline Of NHTSA Actions

Timeline of Events:

2000

- *December 31, 2000:* ODI received approximately 49,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2000, about 1,200 of which (2%) may have alleged UIA^{1,2}.
- Toyota accounted for approximately 4% of VOQs alleging UIA. (Note that this is a percentage of the VOQ reports submitted, not a normalized rate based on vehicle sales.)

2001

- *December 31, 2001:* ODI received approximately 44,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2001, about 1,200 of which (3%) may have alleged UIA.
- Toyota accounted for approximately 5% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2002

- *May 13, 2003:* First VOQ received that is later considered within DP04-003 and PE04-021.
- *December 31, 2002:* ODI received approximately 42,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2002, about 1,200 of which (3%) may have alleged UIA.
- Toyota accounted for approximately 6% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2003

- *May 13, 2003:* NHTSA petitioned to examine “Unintended engine speed increase / Sudden Acceleration” in the 1997 – 2000 Lexus LS and GS 400.
- *July 17, 2003:* NHTSA begins a defect petition review (DP03-003).
- *September 23, 2003:* NHTSA denies DP03-003 on the basis that no evidence of a safety defect trend in either the complaint data or its follow-up.

¹ The term “Unintended Acceleration” as currently used covers a wide spectrum of conditions and covers incidents that include but are not limited to low speed incidents in parking lots, engine “surging” while on the highway, and stuck throttle / accelerator pedal incidents.

² Consumer complaints to ODI, or VOQs, are not marked with condition codes. Rather, they are associated with vehicle components. For the purposes of placing numbers in this report, a keyword search was conducted to identify the VOQ likeliest to allege a UIA. Please note that this search will include other unrelated drivability concerns and that truly verifying which VOQs report UIAs (and classifying them by UIA type) would require an extensive review of each record and additional follow-up with the owner.

- *November 10, 2003*: Ms. Carol Mathews of Rockville, MD, experiences a crash while parking her car. Ms. Mathews would later petition NHTSA to investigate Vehicle Speed Control issues on the Lexus ES300 model.
- *December 31, 2003*: ODI received approximately 45,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2003, about 1,400 of which (3%) may have alleged UIA.
- Toyota accounted for approximately 7% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2004

- *January 27, 2004*: Fatal crash (December 25, 2003) involving a 1989 Camry (ODI 10055020) reported to ODI.
- *February 17, 2004*: NHTSA begins a defect petition review (DP04-003) to review Throttle Control Malfunction.
 - 2002 – 2003 Lexus ES 300; 37 VOQs with 4 crashes; no injuries or deaths.
 - NHTSA determined that 34 of the VOQs were not pertinent to the requested investigation.
- *March 4, 2004*: NHTSA opens PE04-021 based in part on DP04-003 and on other consumer complaints identified by its screening activity.
- *March 31, 2004*: Fatal crash (on March 16, 2004) involving a 2003 Camry (ODI 10065362) reported to ODI.
- *April 9, 2004*: Fatal crash (on January 22, 2004) involving a 2002 Camry (ODI 10065859) reported to ODI.
- *April 13, 2004*: USA Today article (Technology puts unintended acceleration back in spotlight) published.
- *May 14, 2004*: Fatal crash (on September 4, 2003) involving a 2002 Camry (ODI 1072605) reported to ODI.
- *May 26, 2004*: Fatal crash (on May 14, 2004) involving a 2002 Camry (ODI 10073168) reported to ODI.
- *May 29, 2004*: Fatal crash (on March 14, 2004) involving a 2004 Camry (ODI 10074472 and ODI 10171110) reported to ODI.
- *June 24, 2004*: NHTSA-Toyota technical meeting concerning Toyota's electronic throttle control design
 - NHTSA examined sample parts provided by Toyota
 - Toyota presented history of Toyotas ETC systems
 - NHTSA test drove vehicle outfitted with oscilloscope (to monitor ETC system circuits) and a circuit interrupt device (To allow simulation of component or circuit failure)
- *July 2, 2004*: First EWR field report received that is later found within scope of PE08-025/EA08-014 (Sienna trim panel / accelerator pedal interference).
- *July 22, 2004*: NHTSA closes PE04-021 without the identification of a defect trend.
 - At closing, NHTSA identified a total of 20 unique vehicles and 2 crashes which may have related to a loss of throttle control but could not identify a vehicle based cause.
- *September 24, 2004*: Fatal crash (on March 15, 2004) involving a 2003 Camry (ODI 10094578) reported to ODI.

