

[Safety](#)

Car backup camera rule delayed again by NHTSA

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has again postponed its final rule to expand rear visibility requirements in cars, in order to protect against deadly backover accidents. According to Secretary of



Transportation Ray LaHood, regulators have made significant progress, but further research and analysis is needed, so the final standards are now anticipated by December 31, 2012.

The rule is part of the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2007. Two-year-old Cameron Gulbransen was killed when his father accidentally backed over him in the family's driveway. The regulation is intended to address these dangerous blind zones behind vehicles that NHTSA estimates cause 292 deaths and 18,000 injuries each year, with children and elderly the most vulnerable. (Of those, 228 fatalities and 17,000 injuries are attributed to backover incidents involving passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds.) [KidsandCars](#), a nonprofit group that advocates for keeping

children safe around vehicles, says two children die and 50 are injured each week when a driver accidentally backs over them and 70 percent of the time the driver is a parent or relative.

Ami Gadhia, senior policy counsel for Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy arm of Consumer Reports, made the following statement today: "We have long championed a rule to improve visibility in and around cars. We're disappointed the government did not take final action today to address this problem, but we understand they are still on a path forward to issuing a rule this year. We hope that day comes as soon as possible so that rear visibility for all vehicles is improved and needless deaths and injuries are reduced."

According to the [New York Times](#), "Among the details that regulators want to resolve are how quickly a camera image must appear on the screen when the driver shifts the vehicle into reverse gear and the size of the area that must be shown."

We have seen in our tests that some vehicles have a longer-than-expected delay before the display shows the camera view, coming to life well after a driver may begin pulling out of a parking space.

The technology is estimated by NHTSA to cost consumers between \$159 and \$203 for a vehicle without a navigational screen. The price will drop to between \$58 and \$88 for those vehicles already equipped with a visual display, for a total cost estimate of \$1.9 billion to \$2.7 billion annually. According to a [separate report](#) by the New York Times, backup cameras are currently standard on 45 percent of vehicles and optional on 23 percent.

Besides helping to reduce the tragic deaths of those most vulnerable, the backup cameras would also help address the trend in reduced rearward [visibility](#) we have seen in recent years, which has further increased the risk of backover accidents.

With the technology becoming more cost-effective to add this life-saving feature, we feel the time is right to require it be added to all new vehicles, especially considering the advancing age of the driving population who can greatly benefit from the additional visibility. Further, as a feature used every time a driver puts the transmission into reverse, we think consumers will see the immediate benefit.

This additional safety feature is just another step in making vehicles as safe as possible. Check out the future of vehicle safety: vehicles that can communicate with each other in [our latest report](#). This next frontier in car safety promises to one day reduce up to 80 percent of non-impaired accidents.

Related:

[The danger of blind zones](#)

[Guide to kids and car safety](#)

—Liza Barth

<http://news.consumerreports.org/cars/2012/02/car-backup-camera-rule-delayed-again-by-nhtsa.html>