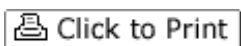




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# Driver: My Prius took me for a ride

## STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- "I pushed the gas pedal ... and it just stuck there," said Jim Sikes
- Sikes had to get help from the California Highway Patrol to stop his car
- A Toyota spokesman said the automaker had been notified of the incident

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**(CNN)** -- The driver of a Toyota Prius says he was taken on a wild ride Monday after the car's accelerator became stuck, reaching speeds in excess of 90 mph on a winding, hilly portion of a southern California interstate.

It took the California Highway Patrol to bring the car safely to a stop.

The driver, Jim Sikes, said he was traveling east on Interstate 8 outside of the San Diego area when he attempted to pass a slower vehicle.

"I pushed the gas pedal to pass a car, and it just did something kind of funny ... and it just stuck there," he said at a news conference outside a Highway Patrol office. "As I was going, I was trying the brakes ... and it just kept speeding up."

Sikes said he called 911 for help, and dispatchers talked him through instructions on how he might be able to stop the car. But nothing worked.

At one point, Sikes said he reached down to try to pull the accelerator up, but it "stayed right where it was."

Alerted by emergency dispatchers, a California Highway Patrol officer was able to catch up to Sikes' Prius and used the patrol car's public address system to instruct Sikes to apply the brakes and the emergency brake at the same time.

The tactic worked, and the car slowed to about 50 mph. Sikes said he was able to shut off the car, and it rolled to a stop. The responding officer, Todd Neibert, positioned his patrol car in front of the Prius as a precaution to prevent it from moving again.

Toyota recently issued widespread recalls due to problems related to the accelerator pedal in several of its auto models. One theory behind the sticky accelerators is the vehicles' floor mats.

But Sikes said "my mat was perfect. There was nothing wrong with my mat."

Sikes said he took his 2008 Prius into a local Toyota dealership about two weeks ago for service and gave workers there his recall notice. He said he was told his car wasn't on the recall list.

"I'll be back there tomorrow," he said Monday, visibly shaken up.

CHP spokesman Brian Pennings said the ordeal lasted just over 20 minutes.

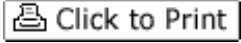
"We are extremely thankful that there was a safe end to this," Pennings said.

A Toyota spokesman issued a statement Monday night saying the automaker had been notified of the incident.

"Toyota has dispatched a field technical specialist to San Diego to investigate the report and offer assistance," the statement said.

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<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/03/08/california.runaway.prius/index.html?hpt=T2>



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