- *December 31, 2004:* ODI received approximately 49,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2004, almost 2,000 of which (4%) may have alleged UIA.
 - Toyota accounted for approximately 20% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2005

- *July 1, 2005:* Mr. Jordan Ziprin of Phoenix, AZ experienced a crash while backing out of a driveway he was parked in. Mr. Ziprin would later petition the agency to investigate the ETC system, which he alleged was the cause of the crash.
- *August 4, 2005:* First VOQ (ODI 10127521, from Mr. Ziprin) received that is later found within the scope of DP05-002.
- *August 5, 2005:* NHTSA begins a defect petition review (DP05-002) to review concerns for vehicle speed control, electronic throttle, and uncontrollable acceleration problems.
 - 2002 to 2005 Toyota Camry, Solara, and Lexus ES models
 - The petitioner subsequently revised the focus of the investigation to include interrelated brake and acceleration issues that allegedly result in inappropriate and uncontrollable vehicle accelerations due to the ETC system.
- *October 5, 2005 –* ODI inspection of DP05-002 petitioner's vehicle (VIN# JTDBF30K420041826), Phoenix Arizona – At the time of inspection the vehicle's mileage was 20,544. The vehicle was inspected both visually and electronically for mechanical or electrical abnormalities. The vehicle was driven (58 miles) no faults or defects were discovered. All vehicle systems; engine, steering, braking, throttle control performed normally.
- *October 26, 2005 –* ODI inspection of vehicle belonging to ODI#10139786, vehicle located at repair shop in Falls Church VA. The vehicle (VIN# [REDACTED]) with mileage of 18,658 and date of manufacture 02/02. Damage was consistent with that described by complainant, approx. \$3,000. Both a visual and operational inspection were conducted. The vehicle operated normally and no abnormalities were observed. In addition a wide open throttle and brake override test was conducted. The brakes restrained the vehicle from moving.
- *December 31, 2005:* ODI received approximately 40,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2005, almost 1,700 of which (4%) may have alleged UIA.
 - Toyota accounted for approximately 14% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2006

- *January 5, 2006:* NHTSA denies DP05-002 on the basis that, in spite of the effort expended, it did not identify any vehicle-based cause to explain the reports, or uncover any evidence to indicate that a throttle control system failure occurred.
- *July 13, 2006:* Toyota notifies NHTSA that it will conduct Uninfluenced Recall 06V253
 - 367,000 Highlander, RX330, and RX400h vehicles in various trims to remedy floor carpet retaining clips which may prevent the accelerator pedal from returning to idle.
- *September 14, 2006:* NHTSA opens DP06-003 based on allegations of short duration (1 to 2 second) engine speed increases without accelerator application on a number (6 to 8) of occasions.
 - 2002 – 2006 Toyota Camry and Solara vehicles.

- The Petitioner reported experiencing this condition in two different Camry's vehicles he had owned.
- *October 3, 2006*: NHTSA conducts an inspection of the subject vehicle in DP06-003 in Raleigh, NC and made arrangements through the local dealership and Toyota to have a suspect throttle body returned to the manufacturer for assessment. No issues were identified with the vehicle or the removed throttle body.
- *December 11, 2006*: First crash that is later found within the scope of PE07-016 / EA07-010 is received.
- *December 31, 2006*: ODI received approximately 30,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2006, almost 1,300 of which (4%) may have alleged UIA.
 - Toyota accounted for approximately 17% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2007

