



By Jason Bare

# THE CRITICAL

*What safety-minded rearview cameras and legislation*

**W**e live in a fast-paced world where everyone is always busy, whether answering phone calls, texts, and emails or trying to get to our next destination in the least amount of time. Sometimes, that split second of turning one's head to check our surroundings when backing up a car gets lost in the shuffle or is just a bit too quick, and results in an accident that could range from a fender bender to a full tragedy. And so the debate has begun: Should all new cars be required to feature rearview or backup cameras that allow drivers to see behind their vehicles even when looking forward? The cameras can and do alert drivers when they back too close to an item or person, and might help reduce accidents and tragedies.

*MotorTrend* recently noted that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported more than 300 deaths and 18,000 injuries each year are caused by accidents when cars are in reverse; these are termed backup or backover accidents. Other research

has documented that victim age seems to play a role. Forty-four percent of victims are children under the age of five years old, who can't always be seen in a driver's line of sight, and 33 percent of victims are older than 70.

This issue has not gone unnoticed. The Cameron



# REAR VIEW

*may mean for drivers and the parking industry.*

Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act (H.R. 1216) was introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2007, after a father accidentally ran over his young son while backing out of their driveway. This bill has given rise to the idea of mandatory rearview backup cameras in all automobiles. NHTSA is involved in thorough research to analyze and determine if rearview backup cameras should become mandatory in new vehicles.

## Pros and Cons

The issue of whether or not backup cameras should become mandatory has various considerations. Proponents and opponents discuss the cost and whether the cameras will effectively solve the problem. One major issue that arises is that some backup cameras may take a few seconds to load images after a vehicle has been

shifted into reverse, meaning drivers in a hurry would still need to slow down and take a moment for the images to appear on their dashboard or rearview mirror screens.

An article that ran on cartalk.com entitled “The Lost Art of Backing Up,” by Jamie Lincoln Kitman, noted that the auto industry is against mandating backup cameras because of the associated cost of approximately \$200 per car that does not also have an in-dash navigation system installed; the cost to add a camera to a vehicle with such a system is around \$60. Proponents would argue that \$200 is a small cost to potentially save a life and prevent an accident.

NHTSA Administrator David Strickland said, “There are a number of things to consider before mandating the legislation, which would reportedly cost the auto industry \$1.9 billion to \$2.7 billion annually.”



**There are a number of things to consider before mandating the legislation, which would reportedly cost the auto industry \$1.9 billion to \$2.7 billion annually.**



**Congress passed a law in 2008 that required the U.S. Department of Transportation to set standards for visibility in reverse; it included the installation of cameras, mirrors, or sensors on cars. It has not, to date, been implemented.**



Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood said, “The changes would help drivers see into those blind zones directly behind vehicles to make sure it is safe to back up.” Should cameras be mandated, most would provide drivers with an additional viewing area of 20 feet to the rear and 10 feet across.

*US News* published an article in April 2013, about Karen Pauly, an Iowa mother who backed over and killed her 19-month-old son. She now lobbies for standard rearview cameras in cars. She told the Des Moines, Iowa, NBC-TV affiliate that she asks lawmakers to, “picture their son, daughter, grandchild, or whoever in their life, when they listen to me talk about the things that I saw that day, when I saw him lying there.”

Congress passed a law in 2008 that required the U.S. Department of Transportation to set standards for visibility in reverse; it included the installation of cameras, mirrors, or sensors on cars. It has not, to date, been implemented. In September 2013, the department added rearview cameras to its list of recommended safety measures in vehicles and said they should cover a 20-foot by 10-foot area and offer an image within two seconds of a vehicle being shifted into reverse. This didn’t meet the law’s mandates, however, and a lawsuit was filed

against the department by a group of safety advocates shortly after, claiming the government has taken twice as long as the law required to come up with rules.

Had the 2008 law been implemented on schedule, approximately 10 percent of new cars would have had rearview cameras by September 2012; 40 percent by 2013; and 100 percent by September 2014. At present, it looks like the regulations will take effect by the 2015 model year at the earliest. Currently, the Transportation Department plans to submit a final rule in January 2015, but has delayed doing so at least four times since 2008.

Experts say there are several reasons the law hasn’t yet been implemented, including that drivers will need to change their driving techniques to be familiar with the cameras, that the cost of cars to consumers and manufacturers would increase, and the whole transportation industry would be affected.

This raises the question everyone is asking: will the transportation industry be able to adapt to changes that would require it to install rearview cameras in all newly-manufactured vehicles, as well as install rearview cameras into older vehicles? Manufacturers say they are not opposed to the changes, but consumers need to see the benefit and adapt as well.



**JASON BARE** manages business development for BARE International, Inc. He can be reached at [jbare@bareinternational.com](mailto:jbare@bareinternational.com) or 703.995.3158.

In a 2010 *USA Today* article, Ford Motor Company announced that most of its cars would offer backup cameras by 2011. This provides evidence to the theory that changes would be accepted.

### Possible Solutions

NHTSA and the larger transportation industry need to look into a cost benefit analysis to measure the cost of adding back-up cameras to vehicles versus saving lives in parking lots, garages, driveways, and streets. Some will argue that they are superlative drivers who constantly check their surroundings before backing out of a space; however, even the best drivers could be involved in a minor fender bender that is out of their control. Those individuals might not be interested in purchasing a car with a camera or might not be able to afford the additional expenses. Maybe the automotive industry can find a way to include rearview backup cameras in all cars without any additional expenses being passed on to buyers.

We can always blame others for accidents or use excuses, such as saying we couldn't see past the huge SUVs on either side of us when backing out. But the arguments for the cameras are stronger. Does a shopping cart sometimes roll down the hill when no one is present? Is shattered glass sometimes an obstacle when leaving a sporting venue? Could a child be sitting behind a car, well below a driver's line of sight when backing up? Absolutely, and with a camera looking behind the car, most, if not all, of these obstacles would be spotted and accidents could be avoided.


Who do we blame for not having an amendment in place today? Do we blame technology? Do we blame financial considerations? Do we blame public perception? I think all three categories have an influence on the lack of installed rearview cameras in today's world. However, with the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2007, kidsandcars.org, and a majority of the population expressing interest in rearview cameras to avoid injuries and deaths, I believe a strong push will be made in the coming months to ensure proper safety measures are taken. This would result in

rearview cameras in all automobiles.

What can the public and the parking industry do to make the necessary changes to save lives? When will all of the necessary changes take place? From studies, court cases, legislations, rulings, etc., it appears to be within the next two to three years. I hope that necessary changes are made before further lives are ruined.

Every year for the past four, there has been an increase in the number of passenger vehicles that are manufactured. From 2009

with 48 million vehicles produced, to 2012's astounding total of 60 million new vehicles rolling off production lines, we are seeing more vehicles than ever in our parking facilities and our communities. Will so many cars have a new improved technology piece soon? Can this be something that is ratified in 2014?

It's something to think about and voice support for, and will absolutely have a large effect on the parking industry and its safety. As they say, stay tuned. 



**MAKE MORE HAPPEN**

Your parking meters should do **more**.  
With Parkeon Cloud Services we can make "**more**" happen.

For more information call  
1-800-732-6868 ext. 292.



[www.parkeon.com](http://www.parkeon.com)  
 Follow us on Twitter @Parkeon\_us