



Home / Car news / Car safety

# Toyota may ban drivers from switching off safety tech in future in pursuit of "zero accidents" goal

2 weeks ago

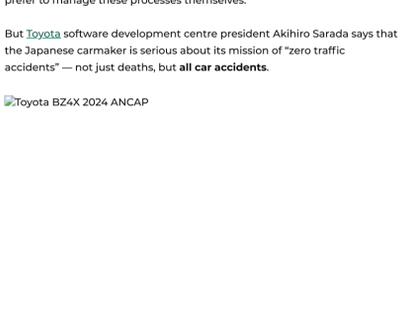


Tom Baker  
Founder

Combination of increasing government regulations and Toyota's goal of zero traffic accidents are forcing hard questions about turning safety technology off

Toyota's most senior software executive has revealed that the carmaker is considering **banning drivers from switching off vehicle safety features** in the future.

Government regulations normally shape the degree of strictness a carmaker imposes, and Australian and European safety regulations in recent years have started to impose various lane keeping, speed limit awareness and driver monitoring systems in cars.



At present, those systems can **typically be switched off** manually at the touch of a button or swipe of a screen, if the driver deems that they would prefer to manage these processes themselves.

But **Toyota** software development centre president Akihiro Sarada says that the Japanese carmaker is serious about its mission of "zero traffic accidents" — not just deaths, but **all car accidents**.

Toyota BZ4X 2024 ANCAP

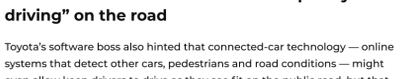
"Our ultimate goal is to eradicate all traffic accidents, and of course, autonomous driving is a technology that is necessary to realise a safe environment," said Sarada.

"We have to study and decide if we would enable an 'off' button."

## "Safety systems off" button possibly only for circuit use in future

Allowing drivers to operate the vehicle however they see fit, including by exceeding the speed limit or approaching lane markings to hit a corner apex, **may not be compatible** with achieving Toyota's goal of eliminating accidents.

Sarada said that Toyota was **considering allowing drivers to temporarily disable safety features** — or drive in the manner they see fit — in two environments: on roads where the car's software knows no other cars or pedestrians are around, and on the racetrack.



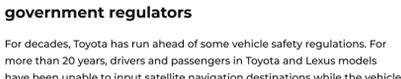
"If it is safe, for example, if it is on the circuit, [autonomous driving and sporty human driving] can co-exist," said Sarada.

"In the area[s] where drivers are able to have fun driving, then **we want them to have the discretion to decide the way they drive their cars**."

"We have to really study in detail whether or not it is really mandatory for us to control that detail, to the level where we have to forbid them to enjoy their driving."

## Connected-car tech could allow temporary "fun driving" on the road

Toyota's software boss also hinted that connected-car technology — online systems that detect other cars, pedestrians and road conditions — might even allow keen drivers to drive as they see fit on the public road, but that **warnings would kick in if risks increased**.



"Drivers want to have excitement in driving. By using connected data, they can receive announcements that under [certain] conditions they can have more fun, that right now it is safe, but several seconds later, [if] there is a risk [they can] receive a warning beforehand," Sarada explained.

But even this 'leniency' could, in theory, **stop a driver from disabling safety technologies** like lane-centring or speed limit controls on country roads if other cars, cyclists or particularly pedestrians are present in the area.

It's a balancing act within Toyota between departments like Sarada's — tasked with deploying software that reduces accidents, injury and death — and performance-arm GB, which must convince buyers that they should spend their cash on sporty, fun-to-drive cars.

## Safety decisions are up to both Toyota and government regulators

For decades, Toyota has run ahead of some vehicle safety regulations. For more than 20 years, drivers and passengers in Toyota and Lexus models have been unable to input satellite navigation destinations while the vehicle is in motion.

Toyota Corolla Cross Atmos 2025 interior 2



That's a common practice — often perceived as 'safer' to use while moving — but also often via simple touchscreen inputs.

In recent years other firms have followed Toyota's lead on blocking some touchscreen functions while the vehicle is in motion. The two key smartphone mirroring products, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, both **prevent most on-screen keyboard use while driving**.

European regulations have also started to encroach on touchscreen use via that continent's Advanced Driver Distraction Warning requirements, which will come into force for all new vehicles registered in the EU from July 2026.

Toyota Corolla Cross Atmos Hybrid 2022 drift close



Even in the EU, however, safety features — including speed warning, stability control and lane-keeping are typically allowed be switched off, though **all restart at the next vehicle ignition** and a driver would be held responsible for increasing the risk of a crash if a safety system is deactivated.

Typically, governments — including in Australia and Europe — issue broad guidelines for how safety features should work, leaving precise implementation decisions up to carmakers.

## Chasing more Toyota?



Toyota news & reviews

## Related reviews

- 6.0** a Yaris Cross Urban 2026  
Toyota Yaris Cross Urban 2026 review  
1 week ago
- 8.0** a Land Cruiser Prado 250 3ng term review  
Toyota Land Cruiser Prado 250 Series long term review  
1 week ago
- 6.0** a Yaris ZR 2026 review  
Toyota Yaris ZR 2026 review  
2 weeks ago
- 6.5** a Kluger Gr 2026 review  
Toyota Kluger Gr 2026 review  
1 month ago

## Related articles

- Mazda the biggest loser, BYD the biggest winner in Australia's first round of vehicle emissions results  
Mazda the biggest loser, BYD the biggest winner in Australia's first round of vehicle emissions...  
3 days ago
- 2027 Toyota Kluger revealed as a dedicated EV! Three-row SUV set to arrive to tackle Kia EV9 and Volvo EX90  
2027 Toyota Kluger revealed as a dedicated EV! Three-row SUV set to arrive to tackle Kia EV9 and...  
1 week ago
- New-car sales January 2026: Ford Ranger on top, Toyota still dominates despite dropping market share, PHEV sales surge and ICE plunges  
New-car sales January 2026: Ford Ranger on top, Toyota still dominates despite dropping...  
2 weeks ago
- Electric Toyota Kluger closer: Toyota teases large SUV to rival Kia EV9, Volvo EX90  
Electric Toyota Kluger closer: Toyota teases large SUV to rival...  
2 weeks ago

## Car buying guides

- Chinese car brands in Australia: From BYD to Zeekr, the new cars you can buy right now – and what's coming soon
- 2025 Ute payload guide (Australian market)
- 2025 Ute towing capacity guide (Australian market)
- Which new ute is the longest v Australia

[Back to the top](#)

Chasing Cars, Powered by Budget Direct

Australia's most independent car reviews

- [YouTube](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [RSS](#)

- Trending Reviews**
  - Kia Seltos Reviews
  - Subaru XV Reviews
  - Mitsubishi Outlander Reviews
  - MG ZS Reviews
  - Hyundai Kona Reviews
  - Hyundai Venue Reviews
  - Mazda CX-5 Reviews
  - Hyundai Tucson Reviews
  - Mazda CX-30 Reviews
  - Kia Sportage Reviews
- Reviews by Manufacturer**
  - MG Reviews
  - Haval Reviews
  - Skoda Reviews
  - GWM Reviews
  - Kia Reviews
  - Hyundai Reviews
  - Subaru Reviews
  - Isuzu Reviews
  - Mazda Reviews
  - Toyota Reviews
- Car Comparisons**
  - Car Guides**
  - Car Warranties**
  - About us
  - Contact us
  - Terms
  - Privacy