- *March 29, 2007*: NHTSA opens preliminary investigation into pedal entrapment concern on MY '07 Lexus ES350 models
 - Based on 5 consumer complaints alleging 3 crashes and 7 injuries
 - Accessory all weather floor mat identified as the possible cause
- *March 29 – July 26*: During the preliminary investigation, NHTSA, among other things, interviewed consumers, obtained information from the manufacturer and inspected incident vehicles.
- *July 26, 2007*: Fatal crash in San Jose, CA involving a 2007 Camry in which the driver suffers serious injuries and the driver of the struck vehicle is killed.
 - ODI learned about this crash via a news alert and dispatched NHTSA's Special Crash Investigations Team to the crash site,
- *August 8, 2007*: NHTSA upgrades investigation to Engineering Analysis, conducting additional technical analyses and discussions and meeting with Toyota on various technical issues related to the investigation
- *September 13, 2007*: After determining that the fatal San Jose crash to be caused by floor mat entrapment NHTSA meets with Toyota to tell them a recall is necessary, including the Camry model despite its not being in the scope of the investigation.
- *September 14, 2007*: NHTSA receives the first EWR field report later found within the scope of PE07-016/EA07-010.
- *September 26, 2007*: Toyota announces recall of all weather floor mats
 - Toyota recalled 55k accessory floor mats for MY '07 – 08 Camry and ES350
- *September 26, 2007*: NHTSA issues Consumer Advisory warning Toyota owners and all consumers to remove or properly secure floor mats, and closes first investigation following identification of defect and announcement Toyota recall.
- *December 31, 2007*: ODI received approximately 33,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2007, almost 1,300 of which (4%) may have alleged UIA.
 - Toyota accounted for approximately 23% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2008

- *January 5, 2008*: Mr. William Kronholm of Helena, Montana experiences two incidents of unintended acceleration in his 2006 Toyota Tacoma while returning from a ski event. Mr Kronholm would later petition NHTSA to investigate the cause of these incidents.
- *January 31, 2008*: NHTSA opens DP08-001 for vehicle acceleration without accelerator pedal application as alleged by Mr. Kronholm.
 - 2006 – 2007 Toyota Tacoma pickups
 - Mr Kronholm cites his research showing that the Tacoma is overrepresented in NHTSA's VOQ database.
- *February 21, 2008*: Fatal crash (on February 20, 2008) involving a 2007 Tundra (ODI 10218762) reported to ODI.
- *April 10, 2008*: ODI opens PE08-025 to investigate allegations of unwanted acceleration due to trim panel interference based on one VOQ report and one EWR field report.
 - 2004 Toyota Sienna van
- *May 12, 2008*: Fatal crash (on April 19, 2008) involving a 2005 Camry (ODI 10228389) reported to ODI.
- *July 16, 2008*: NHTSA and Toyota meeting related to Sienna investigation
 - Revision of the trim panel design and level of throttle entrapment demonstrated
- *August 8, 2008*: NHTSA upgrades PE08-025 to EA08-014.
- *September 2, 2008*: Fatal crash (on August 26, 2008) involving a 2006 ES330 (ODI 10240599) reported to ODI.
- *October 14, 2008*: NHTSA and Toyota management meeting to review the Sienna investigation
- *December 31, 2008*: ODI received approximately 37,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2008, almost 1,400 of which (4%) may have alleged UIA.
 - Toyota accounted for approximately 17% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2009

- *January 15, 2009*: Toyota notifies NHTSA that it will conduct Recall 09V023 to resolve EA08-014.
 - 26,501 MY 2004 Sienna vehicles to remedy the trim panel issue that may prevent the accelerator pedal from returning to idle.
- *January 26, 2009*: NHTSA closes EA08-014
- *March 12, 2009*: ODI receives the first VOQ later found to relate to DP09-001.
- *April 9, 2009*: ODI opens DP09-001----
 - *May 1, 2009*: ODI and VRTC engineer met with Mr. Jeffrey Pepski petitioner of PD09-001 at Lexus of Wayzata in Wayzata, Minnesota.
 - Petitioner's vehicle (VIN [REDACTED]) 2007 Lexus ES350
 - Also in attendance was Mike Zarnecki-Field Technical Specialist from Lexus
 - Interviewed petitioner and test drove vehicle.
 - No functional abnormalities found during test drive
 - Note provided by Lexus show no fault codes were found
 - Toyota concluded incident caused by improper installation of floor mat.
- *August 28, 2009*: Fatal crash in Santee CA involving "loaner" 2009 ES350.

