

How to cope with sudden unintended acceleration

Five steps that could save your life

Sudden unintended acceleration – in which your car races ahead even though you are not pressing the accelerator pedal – is a rare but potentially fatal event. Sometimes there are warning signs beforehand, such as the accelerator pedal being harder to depress, slower to return to its upper position, or simply not operating smoothly. Other times, the problem strikes without warning. If your car suffers sudden unintended acceleration, the Consumer Reports Auto Test Center recommends that you take these five steps that can help bring your runaway vehicle safely to a halt.



1 Brake firmly. Do not pump the brakes. Do not turn off the engine yet—because doing so would disable the power assist for your steering and brakes.



2 Shift the transmission into Neutral. Don't worry if the engine revs up alarmingly; most cars have rev-limiters to protect against damage.



3 Steer to a safe location and come to a full stop.



4 Shut off the engine with the transmission still in Neutral.



5 Finally, shift the transmission into Park or, with a manual transmission, set the emergency brake. Then breathe deep and call for help. Do not drive the car.

Memorize these steps to prepare for the rare chance that you might experience unintended acceleration. Better yet, practice them in a safe location at low speeds until you feel comfortable with them. They could save your life.

For more information online:

www.consumerreports.org/acceleration