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Toyota And Lexus Vehicles Are Unsafe

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By [Timothy D. Naegele\[1\]](#)

All Toyota-produced vehicles sold in the U.S. today—including Toyota

cars and trucks, and Lexus automobiles—are unsafe. It will take years before new models roll off the company’s assembly lines that are completely safe. Also, millions of Toyota vehicles are on American roads already that are unsafe to drive. Any recent-vintage Toyota product, model years 2002[2] and later, potentially can turn into a runaway vehicle at a moment’s notice. Driving one or being a passenger is like playing Russian roulette. Query whether Americans, especially young families with small children, will trust their lives to Toyota?

Tragically and irresponsibly, the company has lied for years and it is lying now. First, Toyota claimed it was a floor mat problem. Next, the problems were related to the accelerator pedal[3]; and on and on the company’s lies go. Toyota has had 10 years to investigate these issues, and determine and implement solutions, but its management has lied repeatedly and it is still doing it. The runaway vehicle safety problems, which are confronting the giant automaker, are of a magnitude equal to or greater than those that brought down the storied Firestone tire brand, and the same thing may happen to Toyota. Every American needs to read about runaway Toyota-produced vehicles. The facts are sobering.

After the sudden-acceleration problems surfaced in Toyota and Lexus vehicles, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said “more motorists have died in Toyota vehicles associated with sudden acceleration in the last decade than in cars made by all other manufacturers combined.”[4] Consumer advocate Ralph Nader’s trail-blazing and Herculean efforts helped launch the automobile safety movement. His speeches and writings on behalf of Americans (*see, e.g.*, “Unsafe at Any Speed”) helped expose and remedy auto safety defects. Today he believes: “[The NHTSA] is a broken agency that has to be rebuilt.”[5]

The Los Angeles Times’ fine investigative reporters have been shining light into the dark recesses of Toyota—notwithstanding the company’s massive cover-up that has spanned a decade so far.[6] Rather than attempt

to distill the wisdom contained in the Times' articles, the links to the most recent ones are set forth below. I encourage you to read them carefully now and in the future, especially if you are a current Toyota or Lexus owner, or someone who may be considering the purchase of such vehicles in the future. The life you save may be your own, or that of a friend or loved one, or even a total stranger who gets killed or injured by these vehicles.

The Times' brilliant—and hopefully prize-winning—team members deserve enormous public praise and professional recognition by their peers for the courage and talent that they have exhibited consistently in ferreting out the facts and writing about these critical issues. The newspaper's editors must be congratulated too, for having the guts to encourage and support the “Times Investigation.” One can barely imagine the staggering political, financial and other pressures that are being applied by Toyota to its critics in the media, in government, and in the private sector, as the company perpetuates its lies and massive cover-up[\[7\]](#)—despite the risks to Americans each and every day.[\[8\]](#)

- “Toyota found to keep tight lid on potential safety problems,” by Ken Bensinger and Ralph Vartabedian (December 23, 2009)[\[9\]](#)
- “Study: Toyota received most complaints about sudden acceleration,” by Ken Bensinger and Ralph Vartabedian (December 8, 2009)[\[10\]](#)
- “Toyota's acceleration issue,” editorial by the Los Angeles Times (December 5, 2009)[\[11\]](#)
- “Report inconclusive on floor mat's role in fatal Toyota crash,” by Ralph Vartabedian and Ken Bensinger (December 5, 2009)[\[12\]](#)
- “Toyota vehicles in another federal safety probe,” by Ken Bensinger and Ralph Vartabedian (December 5, 2009)[\[13\]](#)
- “Data point to Toyota's throttles, not floor mats,” by Ken Bensinger and Ralph Vartabedian (November 29, 2009)[\[14\]](#)
- “Toyota to fix ‘very dangerous’ gas pedal defects,” by Ken

- Bensinger and Ralph Vartabedian (November 26, 2009)[\[15\]](#)
- “Recall another blow to Toyota’s reputation,” by Martin Zimmerman (November 26, 2009)[\[16\]](#)
 - “Runaway Toyota cases ignored,” by Ralph Vartabedian and Ken Bensinger (November 8, 2009)[\[17\]](#)
 - “Toyota’s runaway-car worries may not stop at floor mats,” by Ralph Vartabedian and Ken Bensinger (October 18, 2009)[\[18\]](#)

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[\[2\]](#) *See, e.g.*, <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-throttle29-2009nov29,0,1231630,full.story>

[\[3\]](#) *See, e.g.*, http://www.latimes.com/business/la-112609-fi-toyota_inside-g,0,6391652.graphic

[\[4\]](#) *See* <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-highway-regulators31->

[2009dec31,0,3601262,full.story](http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota24-2009dec24,0,110267.story)

[5] *See id.*

[6] *See, e.g.*, <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota24-2009dec24,0,110267.story> (“A lawyer who sought to reopen 17 rollover claims says he cannot prove his case after reviewing documents allegedly showing that Toyota had hidden key evidence”); *see id.* (A former Toyota lawyer, Dimitrios P. Biller—who headed the automaker’s rollover litigation work for four and a half years—filed suit in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles against the automaker last summer, alleging that “it had engaged in a calculated scheme to hide evidence in product liability and personal injury cases,” and that “Toyota hid or destroyed evidence in roughly 300 rollover cases.”); <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-secrecy23-2009dec23,0,557792,full.story>

[7] *See, e.g.*, <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-highway-regulators31-2009dec31,0,3601262,full.story> (“When attorney Edgar Heiskell went to a Washington law office this month to depose a Toyota Motor Corp. executive, he said he was met by a virtual NHTSA alumni club now working for Toyota. It included at least two former agency attorneys and former defects investigator Christopher Santucci.”)

[8] *See also* <http://www.leftlanenews.com/nhtsa-reviewing-third-generation-toyota-prius-braking.html>;
http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money_co/2009/12/top-stories-new-toyota-probe-airbus-takes-on-boeing-airport-kiosks-go-high-tech.html

[9] *See* <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-secrecy23-2009dec23,0,557792,full.story>

[10] *See* <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-recall8-2009dec08,0,371465.story>

[11] See <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-toyota5-2009dec05,0,1844374.story> (“To turn off [an engine with a keyless ignition system] while moving, drivers must press the ‘on’ button for three seconds—a task that’s neither intuitive nor easy in a runaway vehicle”)

[12] See <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-fi-toyota-recall6-2009dec06,0,2913588.story>

[13] See <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-recall5-2009dec05,0,6012156.story>

[14] See <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-throttle29-2009nov29,0,1231630,full.story> (“[A]ccounts from motorists . . . , interviews with auto safety experts and a Times review of thousands of federal traffic safety incident reports all point to another potential cause: the electronic throttles that have replaced mechanical systems in recent years”)

[15] See <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-recall26-2009nov26,0,7792141,full.story>

[16] See <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-cost26-2009nov26,0,6652707,full.story>

[17] See <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-fi-toyota-recall8-2009nov08,0,2472257,full.story>

[18] See <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-toyota-recall18-2009oct18,0,2352642,full.story>

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