

Troubling times ahead for Toyota

Major car manufacturer Toyota forced to recall defective automobiles

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Earlier this week, Toyota, an automotive icon of reliability, suffered a significant blow to its reputation and credibility, further compounding the already fragile state of the automotive manufacturing industry.

The seemingly invincible Japanese based company was forced to place recalls on nearly 2.3 million vehicles.

Additionally, the company halted the sale of eight of its different vehicle models. These models include: the Camry, Corolla, RAV4, Highlander and Tundra pickup.

The reason for the recalls and the sales halt is because of a manufacturing defect that causes vehicles to accelerate unexpectedly.

Initially, the company believed that the unintentional acceleration was being caused by unsecured floor-mats that would “pin” the accelerator down, causing the vehicle to speed up uncontrollably.

Now, however, the company has begun to assert that the undesired acceleration may actually be caused by a defect in the vehicle’s accelerator electronics assembly.

Safety Research and Strategies, a safety firm based in Massachusetts, has found over 2000 incidents of sudden unintentional acceleration in the companies vehicles, which may have caused up to 275 crashes, resulting in at least 18 fatalities over the

past decade.

The recall and sales halt puts the company, at least temporarily, in a financial pinch; the eight vehicles currently being halted from sale comprised 57% of the company’s total U.S. sales last year.

Toyota is scrambling to overcome this set-back. Although its reputation may have been damaged somewhat, history has proven that car companies are able to overcome such incidents, as was demonstrated by Ford when they ran into similar difficulties with the Explorer SUV.

However bleak the situation may appear, Bob Carter, vice-president of Toyota USA stated that, “Helping ensure the safety of our customers and restoring confidence in Toyota are very important.” Although speculation about the company’s future financial stability is rampant, only time will tell how this incident will affect the company’s status as an automotive powerhouse.

Below: A Toyota Tundra on the assembly line. The Tundras were one of the models being recalled by Toyota due to a manufacturing defect



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