

Could new technologies help prevent traffic deaths?

Written by Australian Business

September 20, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Traffic accidents claimed more than 32,000 lives in the United States during 2011, according to an analysis by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Cellphone use and other forms of distracted driving played a role in just over 10 percent of those deaths and caused another 387,000 injuries that year.

Recently, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended the development and widespread implementation of vehicle-to-vehicle communication systems that would help prevent [traffic accidents](#) by detecting traffic hazards that drivers themselves may be unaware of. Vehicle manufacturers have joined in the effort and are currently testing a variety of new accident prevention technologies.

Communicating between cars

The NTSB's July 2013 recommendation applied specifically to a new safety communication system that the NTSB has been testing for the past year. The system allows vehicles to communicate with one another over wireless networks at a range of about 1,000 feet. By constantly trading information about each vehicle's speed, direction and location, the communication systems can help anticipate potential collisions and warn drivers about them in advance.

The car-to-car communication technology is expected to be particularly effective at preventing car accidents at intersections, where drivers are often less likely to be aware of an oncoming vehicle. According to federal data, intersection crashes resulted in nearly 87,000 traffic fatalities between 2002 and 2011, or about 22 percent of all traffic deaths during that time period. The NTSB recommends installing the systems in all newly manufactured vehicles and has asked the federal government to establish new safety standards for the technology.

Automation could protect pedestrians

Another experimental new safety feature, revealed recently by Honda, is specifically aimed at preventing [pedestrian accidents](#). The technology would allow vehicles to locate nearby pedestrians by detecting signals from their cellphones. The system would analyze the information obtained from these signals to determine the pedestrian's location, speed and potential distraction level to assess whether he or she is on a likely collision course with the vehicle.

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If a potential collision is detected, the system would notify the driver with a series of escalating signals to warn of pedestrian's presence and instruct the driver to brake. If the driver does not respond, the system can even initiate an automatic stop.

In 2011, a total of 4,432 pedestrians were killed in vehicle crashes, accounting for 14 percent of all traffic fatalities in the U.S. Honda is also developing similar systems to prevent collisions with motorcycles and other vehicles.

Get legal help after a crash

When someone is injured or killed in a traffic accident, the emotional and financial consequences can be enormous. In many cases, injured accident victims or their surviving family members are able to receive monetary compensation for the medical bills, lost wages and other damages that may occur as a result of a car accident. To learn more about the options that are available after someone is injured in a crash, get in touch with a knowledgeable personal injury lawyer.

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