



U.S. Starts Inquiry Into Prius Brake Problems

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Poor Toyota. The company finally comes up with a proposed solution to the sticking throttle problem, and now they have a brake problem with the hugely popular Prius model. Here are excerpts from an article in the [New York Times](#) about the Prius problems:

No sooner had Toyota dealerships begun to repair accelerator pedals on millions of recalled vehicles than the carmaker said it was considering yet another major recall, this time for problems with the brakes on its Prius hybrid.

Safety regulators in Washington said Thursday that they would open an investigation into the brakes on the 2010 Prius, which had been spared from the recall lists.

The announcement was made hours after Toyota acknowledged that it had identified a flaw in the car's antilock braking system and corrected it for Priuses built since late January. The car was redesigned for the 2010 model year.

Prius drivers have complained that the car momentarily loses the ability to brake when driven over a pothole or other uneven surface. Toyota said the issue was a result of the antilock brakes' trying to maintain tire traction. Official in Japan also said Friday that the carmaker was looking into the two other hybrids with the same braking system — the Lexus HS250h as well as a Japanese model, the Sai.

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Toyota officials in Japan said Friday that they were considering a recall but no decision had been made yet. If the recall does take place, it would affect at least 103,000 new Priuses in the United States and 176,000 in Japan. A recall in Europe would affect about 32,000 Priuses.

In opening the investigation into the Prius, the highway traffic safety agency said it had received 124 complaints about the brakes on 2010 Priuses. But by Thursday afternoon, its database listed nearly 300 complaints on that issue. Eight of them involved crashes — mostly into the rear of another car at a low speed — and two of the drivers said they had injured their necks.

“It corrects itself almost immediately, but there is that second when it feels like it isn’t going to stop,” one complainant wrote.

Toyota said the problem it identified in the Prius was unrelated to the recall in January of eight other models, totaling nearly 4.5 million vehicles, for accelerator pedals that could stick and the recall in November of 5.5 million vehicles with accelerator pedals that could become trapped under the floor mat. Priuses sold in the 2004 through 2009 model years are included in the floor mat recall, and some Toyota models are covered by both recalls.