

Easier Motoring

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Disappointing results from Euro NCAP's ESC fitment survey

Today (8 May 2007) in Rome, the results of Euro NCAP's survey on Electronic Stability Control fitment are released, compelling Euro NCAP to call for manufacturers to fit ESC as standard to all cars. The EU wide survey places the UK, Netherlands, Greece, Malta and Ireland bottom of a country ranking with Denmark, Sweden and Germany topping the list. ESC can turn potentially serious accidents into near misses and could drastically reduce accident occurrence across Europe.

ESC first emerged some ten years ago and its safety benefits quickly became apparent. Several studies have now shown that cars fitted with ESC are less likely to be involved in accidents than those which are not. Estimates vary, but ESC could prevent around one death in five of car occupants, saving the lives of thousands of people every year across the European Union if fitted to all cars. ESC recognises when a skid is starting to happen. In a fraction of a second the electronic control unit applies the brakes at individual wheels, helping to keep the car under control before the skid develops. Whether the skid is the result of an emergency avoidance manoeuvre or a simple error of judgement, ESC can help a driver maintain control of the vehicle.

The results are released today in association with the launch of the new 'Choose ESC' Campaign, led by eSafetyAware! and under the patronage of the European Commission, with the goal of raising awareness of ESC. There are huge differences in the extent to which this crucial safety technology is offered to car-buyers across Europe. The Euro NCAP survey released at the Rome event shows that Denmark and Sweden come out top of the league with ESC broadly fitted as standard equipment. Malta and Ireland come out bottom of the table with extremely low levels of standard ESC fit, especially for superminis and small family cars. And the reasons for the disparity are not technical ones. Some models have ESC fitted as standard equipment in one country, yet it is not available, even as an option, in others.

In presenting the results, Euro NCAP's Secretary General Adrian Hobbs said 'We must all do what we can to raise awareness of ESC's importance. Car manufacturers respond to the demands of customers but customers will only demand ESC when they become aware of the benefits. The media and organisations such as fleet buyers can play a pivotal role in increasing this awareness and in helping to bring pressure to bear on manufacturers and distributors to fit ESC as standard on all new cars, in all countries.'

Euro NCAP and the new Choose ESC Campaign will do as the name of the Campaign implies: urge European motorists to choose a safety system that will help keep them and their families safe.

Euro NCAP's commitment to consumers ensures that test results are released as soon as possible. Keep checking our website for details of forthcoming results.