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Keep calm and carry on: how to deal with a stuck accelerator

As Toyota recalls millions of its cars due to accelerator problems, the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) today offers advice to drivers on what to do in event of an engineering malfunction.

Stephen Mead, IAM Assistant Chief Examiner, said: "Keep calm – surprisingly the perception of the average driver with a stuck accelerator is that they can't brake either, but this is a misconception brought on by panic.

"Press the brake firmly, then the clutch, disengaging the power. In an automatic, drivers should brake, wait for a reaction from the vehicle and then put the car into neutral. You can still steer, too, so a stuck accelerator isn't actually the disaster it sounds," added Mr Mead.

Look for somewhere to stop safely, indicate and make the manoeuvre as you would under normal circumstances. There will be loud revving in the background and you will probably be in a state of shock, but if you remain calm you can avoid serious danger."

Mr Mead offered this advice for owners of car models subject to recall: "Do look into getting a recall as soon as possible. Surprisingly few people actually approach manufacturers for recalls, which means the vehicles get sold on with the fault going unknown."

Accelerator Advice: Peter Rodger on BBC News 24 link - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8500693.stm>

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1. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) directly influences the driving and riding of more than 100,000 full members in the UK and Ireland. Established in 1956, the IAM is today best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving course, which is available to car, motorcycle and commercial licence holders. The IAM has grown to become the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to raising driving standards, engaging with the road-using public and influencing road safety policy. The commercial division of the IAM operates through occupational driver training companies IAM Fleet and Drive & Survive.

2. A 2006 report by Brunel University, following an 18 month study, concluded that "advanced driver training produces safer drivers and lower accident involvement", with measurable improvements in knowledge, skills and attitude..

3. In January 2007, the IAM Motoring Trust was established as the Policy and Research Division to undertake research, promote practical policies, act as an advocate for safer roads, safer drivers and safer vehicles and encourage responsible motoring through education and training.

