

## WEEKLY SAFETY TIP - 3/15/10 - STOPPING A TOYOTA HYBRID

Toyota hybrid vehicles have had a lot of news coverage lately due to a massive recall for an acceleration problem. It seems the gas pedal “sticks”, causing unwanted and very dangerous acceleration. These cars are also very popular, and are frequently used in company motor pools. If you don’t drive one of these cars, chances are you know someone who does.

A “runaway” vehicle is a frightening hazard. How do you stop it? We might think we should cut the engine, turn the key or put the vehicle in park. But all these actions might make things worse, not better. From both the Toyota Recall website and from a safety video produced by Consumer Reports (links to both are below), we get the following safety information.

1. **BRAKE HARD.** If your vehicle is accelerating and won’t slow down when you take your foot off the gas, step hard on the brake and don’t let up. Do not pump the brake, but keep constant, firm pressure on the brake pedal.
2. **PUT IT IN NEUTRAL.** With the engine running, change gears, putting it in neutral. This, with the continually applied brake, will start slowing the vehicle, but you will still be able to steer. Cutting the engine before it is in neutral might lock the steering mechanism.
3. **TURN IT OFF.** Once you have the vehicle slowed and have guided it to the shoulder of the road or a safe place, cut the engine to stop the vehicle.

How do you know if you can do these steps? Take the vehicle to a deserted parking lot, with little to no barriers or obstacles, and practice stopping using the previous steps. The Consumer Report video recommends that you practice putting the vehicle into neutral, as that is not something you do often and you will want to remember how to do it while you are distracted by the vehicle’s acceleration. The Toyota video demonstrates how to find neutral. We recommend you watch both.

We also recommend you forward this tip to your family and friends who might drive the Toyota hybrid vehicles in question. It’s a tip that just might save a life.

TOYOTA RECALL SAFETY VIDEO: <http://www.toyota.com/recall/videos/hybrid-vehicle-stopping-procedure.html>

CONSUMER REPORTS TOYOTA SAFETY VIDEO:  
<http://video.consumerreports.org/services/player/bcpid1886192484?bctid=4823486200>