- NHTSA and CHP investigate the vehicle jointly beginning September 1, 2009
 - Incident vehicle had all weather floor mat from another Lexus product
 - Previous driver of loaner vehicle had reported entrapment incident to dealership
 - The incident was reported in ODI 10284881 on September 29, 2009
- *September 25, 2009*: Upon discovering that pedal entrapment is possibly involved with the crash and exploring all relevant data, NHTSA meets with Toyota to discuss the potential defect. At the conclusion of the meeting, NHTSA officials stated that they expected a recall to address what may be a defect in the pedal design, not just floor mats, and wanted to hear back from Toyota on September 28.
- *September 28, 2009*: Toyota meets with NHTSA to notify the agency that it would conduct a recall of the gas pedals.
- *October 5, 2009*: Toyota recalls 3.8 million vehicles for pedal entrapment by floor mat
 - Toyota sends interim letter sent to consumers to remove floor mats
 - Remedy involves gas pedal reconfiguration, floor pan/carpeting revisions, and 'brake pedal override' software for vehicles with keyless ignition
- *October 7, 2009*: NHTSA-Toyota meeting concerning accelerator pedal entrapment.
- *October 29, 2009*: NHTSA denies DP09-001.
- *November 4, 2009*: NHTSA issues a press release correcting inaccurate and misleading information put out by Toyota concerning the safety recall involving 3.8 million Toyota and Lexus vehicles. Toyota had incorrectly stated that NHTSA had reached a conclusion that "no defect exists." Toyota publicly apologizes.
- *November 9, 2009*: Fatal crash (on August 21, 2009) involving a 1996 Avalon (ODI 10291453) reported to ODI.
- *November 19, 2009*: Fatal crash (on May 27, 2009) involving a 2007 Camry (ODI 10292939) reported to ODI.
- *November 25, 2009*: Fatal crash (on April 9, 2007) involving a 2001 Avalon (ODI 10293580) reported to ODI.
- *November 25, 2009*: Fatal crash (on August 4, 2009) involving a 2005 Camry (ODI 10293494) reported to ODI.
- *December 9, 2009*: Fatal crash (on April 10, 2009) involving a 2006 IS250 (ODI 10295101) reported to ODI.
- *December 11, 2009*: Fatal crash (on April 12, 2008) involving a 2007 Camry (ODI 10295343) reported to ODI.
- *December 15, 2009*: NHTSA officials meet with Toyota executives in Japan to explain NHTSA's defect recall process and underscore Toyota's obligations under US law to find and report defects promptly. Toyota management in attendance at the meeting: Managing Officer Hiroyuki Yokoyama, Customer Quality Engineering Division General Manager Shinji Miyamoto, Assistant General Manager of Government Affairs Akihito Hayasaka, Customer Quality Engineering Division General Manager Hiroshi Hagiwara, and Christopher Santucci, Manager of Technical and Regulatory Affairs for Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
- NHTSA indicates that it expects improvement in their responsiveness in the future. Toyota committed to making these improvements.
- *December 29, 2009*: NHTSA learned via media coverage of a fatal incident involving four deaths in a 2008 Avalon in a residential area in Southlake, Texas.

- Late in the morning of December 26, 2009, the Avalon drove through a stop sign-controlled intersection, through a steel pipe fence to strike a tree, and then flip into a nearby pond.
- Because a complaint was not filed with ODI, this incident is not listed on the fatal incident list
- NHTSA engineers conducted a site visit on January 12, 2010.
- *December 31, 2009*: ODI received approximately 38,000 consumer complaints for all reasons during 2009, almost 2,000 of which (5%) may have alleged UIA.
 - Toyota accounted for approximately 33% of VOQs alleging UIA.

