

Exposé

Going behind the story with the Chronicle Investigative Team

A clearer picture of how many vehicles have backup cameras

The Houston Chronicle, Thursday, October 3, 2013

The folks at Edmunds went back after our [last blog post](#) about misleading backup camera statistics and reanalyzed their data, offering a much more accurate picture of how widely available this technology really is.

The result: A little more than half of base vehicle models in 2013 offered cameras either as standard or optional equipment.

- 23 percent of base models offer cameras as standard equipment.
- 30 percent of base models offer cameras as optional equipment.

Of course, many of these base models with standard cameras are luxury vehicles. When you just look at vehicles with MSRPs below the national average of \$30,721, 72 percent did not offer cameras. About 18 percent offered it as an option, ranging in price from \$200 to \$5,600. Just 16 base models had standard cameras (less than 10 percent.)

The earlier Edmunds backup camera data, pushed by auto lobbyists and cited in major media outlets including the New York Times, reported that vehicle models offered cameras as standard or optional equipment if they were available at any of the model's trim levels. By that measure, nearly 80 percent of 2013 vehicle models offered cameras as optional or standard equipment.

The problem is that when a camera is bundled in a fancier trim package, buyers often end up paying thousands more. In the case of the Ford F-150, the \$24,000 base model does not offer a camera. It's optional starting with the XLT and Lariat trim packages, which start at \$29,400 MSRP (plus the price of the camera, which Ford declined to provide.) The cameras come standard in loaded trim packages starting at \$43,900 — a full \$20,000 more than the base. And some media outlets have glossed over the trim level issue altogether, just reporting the cameras were available as standard or optional on 80 percent of models.

Edmunds responded quickly after the Chronicle's earlier blog and crunched the new numbers for base models. "In the future, we'll take more time to consider the implications for consumers when we share such data with media," said Edmunds spokeswoman Stephanie Mar.

Edmunds' new method does away with the trim level confusion and gives the public a much better picture of how available these cameras really are. Kudos to them for taking the extra step to provide accurate information.

<http://blog.chron.com/expose/2013/10/a-clearer-picture-of-how-many-vehicles-have-backup-cameras/>