



Toyota Seeks Solution to Floor Mat Issue

Written On October 1, 2009 By [Bob Kraft](#)

I've been writing here about the recall of Toyota and Lexus vehicles due to floor mat safety issues. Now we learn from the [Wheels blog](#) in the New York Times that Toyota is not planning to redesign the floor mats themselves, but is looking for a solution for those drivers who do have the accelerator get stuck under the floor mat. Until Toyota comes out with an official solution, here are some safety tips from the Wheels blog that you should keep in mind:



The accelerator of a Lexus stuck on a floor mat.

Toyota said its "consumer safety advisory" issued on Tuesday about floor mats possibly jamming the accelerator pedal would not result in the world's largest redesign of floor mats. Instead, the automaker was looking for a way to make sure the driver could overcome a stuck accelerator.

"This is not a floor-mat recall," said Brian Lyons, a Toyota spokesman. "We want to put in an on-vehicle countermeasure."

Toyota and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a warning on Tuesday to the owners of about 3.8 million Toyota and Lexus vehicles to remove the driver-side floor mat because it could jam the accelerator pedal.

Mr. Lyon said Toyota was looking at what the driver could do to control the vehicle if the accelerator pedal jammed.

“It is conceivable we could develop software so that if the gas pedal and brake pedal were hit at the same time, the brake pedal wins,” he said. “We have several ideas in mind.”

Toyota said the problem with the floor mats included optional or aftermarket mats that were placed on top of the standard mats; aftermarket mats that were too big for the vehicle or mats that were not connected to the two retaining hooks designed to keep the mats from moving forward, toward the brake and accelerator pedals.

The vehicles affected by the advisory were the:

- * 2007–10 Camry
- * 2005-10 Avalon
- * 2004-9 Prius
- * 2005-10 Tacoma
- * 2007-10 Tundra
- * 2007-10 ES350
- * 2006-10 IS 250 and IS 350

Meanwhile, Toyota’s advice for handling a stuck accelerator includes how to shut off the engine in a vehicle with a starter button. When the vehicle is moving, a quick push of the button won’t do it. The button must be held down for three seconds. Mr. Lyons said that was a safety feature to prevent the engine from being shut off accidentally if the button were brushed.

Here are the other steps Toyota recommends:

*If possible, pull back the floor mat and dislodge it from the accelerator pedal.

*If the floor mat cannot be dislodged, then firmly and steadily step on the brake pedal with both feet. Do not pump the brake pedal repeatedly because this will increase the effort required to slow the vehicle.

*Shift the transmission gear selector to the Neutral (N) position and use the brakes.

*If unable to put the vehicle in Neutral, turn the engine off, or to ACC. This will not cause loss of steering or braking control, but the power assist to these systems will be lost. Do not remove the ignition key because this will lock the steering wheel and make it impossible to turn.