

ROAD TO SAFETY

Daytime Running Lamps Cut Crashes

(NAPS)—It's a low-cost, effective way to reduce crashes. In fact, it is estimated that this technology has helped drivers avoid more than 750 pedestrian collisions, with children under the age of 12 accounting for nearly half of these avoided collisions. So what is this safety device? It's daytime running lamps (DRLs)—exterior front lamps that automatically illuminate when a vehicle is started—and they can increase vehicle visibility for other drivers and pedestrians in a variety of daytime conditions including fog, rain, dusk and bright sunlight.

Consider these real-world traffic safety statistics:

- 71 percent of all vehicle crashes involve two or more vehicles;
- 59 percent of multi-vehicle crashes are non-rear end crashes; and
- 74 percent of all crashes occur during daylight, dawn or dusk.

With these facts in mind, General Motors (GM), the world's largest vehicle manufacturer, began equipping vehicles with DRLs in 1995. They have been standard equipment on virtually all GM light-duty vehicles since 1997.

An independent study which reviewed police crash reports and vehicle registration data in 17 states, concluded that GM customers have avoided more than



One safety feature, daytime running lamps, cuts daytime multi-vehicle crashes up to 12.5 percent, car-pedestrian crashes by up to 15 percent.

37,000 crashes since the company introduced DRLs. These figures represent as much as a 12.5 percent reduction in daytime multi-vehicle crashes and up to a 15 percent reduction in vehicle-pedestrian crashes.

Several other studies, including those conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA); the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety; and European and Canadian transportation officials, also support the safety benefits of daytime running lamps. A NHTSA technical report released in 2000 found that DRLs reduced fatal single-vehicle pedestrian crashes by 28 percent.

This growing body of scientific

evidence is too great to ignore. Other automotive manufacturers agree and several have joined in offering daytime running lamps on their products.

"Daytime running lamps are a economical, effective way to reduce crashes," said Robert C. Lange, GM executive director, structure and safety integration. "Nearly all published reports indicate that DRLs reduce multiple-vehicle and pedestrian collisions, potentially saving lives and preventing thousands of injuries."

Running vehicle lights in the daytime does not significantly shorten bulb life. Most systems use high beams that are designated to operate at half their normal power during daylight hours, thereby conserving energy and fuel. DRLs reduce fuel economy only a fraction of a mile per gallon, depending on the type of system used. It's estimated the cost is about \$3 per year for the average driver—less than a penny a day. There were 4,808 traffic-related pedestrian deaths in 2002, according to NHTSA.

Cumulatively, NHTSA estimates motor vehicle crashes cost society \$230.6 billion a year, about \$820 per person. Daytime running lamps already are mandatory in Canada, and in several European countries.

For more information on vehicle safety, visit www.gmability.com.