

Product Quality and Service Support, Quality Compliance  
July 29, 2010

To: All Toyota Dealers  
From: Toyota Customer Services

Voluntary Safety Recall A0H – Preliminary Notification – Filing of Defect Information Report  
Certain 2000 through 2004 Model Year Avalon Vehicle – Steering Column Bracket

\*\*\*\*\*URGENT\*\*\*\*\*

On Thursday, July 29, 2010, Toyota will file a Defect Information Report (DIR) with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) informing the agency of our intent to conduct a voluntary Safety Recall on certain 2000 through 2004 model year Toyota Avalon vehicles:

**Condition**

- Due to the improper casting of the steering lock bar (“bar”), which is a component of the steering interlock system, there is a possibility that a minute crack may develop on the surface. Such a crack may expand over a long period of repeated lock and unlock operations, and eventually the bar could break. If this occurs, the interlock system may become difficult to unlock when stationary.
- If the vehicle, while being driven, is steered to the right with sufficient lateral acceleration, a broken and loose lock bar may move toward the steering shaft. If the engagement hole in the shaft happens to line up at the specific time the broken lock bar has moved, this could cause the steering wheel lock bar to engage, locking the steering wheel, and increasing the risk of a crash.

**Involved Vehicles**

- There are approximately 373,000 Avalon (2000 through 2004 model year) vehicles covered by this voluntary Safety Recall.

**Status**

- Toyota is currently preparing the remedy for this condition. We anticipate that the remedy will be available by late August, 2010. *Additional information (such as: Technical Instructions, Parts Ordering Information, Op. Codes, etc.) will be provided once the remedy is available.*
- Owners of the involved vehicles will begin receiving Safety Recall notifications by first class mail in late August. The owner notification will be phased over several months consistent with dealer capacity and parts availability.
- ***VINs will be loaded on TIS starting Thursday (7/29/2010) early afternoon (Pacific Standard Time).***
- Please thank customers for their patience as we prepare the remedy.
- A Q&A has been attached for your reference.

**Customer and Media Contacts**

- A Q&A has been attached for your use in the event you receive a customer contact. If a customer has further questions, please direct the inquiry to the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-800-331-4331.
- If you are a dealership associate and have any questions, please contact your District Service/Parts Manager.
- ***In the event you are contacted by the News media***, it is imperative that all media contacts (local and national) receive a consistent message. Please direct all media contacts to Brian Lyons (310) 468-2552 or John Hanson (310) 468-4718, in Toyota Corporate Communications. (Please do not provide these numbers to customers or call if you are a dealer associate. Please provide these contacts to only media associates.)



**Voluntary Safety Recall A0H  
Certain 2000 through 2004 Toyota Avalon  
Steering Column Bracket Q&A**

**Q1: What is the condition?**

A1: Due to the improper casting of the steering lock bar ("bar"), which is a component of the steering interlock system, there is a possibility that a minute crack may develop on the surface. Such a crack may expand over a long period of repeated lock and unlock operations, and eventually the bar could break. If this occurs, the interlock system may become difficult to unlock when stationary.

If the vehicle while being driven is steered to the right with sufficient lateral acceleration, a broken and loose lock bar may move toward the steering shaft. If the engagement hole in the shaft happens to line up at the specific time the broken lock bar has moved, this could cause the steering wheel lock bar to engage, locking the steering wheel, and increasing the risk of a crash.

**Q2: What is the cause of this condition?**

A2: The steering lock bar was improperly cast.

**Q3: Where is the steering lock bar located?**

A3: The steering lock bar is integrated into the ignition key cylinder.

**Q4: Which and how many vehicles are involved?**

A4: There are approximately 373,000 vehicles involved in the U.S.

**Q5: What is the production period of the vehicles covered by this Safety Recall?**

A5: The Avalon vehicles covered by this Safety Recall were produced from late April, 1999 through late December, 2004.

**Q6: Does this Safety Recall cover other Toyota/Lexus models?**

A6: There are no other models covered by this Safety Recall.

**Q7: How many cases have been reported?**

A7: There have been 6 cases of this condition lock bar breakage reported in the U.S.

**Q8: Have there been any reports of accidents?**

A8: There are three unconfirmed minor accidents alleged to be related to this condition. The accidents do not involve injuries.

**Q9: Are there any warnings that this condition has occurred?**

A9: No, there are no specific warnings that this condition exists.

**Q10: What is Toyota going to do?**

A10: Owners of the involved vehicles will receive a Safety Recall notification by first class mail beginning in late August, 2010. Toyota dealers will replace the Steering Column Bracket at **NO CHARGE** to the customer.

**Q11: How long will the repair take?**

A11: The repair will take approximately two hours. However, it may be necessary for the owner to make the vehicle available for a longer period of time depending upon the dealer's schedule.

**Q12: What if an owner has previously paid for repairs for this condition?**

A12: Owners that have previously paid for their steering column bracket to be replaced to address this specific condition should refer to the owner letter for reimbursement consideration instructions.

