



Toyota Knew of Throttle Problem Last Year

Written On January 26, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

Confirming some suspicions, and according to [USA Today](#), Toyota says it knew there were problems with accelerator-pedal assemblies from supplier CTS late last year, but not enough to warrant a recall. Here are excerpts from the article:

The automaker says it hurriedly announced last Thursday a planned recall of 2.3 million Toyotas, back to 2005 models, because the defect trend had picked up. "The quickness that this all came together is one reason why I don't have numbers" of complaints, the automaker's U.S. safety spokesman, John Hanson, says. "And why we don't have a fix."

The recall includes an unspecified number of 2009-10 Pontiac Vibes, designed and built by Toyota for General Motors' now- discontinued Pontiac brand. Vibe is similar to the Toyota Matrix that's part of the recall.

Hanson has said it could be weeks before Toyota determines a remedy and gets it approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Toyota says it has no direct reports of injuries or deaths. But the day Toyota announced the recall, [ABC News](#) broadcast a report, prepared before the recall announcement, linking the problem to four deaths.

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The car company says that the latest sticking-throttle recall is separate from one it announced in November. That one involved 4.3 million Toyota and Lexus models. Their gas pedals might get caught under floor mats and send the cars out of control.

“I think it’s questionable” whether the two recalls are separate, says Jesse Toprak, vice president of industry trends for TrueCar.com, an auto-pricing and industry-tracking site.

Toyota says 1.7 million vehicles are affected by both recalls. Toprak notes that Toyota first identified the previous recall as a floor mat issue, then said the accelerator pedals themselves were partly at fault. Now, most vehicles in the sticking-throttle recall announced Thursday also are involved in the November recall.

Toyota says drivers whose throttles stick open should shift into neutral, pull off the road and call a dealer. Dealers have been told to help on a “case-by-case basis,” until Toyota can fix the problem.

Toyota won’t say how much leeway dealers have — whether, for example, they can install new pedal assemblies, or provide long-term loaner cars until there is a recall remedy.

Toyota says the problem appears to be due to premature wear of some mechanical parts in the CTS throttle assemblies. Hanson says that means new vehicles should be risk-free, at least long enough for Toyota to come up with a fix.

Hanson says the first symptom of the latest throttle problem is when the gas pedal feels rough, instead of smooth, when the driver presses down. The next stage: The throttle pedal doesn’t return promptly when the driver lets off. Finally, the throttle sticks open even after the driver’s foot is removed.

Hanson says drivers should contact dealers if they experience the first step and not wait for the gas pedal to begin working sluggishly. “We don’t want that vehicle on the road, and we want to keep that owner mobile. We’ll do whatever we can on a case-by-case basis,” Hanson says.