

DID YOU KNOW???

ADVANCED SAFETY SYSTEMS GAIN DRIVER ACCEPTANCE

Rare is the driver that doesn't tailgate sometimes. Rare too is the driver that always checks behind the vehicle before backing. Equally rare is the driver that is paying 100 % attention to their driving and can react to a potential crash as fast as a computer.

An excellent article in the August, 2017, edition of Consumer Reports Magazine reports on driver acceptance of some of the newer safety features now available on many vehicles. This is good news since the latest car-safety technologies have the potential to significantly reduce crashes.

In a recent survey by Consumer Reports, more than 57,000 CR subscribers reported on the nearly 66,000 vehicles they own, with model years ranging from 2011 to 2017. The vehicles were equipped with safety features including automatic emergency braking (AEB), forward-collision warning (FCW), blind-spot warning (BSW), and lane-departure warning (LDW). Survey results show the majority of owners were very satisfied with the features. With most systems, more owners reported that the features had prevented crashes than complained about annoyance with audible warnings or false alerts.

Among the survey findings, blind-spot warning and rear cross-traffic warning received the highest satisfaction scores, at 83 percent each. Owners reported seeing the benefits of these systems on a daily basis, while drivers wouldn't necessarily appreciate the effectiveness of FCW or AEB until one or the other helped them avoid a collision.

Adaptive cruise control and lane-keeping assist were reported as least likely to prevent crashes, at 6 percent and 7 percent, respectively. However, adaptive cruise had a high degree of driver acceptance at 75 % stating they were "very satisfied". Many drivers do not use regular cruise control because they find they cannot drive with this feature for very long periods of time. However, adaptive cruise eliminates this reluctance as it controls your speed according to other traffic, reducing your speed when necessary and then resuming your pre-set speed when it is safe to do so.

Ninety-two percent of Tesla owners were very satisfied with their ACC system, the highest among all brands. An owner of a 2016 Tesla Model S said ACC makes driving much easier. "It is highly reliable and keeps me at a consistent, safe distance from the car in front of me. This makes the driving experience safer, less fatiguing, and more relaxing." Subaru holds the second spot at 82 percent very satisfied.

Consumer Reports believes that FCW and AEB should be standard equipment, even with occasional false alerts. The latest study from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) supports this: Rear-end crashes are cut by 27 percent when a vehicle has FCW and by 50 percent when it's also equipped with AEB. "All consumers should be able to benefit from these safety systems—not just those who can afford luxury cars or expensive extras," says William Wallace, a policy analyst for Consumers Union, the policy and mobilization arm of Consumer Reports. FCW is now available in 78 % of 2017 vehicles, up from only 34 % in 2013 model vehicles, according to CR magazine.

So, the next time you are in the market for a new vehicle, consider the advanced safety systems available – you'll be glad you did.