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Electronic Stability Control

(Tue 01 Jul 08)

There are mixed views on the progress of car manufacturers introducing ESC (electronic stability control, also known as ESP for electronic stability programme) to their vehicles.



ESC works by sensing when the car is about to skid and applying the brakes selectively to prevent it going off course. It's generally agreed that this is a good idea, and the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) has been saying that its members are introducing it to their products "relatively quickly" considering the time restraints.

ACEA also points out that ESC is by no means the only important safety innovation to have been introduced in recent years, and says that multiple airbags, seatbelt strengtheners and reminders, adaptive headlights, adaptive cruise control, blind spot monitoring and others have to be taken into account as well.

Euro NCAP, however, is critical of the rate of progress, and believes that ESC should be fitted as standard to all cars as soon as possible (rather than by 2014, as suggested by the European Commission) since this would reduce annual road deaths by 4000 and annual road injuries by 100,000.

Euro NCAP has praised Ford, Hyundai, Mazda and Mitsubishi for increasing the proportion of models fitted with ESC as standard, but criticised Kia and Vauxhall/Opel for doing exactly the opposite.

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