2010

- *January 7, 2010*: NHTSA-Toyota meeting and test drive to assess the operation and functionality of the “smart pedal” software modification on a Lexus ES model.
- *January 12, 2010*: Two NHTSA engineers met with the driver’s family in the Southlake and their counsel, local law enforcement, and a Toyota representative to examine the vehicle and collect data from its Event Data Recorder (EDR). The crash site was also examined and a witness was interviewed.
 - Forensic evidence indicated that the Avalon was traveling at approximately slightly more than 45 mph at the time of impact.
 - The vehicle had been traveling in a zone that had a speed limit posted at 30 mph.
 - A witness who had a perpendicular view to the vehicle account noted that the vehicle drove through the intersection with no apparent evasive action as it traversed the intersection, did not see illuminate brake lights, and saw no indications that it was accelerating.
 - Police accounts indicate that Mr. Hardy was familiar with the area, had a clean driving record, and had been experiencing seizures in the time leading up to the crash.
 - The carpeted floor mats were found in the trunk just after the crash.
 - No all weather mats were found in the vehicle.
 - Earlier in the life of the vehicle, Mr. Hardy had complained on occasion that the accelerator pedal would stick.
- *January 16, 2010*: Toyota informs NHTSA that CTS pedals may have a dangerous ‘sticking’ defect. NHTSA tells Toyota it wants an in-person meeting on January 19 to discuss everything they know about the CTS pedal
- *January 19, 2010*: NHTSA meets with Toyota representatives at DOT headquarters in Washington, DC on the sticky pedal issue, including President and COO of Toyota North America, Yoshimi Inaba, President and COO of Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc., James E. Lentz, and Group Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc., Christopher P. Reynolds. In the meeting, Toyota provides field reports on sticky pedal incidents. At the end of the meeting, NHTSA tells Toyota that it expects prompt action. Toyota calls several hours after the meeting to inform NHTSA they plan to issue a recall.
- *January 21, 2010*: Toyota notifies NHTSA that it will conduct Safety Recall 10V017
 - 2.3 million Toyota models and Pontiac Vibe to correct defect for sticky pedals
 - Recall affects Toyota models and Vibe w/CTS supplied pedals only

- Overlap of over a 1M vehicles with pedal entrapment recall
- *January 25, 2010:* NHTSA informs Toyota that they are legally obligated to stop selling their vehicles if they acknowledge a defect even if they do not have a remedy available.
- *January 26, 2010:* Toyota announces it is halting sales of 8 models as a result of the sticky pedal recall.
- *January 27, 2010:* At the urging of NHTSA to expand its pedal entrapment recall, Toyota agrees and announces recall of an additional 1.1 million vehicles
- *January 27, 2010:* Fatal crash (on October 13, 2009) involving a 2005 Highlander (ODI 10302616) reported to ODI.
- *January 28, 2010:* Toyota meets with NHTSA to review remedy plan and later that day, NHTSA informed Toyota that it had no objections to its remedy.
- *January 28, 2010:* Fatal crash (on September 28, 2009) involving a 2004 Solara (ODI 10303080) reported to ODI.
- *January 29, 2010:* NHTSA opens an investigation on the CTS accelerator pedals that were recalled. NHTSA sends CTS a formal request for information asking whether it sold the pedal to other vehicle manufacturers and when it discovered reports of failures about the pedal.
- *January 30, 2010:* Fatal crash (on January 26, 2010) involving a 2008 Tacoma (ODI 10303373) reported to ODI.
- *February 1, 2010:* NHTSA issues Consumer Advisory clarifying the differences between the two Toyota pedal recalls and advising consumers of actions they can take to ensure their safety.

Detailed Timeline

Description:

Supporting timeline in text form that covers responsive materials in greater detail and in chronological order.

Where appropriate, dates for the following items are included:

- First relevant complaint and crash;
- First relevant early warning reporting (EWR) field report;
- Investigation / petition opening and closing;
 - Includes counts of relevant consumer complaints and EWR field reports;
- NHTSA field visits; and
- NHTSA-Toyota meetings.

Contents:

DetailedTimeline.pdf (Adobe Acrobat)