

Center for Auto Safety

2001 S Street N.W., Suite 410
Washington, D.C. 20009
(802) 328-7700

March 31, 1986

Ms. Diane Steed, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

PETITION FOR DEFECT INVESTIGATION AND RECALL OF 1983-84 TOYOTA CAMRYS
FOR SUDDEN ACCELERATION

Dear Ms. Steed:

The Center has received seven reports of complaints and accidents caused by a sudden acceleration defect in the 1983 and 1984 Toyota Camry models. These are not complaints of mere mechanical nuisances, but serious reports of vehicles taking off wildly, only stopping by crashing into walls, or other cars. In one case the speed and force of the acceleration was so fierce that the Camry that accelerated had to be pryed off the vehicle it had run into.

Many of the Camry sudden acceleration complaints are quite graphic. Ms. Selma Grosser, of Newton, MA, has a case that is a perfect example. Ms. Grosser had pulled her 1984 Camry into her driveway, stopped, put the car in park, and got out to open her garage door. She opened the door and got back into the car. When back inside the car, Ms. Grosser put her foot on the brake, shifted into drive, and the car suddenly accelerated forward, shooting through the wall at the back of her garage, through her backyard, through her neighbor's six foot cedar fence, and into the neighbor's swimming pool.

By now, your office must be aware of the characteristics of a sudden acceleration accident. The Center first informed the Office of Defects Investigation of the potential for the Camrys to suddenly accelerate back in March of 1985. Since that time we have continued to receive complaints on the Camrys. One typical occurrence is that the car suddenly accelerates after shifting. The other is that the car accelerates while driving down a highway.

In light of the seven enclosed reports of sudden acceleration in the Camry models, and the prevalence of sudden acceleration complaints in Japanese cars in general, the Center requests that your office initiate a defect investigation leading to a recall of 1983 and 1984 Toyota Camry models for sudden acceleration.

Sincerely,

Kina Tins

860 4020015



U.S. Department
of Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

AUG - 7 1986

Ms. Nina Tristani
Vehicle Safety Staff
Center for Auto Safety
2001 S Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20009

NEF-12gdc
DP86-08

Dear Ms. Tristani:

This is in response to your petition of March 31, 1986, requesting that the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) commence a safety defect investigation of sudden vehicle acceleration in 1983 and 1984 model year Toyota Camry vehicles.

After receiving the petition, a search was made of the ODI data system which revealed eight reports concerning an alleged sudden vehicle acceleration in 1983 and 1984 model Toyota Camry vehicles. Three of those reports were also included in your petition. The Toyota Motor Corporation (Toyota) was contacted regarding this matter. In their response, Toyota has received seven consumer and field reports alleging a sudden vehicle acceleration. Four of the seven reports are the same as those submitted in your petition. There were a total of fourteen non-duplicated reports either received by ODI or supplied by Toyota and your center.

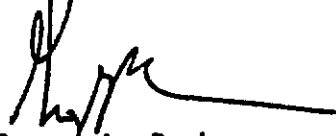
Toyota investigated six of the seven alleged sudden acceleration incidents and could not duplicate sudden vehicle acceleration on any of the vehicles. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration testing of components removed from a Camry which experienced alleged sudden acceleration also did not reveal any electrical or mechanical cause.

Based on the information available at the present time, the alleged failure symptoms concerning sudden vehicle acceleration without operator assistance apparently are not a common problem in the subject vehicles and many of the alleged incidents may have occurred due to human error. Therefore, we have determined that there is no reasonable possibility that an order concerning the notification and remedy of a safety related defect causing a sudden vehicle acceleration in 1983 and 1984 Camry vehicles would be issued at the conclusion of an investigation. For the above reasons, your petition is denied.



Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention, we will monitor this problem in case future reports merit further investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. L. Parker', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

George L. Parker
Associate Administrator
for Enforcement