

DID YOU KNOW???

LANE DEPARTURE WARNING FEATURE LOWERS CRASH RATES

Thankfully new technology rapidly finding its way into our newer cars is significantly yielding benefits when it comes to preventing lane-change crashes. Many fatal crashes happen when drivers unintentionally stray from their lanes and run off the road or collide with another vehicle.

In the latest in a series of studies by Jessica Cicchino, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) vice president for research, indicate that *lane departure warning* lowers rates of single-vehicle, sideswipe and head-on crashes of all severities by 11 percent and lowers the rates of injury crashes of the same types by 21 percent. That means that if all passenger vehicles had been equipped with lane departure warning, nearly 85,000 police-reported crashes and more than 55,000 injuries would have been prevented in 2015, according to an article in the August, 2017 edition of "Status Report".

"This is the first evidence that lane departure warning is working to prevent crashes of passenger vehicles on U.S. roads," Cicchino says. "Given the large number of fatal crashes that involve unintentional lane departures, technology aimed at preventing them has the potential to save a lot of lives."

A friend of mine has a vehicle, a Hyundai Genesis F-80, with this technology and offered me a chance to recently drive it. It was great! The technology activates when a vehicle strays toward the center line or the fog line without the driver activating the turn signal. Some vehicles only sound an audible warning. However, my friend's car has no audible warning but rather does two things – vibrates the steering wheel and also nudges the steering wheel in the direction to put the vehicle back in the center portion of the lane the vehicle is in. Studies have shown that drivers often de-activate this safety feature when equipped with an audible warning, as it can become annoying; it also alerts passengers that the driver is perhaps not paying enough attention to the driving task, and this tends to irritate drivers.

Another feature that has the promise of making driving more pleasant is the *adaptive cruise control*. With this feature, the driver can set the cruise at a chosen speed, and if he/she comes upon a vehicle moving slower than the set cruise speed it slows the vehicle to follow the slower car and will even stop the vehicle should the car in front stop for any reason. Adaptive cruise has the potential to get drivers to use cruise control that have tended to avoid it.

When shopping for a new vehicle, one should certainly investigate what new technology the vehicle comes with, and if at all possible, go for the new safety features. It could save your life.

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