Addressing Deadly Rear-End Crashes

Forward Collision Avoidance Systems Can Save Lives

The Problem

- Between 2012 and 2014, almost half of all two-vehicle crashes were rear-end crashes. These crashes killed more than 1,700 people each year.

- In that same time frame, the NTSB investigated nine rear-end crashes involving a passenger or a commercial vehicle striking the rear of another vehicle, which killed 28 and injured 90 people.

- A 2007 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study showed that 87 percent of rear-end crashes involved a driver failing to attend to the traffic ahead.

The Solution

- Considerable research on forward collision avoidance systems (CAS) in both passenger and commercial vehicles has shown that these systems can prevent or mitigate rear-end crashes.

  - Forward CAS typically consist of (1) collision warning that alerts a driver of the impending crash, and (2) autonomous emergency braking (also known as “crash imminent braking”) that automatically applies brakes.

- NHTSA is recommending the use of forward CAS.

- Broad deployment of forward CAS in all vehicles is necessary to reduce the severity of rear-end crashes.

What You Can Do

- When purchasing a vehicle, consumers should consider vehicles equipped with collision warning and autonomous emergency braking. To find out which vehicles offer these features, go to NHTSA’s safercar.gov website.

- Commercial vehicle fleet owners should consider transitioning their fleets to vehicles equipped with collision warning and autonomous emergency braking.

For more information: See report NTSB/SIR-15/01, The Use of Forward Collision Avoidance Systems to Prevent and Mitigate Rear-End Crashes, on the NTSB website (www.ntsb.gov).

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