

## Mandatory rearview cameras in vehicles would help save children: An editorial

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Fifty children a week got run over, and roughly two died each week, during the past decade when drivers backing up their vehicles couldn't see them behind their cars. A 2008 federal law designed to prevent many of these tragedies required new rear visibility standards, possibly including rearview cameras on new models.



*Gerald Herbert, The Associated Press*

SUVs in general have some of the largest blind zones, but even sedans have blind zones behind them as well. The Obama administration has delayed issuing new rules, mandated in 2008, to require rearview cameras in all new vehicles.

But for more than a year the Obama administration has postponed issuing rules to phase in the camera requirement. [The latest delay came this week](#), when Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the rules, originally required by February 2011, won't be ready until the end of the year.

Mr. LaHood said further study "is important to ensure the most protective and efficient rule possible." But officials have had more than three years to complete a requirement that enjoys support from some auto manufacturers and consumer safety groups.

Rearview cameras, which project images from behind the vehicle to a screen on the dashboard or on the rearview mirror, are already standard in almost half of 2012 models and offered as an optional feature in a quarter of them. Large SUVs have the largest blind zones. But sedans have blind zones as well, some larger than small SUVs.

Requiring rearview cameras in all models would raise the cost of new vehicles between \$160 and \$200. But the cameras would prevent at least half of the deaths involving vehicles backing over people. The cameras also would prevent as many as 8,374 injuries per year, officials said.

A parent or other close relative is the driver in more than two thirds of cases involving the death of a child. Safety advocates call it the "bye-bye syndrome," when a child rushes out to wave to a driver without the person realizing it. The victims' predominant age is between 1 and 2 years old, making these deaths particularly wrenching for families.

The deaths of children have decreased as rearview cameras have become more common in recent years. According to KidsAndCars.org, which advocates for better vehicle safety standards, 124 children were killed in 2005, a figure that steadily declined to 66 in 2010.

But many more deaths and injuries could be prevented. That's why the government needs to finally put the camera requirement in effect.

[http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2012/03/mandatory\\_rearview\\_cameras\\_in.html](http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2012/03/mandatory_rearview_cameras_in.html)