**Q13: Under what conditions does this occur most frequently?**

A13: This condition mostly occurs when the vehicle is parked, the steering wheel is turned to be locked and the ignition key is removed.

**Q14: What if an owner has additional questions or concerns?**

A14: Owners with questions or concerns are asked to please contact the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-888-270-9371 Monday through Friday, 5:00 am to 6:00 pm, or Saturday 7:00 am through 4:00 pm Pacific Standard Time.

# TOYOTA CUSTOMER SERVICES

## **INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

To: All Toyota Region General Managers/Vice Presidents  
From: Bob Waltz,  
Vice President, Product Quality and Service Support  
Subject: Voluntary Safety Recall AOH – Preliminary Notification  
Filing of Defect Information Report  
Certain 2000 through 2004 Toyota Avalon Vehicles  
Steering Column Bracket

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July 29, 2010  
TMS-NTC-10133

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### **Condition**

- Due to the improper casting of the steering lock bar ("bar"), which is a component of the steering interlock system, there is a possibility that a minute crack may develop on the surface. Such a crack may expand over a long period of repeated lock and unlock operations, and eventually the bar could break. If this occurs, the interlock system may become difficult to unlock when stationary.
- If the vehicle while being driven is steered to the right with sufficient lateral acceleration, a broken and loose lock bar may move toward the steering shaft. If the engagement hole in the shaft happens to line up at the specific time the broken lock bar has moved, this could cause the steering wheel lock bar to engage, locking the steering wheel, and increasing the risk of a crash.

### **Affected Vehicles**

- There are approximately 373,000 Avalon (2000 through 2004 model year) vehicles covered by this voluntary Safety Recall.

### **Status**

- Toyota is currently preparing the remedy for this condition. We anticipate that the remedy will be available by late August, 2010. *Additional information (such as: Technical Instructions, Parts Ordering Information, Op. Codes, etc.) will be provided once the remedy is available.*
- Owners of the involved vehicles will begin receiving Safety Recall notifications by first class mail in late August. The owner notification will be phased over several months consistent with dealer capacity and parts availability.
- **VINs will be loaded on TIS starting Thursday (7/29/2010) early afternoon (Pacific Standard Time).**
- Please thank customers for their patience as we prepare the remedy.
- The attached Dealer Daily Message will be sent to all dealerships, simultaneously with this communication, informing them of the DIR filing.
- A Q&A has been attached for your reference.

### **Media Contacts**

- It is imperative that all media contacts (local and national) receive a consistent message. In this regard, all media contacts must be directed to Brian Lyons (310) 468-2552, in Toyota Corporate Communications. (Please do not provide these numbers to customers. Please provide these contacts to only media associates.)

### **Customer Contacts**

- A Q&A has been attached for your use in the event you receive a customer contact. If a customer has further questions, please direct the inquiry to the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-800-331-4331.
- If you are a dealership associate and have any questions, please contact your District Service/Parts Manager.

Please review this preliminary notification with your staff to assure that all relevant personnel have been briefed regarding this subject.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Enclosures

Safety Recall A0H Preliminary Notice – R – Pages 2 of 2

cc: Region/Private Distributor Assistant General Managers  
Region/Private Distributor Customer Service Operations Managers  
Region/Private Distributor Service Managers/Directors/VPs  
Region/Private Distributor Parts Managers/Directors/VPs  
Region/Private Distributor Customer Services Field Managers  
Region/Private Distributor Technical Services and Training Managers  
Region/Private Distributor District Service and/or Parts Managers  
Region/Private Distributor Customer Relations Managers  
Region/Private Distributor PDC Managers  
Region/Private Distributor Field Technical Specialists  
Region/Private Distributor Service Training Specialists  
Region/Private Distributor Vehicle Operations Managers  
All NAPC General Managers  
All TMS Sales Administration Managers  
All TMS Product Quality & Service Support Managers  
All Field Product Engineers

G. Borst	N. Fein	K. Kusakawa	S. Sugawara
R. Broughman	F. Fontanella	M. Michels	M. Templin
G. Bryan	H. Fukui	T. Morrison	J. Tetherow
W. Burns	S. Haag	T. Nakagami	P. Turner
D. Camden	J. Hanson	D. Pettitt	P. Unbe
B. Carter	T. Hayakawa	R. Pflughaupt	K. Ura
G. Christoff	K. Higgins	C. Reynolds	A. Vaish
J. Colon	M. Hosoe	C. Roberts	R. Waltz
B. Cooper	C. Hostetter	D. Sakai	S. Yamaguchi
R. Daly	Y. Inaba	R. Sakakibara	M. Yamanami
F. Davidson	M. King	M. Setta	H. Yoshihashi
T. Doi	J. Lang	A. Smith	D. Zellers
D. Esmond	J. Lentz	R. Specht	
W. Fay	E. Matsuda	J. Stempkowski	



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