



Press Release

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Small cars are falling behind in crash avoidance technologies

Despite rising awareness of life saving crash avoidance technologies not enough cars have crucial eSafety systems fitted, according to eSafetyAware. Thousands of lives could be saved if these systems were more widely used.

Across the five biggest European markets, installation rates for eSafety systems such as anti-skid device Electronic Stability Control (ESC) are too low. In particular very few small cars have ESC installed as standard. In the mini class, the majority (83%) are sold without ESC, new figures show.

New cars today are much safer than they were 10-15 years ago thanks to improved crash test standards, crumple zones, seatbelts, and air bags which help protect occupants in a crash. Under the latest technological developments, so-called active safety systems can help prevent accidents from happening in the first place.

Devices such as ESC have the potential to save 4,000 lives and 100,000 injuries annually in Europe alone. In Germany, research shows that as much as €330 million could be saved by preventing small rear impact accidents and that almost three out of four rear impact accidents with injuries and fatalities could be avoided with the 100% introduction of Advanced Emergency Braking Systems.

Despite these findings, many businesses are allowing employees to drive company cars without eSafety systems. The result is that thousands of lives which could be saved, will be lost in preventable crashes, warns eSafetyAware. The problem is compounded by the fact that with company cars, duty of care features on only 28% of purchase policies, below other factors such as comfort, cost, and fuel economy.

The annual eSafety Challenge, where the research was presented, aims to increase the awareness of both policy makers and the public of the benefits of eSafety systems and their potential to save lives on road through their increased deployment.

Jean Todt, eSafety Aware President said:

“Huge work has gone into developing electronic safety systems that can have a major impact improving road safety. It’s particularly worrying that so many smaller cars which are often driven by families or young people are being sold without crucial life saving technologies such as ESC. We now must get these technologies into the market – people’s lives depend upon it.”

Mike Penning MP, UK under Secretary of State for Transport said:

“Britain has some of the safest roads in the world but we are committed to further improving road safety.

“Making the best use of new eSafety technologies is crucial if we are to continue to reduce the number of people killed and injured on the roads. The eSafety Challenge plays an important role in increasing awareness of these technologies around the world and it is an initiative we strongly support”.

Euro NCAP used the eSafety Challenge event to announce changes to its vehicle rating system making eSafety systems an essential component in achieving a high safety evaluation during its acclaimed crash-test. The new rating system will, for the first time, consider the safety potential of eSafety technologies. The new system is introduced to demonstrate the importance of all-round safety performance, and allow future inclusion of new emerging safety technologies set to revolutionise the future of road safety. The eSafety Challenge was a unique opportunity for Euro NCAP to present its new initiative and share this exciting development for the future of safer cars.

Notes to editors

Lewis Hamilton, Formula One 2008 World Champion and Tom Kristensen, eight-time winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans took part in the eSafety Challenge in Millbrook on 13 July to promote the advanced vehicle safety technologies. Both Lewis Hamilton and Tom Kristensen demonstrated the effectiveness of a range of innovative safety technologies including Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and Warning and Emergency Braking Systems.

eSafety refers to vehicle technologies that can assist the driver in an emergency situation and by providing vital information and warnings to help avoid the situation occurring. The systems improve car occupants’ safety, helping the driver make the right decisions and remain in control of the car by informing, advising and alerting the driver about dangerous situations.

eSafety takes an integrated approach: interactions between the driver, the vehicle and the road environment must be addressed together in the effort to increase road safety; all three of these factors are equally important in tackling the high number of deaths and injuries on roads worldwide.

The eSafety Challenge is an event co-funded by the European Commission, the FIA Foundation and eSafetyAware (39 organisations representing a wide range of automotive stakeholders). The key eSafety applications promoted by the eSafety Challenge are: Electronic Stability Control, Blind Spot Monitoring, Lane Support Systems, Speed Alert, Warning and Emergency Braking Systems, Adaptive Headlights

The data released is a combination of research by IMK, Continental, and Bosch on behalf of eSafetyAware.

For further information and to download the research please consult our internet site:
www.eSafetyChallenge.eu/en/2010