

Watch out: Government delays backup camera rule, again

Liza Barth Jun 25, 2013 5:00 PM

A government rule that would require a backup camera to be standard on all new cars has been delayed a fourth time, now pushed to 2015.

The announcement came from Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in a letter to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D, WV). In a statement Rockefeller responded, "I am deeply disappointed by the Administration's foot dragging over a rule that could help save the lives of hundreds of young children and prevent thousands of heartbreaking injuries."

The initial rule was part of the 2007 Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act signed into law by President George W. Bush to mandate the safety feature on all vehicles starting with the 2014 model year. The act was named after two-year-old Cameron Gulbransen who was killed when his father accidentally backed over him in the family driveway. Back-over accidents injure an average of 50 children a week according to KidsandCars, an advocacy group that promotes child safety in and around vehicles.

The technology is estimated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (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.

Until the rule comes out, NHTSA wants to encourage increased adoption of these camera systems by including them as a recommended technology under its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).

As more vehicles are designed with low slopping roof-lines and small rear windows, a backup camera is fast-becoming a necessity--not just for spotting children behind vehicles, but for help with parallel parking, and backing up out of parking spaces. About half of the new vehicles on the market currently offer the feature as standard equipment. The cameras are a safety feature that you can appreciate every time you get behind the wheel. The focus for legislation has been child safety, of course, but it is truly a welcomed convenience that once experienced can be hard to live without.

Fortunately, some automakers have been integrating back up cameras in anticipation of this rule, and they have become almost commonplace--all the more reason for this rule to be finalized.

"These rules are long overdue. It's time to stop the delays and put these rules into place. Rear visibility and vehicle backovers are a serious problem, and consumers shouldn't have to wait any longer for the reforms that Congress asked for," said Ami Gadhia, senior policy counsel, Consumers Union.

When shopping for your next car, Consumer Reports highly recommends choosing one with a rear-view camera.

<http://news.consumerreports.org/cars/2013/06/watch-out-government-delays-backup-camera-rule-again.html>