

Law to reduce back-over deaths passed, delayed

By Scott MacFarlane Posted: 8:06 p.m. Tuesday, **March 12, 2013**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — It was just over a year ago that 2-year-old Autumn Danchanko was killed when she was run over by a truck in her family's driveway.

6 News first reported last week about the family's lawsuit against Ford Motor Company. They claim a back-up camera should have come standard on the truck and if it had, the accident wouldn't have happened.

Washington promised new regulations to better protect children from accidentally being backed over by large SUV's, but 6 News reporter Scott MacFarlane found out the agency has missed the deadline by two years.

Autumn Danchanko is just one of the recent victims. Her family calls it a "tragic accident."

Her uncle accidentally ran over and killed Autumn in his pickup truck in the family's driveway.

"I ran over to the garage and (my wife) was holding Autumn," said Eric Danchanko. "I had no idea what happened."

Reports 6 News reviewed show between 70 and 110 children are killed each year in so-called "back-over accidents."

Safety groups say popular pickups and SUV's have frighteningly large blind spots -- areas behind the rear bumper in which small children can't be seen.

This danger captured Congress' attention in 2007. And Congress responded by passing a sweeping new law, ordering the U.S. Transportation Department to approve new safety regulations to reduce back-overs by 2011 and to require drivers be given a better view behind their cars. And, that cars would have better mirrors, sensors or cameras.

After hearing about the Danchanko's lawsuit against Ford, 6 News checked and found a series of letters from the U.S. Transportation secretary delaying the new rule. He even acknowledged it pass a rule by the deadline of February 2011.

His spokeswoman said Monday the agency is still gathering data.

"This delay is unacceptable. It's been pending at the White House and we have the technology," said Jackie Gillan of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. "If you go into a showroom today you'll see most of the makes and models have these cameras."

Safety groups say more new cars are now equipped with new technology to reduce these accidents including cameras trained on the rear bumper and better mirrors.

Washington has been under orders to make better visibility mandatory or more available to all drivers and hasn't done so. And after questioning on Monday, it still won't say when it'll do so.

<http://www.wjactv.com/news/news/law-reduce-back-over-deaths-passed-delayed/nWqNk/>