

Toyota Recalls 82,200 Hybrid SUVs

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TOKYO (AP) — Toyota Motor Corp. said Wednesday it will recall about 82,200 hybrid SUVs in the U.S. due to computer boards with possible faulty wiring.

The car giant said the recall will involve Highlander and Lexus brand hybrid SUVs from its 2006 and 2007 lines. The action covers just the vehicles sold in the U.S., with no other models affected.

The recall is the latest setback for Toyota, which is just recovering from the earthquake and tsunami that devastated parts of Japan in March. The company earlier this month predicted annual profit will fall nearly a third due to recent production disruptions related to the disasters, though it expects a strong rebound in the coming months.

Wednesday's recall involves about 45,500 Highlander Hybrid and 36,700 Lexus Rx 400h vehicles, the company's U.S. subsidiary said in a press release.

Toyota said the affected vehicles' hybrid system has a computer board with inadequate soldering that could be damaged during high-load driving. If damage were to occur, the company said the vehicles would either continue to operate under reduced power for a short distance, or coast to a stop.

The automaker said it is working on obtaining replacement parts, and for now will notify owners of possibly faulty vehicles by mid-July.

Toyota was recovering from a series of recalls that soiled its reputation for safety and eventually reached 14 million vehicles worldwide when the natural disasters struck in March.

The company said last week it will hire 3,000 to 4,000 temporary workers in Japan to be ready for a recovery in vehicle production as automakers bounce back and revamp their operations.

Even with a recovery, Toyota is expected to lose its spot as the world's top-selling automaker to General Motors Co. this year because of the disasters.

Japanese automakers are also dealing with possible electricity shortages after the quake and tsunami destroyed a nuclear power plant in northeastern Japan.

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