



Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.  
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May 24, 2016

Mr. Akio Toyoda  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Toyota Motor Corporation  
1 Toyota-Cho  
Toyota City  
Aichi Prefecture 471-8571  
Japan

[Akio.toyoda@toyota.co.jp](mailto:Akio.toyoda@toyota.co.jp)

Dear Mr. Toyoda,

On behalf of the Board of Directors with Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing ("TDI"), this is to express our serious concerns about a life and death issue and to give you some recommendations to address it. We encourage Toyota to initiate some safety measures for all its brand name Toyota and Lexus automotive offerings for its customers (including individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing) that live in America, Japan, and other countries.

Established in 1968, TDI was originally founded to promote distribution of TTYs in the deaf community across America, and to publish an annual international directory of TTY numbers. Today, it is an active national consumer advocacy organization focusing its energies and resources on addressing equal access issues in telecommunications, media, and information technology for four constituencies in deafness and hearing loss, specifically people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, late-deafened, or deaf-blind. Since 1997, TDI has made over 2,000 filings with a number of U.S. governmental agencies on issues that have great impact on us in areas of relay services, captioning of video programming, access to the Internet, emergency access, and captioning of movies on the plane, etc.

It has come to our attention that Wayne and Joan Flammer, a deaf couple from Madisonville, Ohio, died a few weeks ago from carbon monoxide poisoning. This was only because they didn't realize that their car, a Toyota RAV4 was left running in the garage. Their car had a keyless ignition system, whereby they only had to push the button to activate their car engine. We learned also that from 2009 to 2015, eighteen deaf and hard of hearing individuals in America have died from similar carbon monoxide poisoning accidents. Here is the link on the Madisonville, Ohio incident:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCrocyz7a0c>.

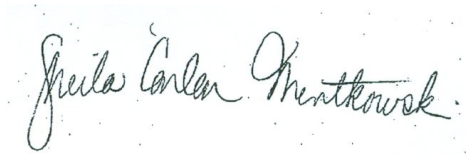
We feel strongly that there must be preventive measures taken by the automotive industry to avoid such incidents in the future. We believe that Toyota, with support from its engineering team, can come up with accessible means for all of its customers (including those who are deaf and hard of hearing) to have a positive, safe driving experience, as well as to have their unattended vehicles secure and safe at home.

Now that we have seat belts, and air bags that give us additional protection in event of accidents, it is logical to expect features available that alert us if we inadvertently leave the motor running. For example, if the engine is idling longer than five minutes in a stationary position, the car would signal by flashing the lights, inside and outside until the motor is turned off. This would be in parallel to the continued warnings via audio beeps and visual cues on the dashboard until our seat belts are fastened. Please incorporate similar safety measures for situations in which the motor is left running beyond a certain amount of time.

We commend Toyota on its recent efforts to make some of its models, particularly fully accessible vans for people with disabilities that use wheelchairs. <http://www.donringlertoyota.com/blog/2015/november/16/toyota-invests-big-money-in-robotics-and-accessibility.htm>. We sincerely hope Toyota will address our concerns and request by incorporating our suggestions into its accessibility and robotics program.

Thank you for giving this matter your serious consideration. We stand ready to work with Toyota and others on this topic. Please feel free to contact our Executive Director, Claude Stout anytime at this email address, [cstout@tdiforaccess.org](mailto:cstout@tdiforaccess.org). We are also sending a copy of this letter to the Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the Chief Executive Officers of a few other major automotive companies for their information and follow-up action. We ask that the automotive industry join Toyota in giving this issue the highest priority. We also welcome support for this proposed safety initiative from our government officials in Washington, D.C.

Sincerely,



Sheila Conlon-Mentkowski  
Board President  
Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI)

cc: Members of the TDI Board of Directors  
Claude Stout, Executive Director, TDI  
The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary, the U.S. Department of Transportation  
Mary Barra, Chief Executive Officer, General Motors Corporation  
Mark Fields, Chief Executive Officer, Ford Motor Company

Dieter Zetsche, Chief Executive Officer, Daimler AG  
Takahiro Hachigo, Chief Executive Officer, Honda Motor Company  
Chung Mong-koo, Chief Executive Officer, Hyundai Motor Group  
Harald Kruger, Chief Executive Officer, BMW  
Martin Lundstedt, Chief Executive Officer, Volvo Group Global