

NEWS



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Fast Tracks from The 2005 Washington Auto Show:

Safety Drives Consumers' Buying Decision

WASHINGTON, D. C. (Dec 10, 2004) – Consumers and automakers share one priority when it comes to vehicle design and manufacturing – safety. For many consumers, a vehicle's safety features and rating drive the buying decision. For manufacturers, developing and integrating the latest safety advancements into new vehicles is a constant goal. The newest and most effective safety innovations for 2005 will be showcased at **The Washington Auto Show®**, Dec. 26, 2004 – Jan. 2, 2005, at the Washington Convention Center.

How important is safety to consumers? A recent J.D. Power & Associates survey reports that nine of the top 10 features consumers want in their next automobile enhance vehicle or occupant safety. The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers draws consumers' attention to 12 important safety features now on many makes and models:

- **Brake Assist:** Uses sensors to determine when a driver is making a panic stop, then applies full brake pressure—which drivers often do not utilize—to stop the vehicle in a shorter distance.
- **Electronic Stability Control:** Uses sensors to detect if a driver is about to lose control, and microprocessors automatically apply individual brakes and/or reduce engine power.
- **Side Airbags:** Uses a variety of technologies to help protect occupants' heads and/or chests, especially in side impact crashes and rollovers.
- **Safety Belt Pre-Tensioners:** Automatically tightens the safety belt prior to or at the onset of a collision to help reduce slack in the belt.
- **Safety Belt Load Limiter:** Automatically extends the safety belt slightly if the belt force on an occupant is high, to reduce the possibility of belt-induced chest injuries.

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- **Dynamic Head Restraints:** When a rear-impact crash is sensed, adjusts the headrest and seat back and reduces the “whiplash” motion that potentially could cause neck and head injuries.
- **Anti-Lock Brakes:** Prevents wheels from locking during heavy braking, allowing the driver to steer and brake at the same time.
- **Safety Belt Reminder Systems:** Uses sensors in belt buckles to determine if occupant is buckled up when vehicle is in motion. If not, a light and chime serve as reminders to buckle up.
- **Automatic Crash Notification:** Automatically notifies emergency providers after an airbag deploys and/or a serious crash occurs.
- **Night Vision:** Uses advanced technology to help drivers detect people, animals and other objects more easily at night.
- **Automatic-On Headlamps:** Turns headlights on automatically at dusk, during storms, or when wipers are used.
- **Traction Control:** Automatically stops the spinning of a wheel due to wet road conditions or loose gravel by either braking that wheel, reducing the fuel, or cutting spark plug ignitions.

Sure to be of interest to safety-conscious consumers at the 63rd staging of The Washington Auto Show will be these safety innovations from individual manufacturers:

From Toyota and Lexus:

The *Star Safety System* is available on every 2005 Toyota and Lexus SUV. It includes vehicle stability control (VSC), traction control, and ABS brakes with electronic brake-force distribution and brake assist. In addition, side curtain airbags are available on all SUVs. The *Night View* option on the Lexus LX 470 SUV uses near-infrared technology to project an image of the road ahead onto the base of the windshield, like a small TV image, showing potential hazards beyond the range of the headlights. *Rear back-up cameras*, available on some Lexus and Toyota SUVs and the Toyota Sienna minivan, show a wide-angle, real-time TV image of the area directly behind the vehicle on the navigation screen, eliminating a major blind spot when backing up.

From General Motors:

The Buick LaCrosse offers GM's *StabiliTrak*, an electronic stability enhancement system, -a first for a midsize Buick, to help drivers maintain control of vehicles during certain difficult driving conditions. The Cadillac STS comes with six standard air bags, which helps to maximize protection in high-speed crashes while minimizing the risk of injury to out-of-position occupants.

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From Daimler-Chrysler:

The rear structure of the Chrysler 300, the Jeep Grand Cherokee and the Dodge Magnum were designed to allow the spare tire to rotate out of the way during a rear impact. The *rear sill reinforcement* was optimized through computer simulation to ensure consistent impact performance. On the Dodge Durango and Dakota, the *frame rail tips* were designed to crush a specific distance at several critical speeds. These tips are also replaceable, making repairs easier and less costly. Daimler-Chrysler's patent-pending *energy absorbing steering column*, featured on the Chrysler Pacifica, Dodge Dakota and Jeep Grand Cherokee, reduces the force to the occupant during a high impact event.

From Ford: *Roll Stability Control* is standard on several Ford SUVs (Explorer, Mountaineer, Aviator, Navigator) and also available for the Ford Expedition. Ford also offers *Occupant Classification Sensing*, which controls the deployment of passenger airbags depending how much weight is on the seat.

From Mercedes-Benz: *Head Protection Air Bag Curtains* work with door-mounted side air bags to help reduce injuries in side collision. The *Electronic Stability Program* helps drivers maintain control, with sensors that detect oversteer, understeer or slippage on hazardous roads and apply the break on one wheel to help restore stability. *Tele Aid* is a 24-hour connection to Mercedes using advanced cellular and GPS technology to send roadside and emergency assistance.

The 2005 Washington Auto Show: "Driven by Design" will bring more than 700 new cars, trucks, mini-vans and sport utility vehicles from over 37 domestic and import automakers to the Washington Convention Center from Dec. 26, 2004 through Jan. 2, 2005. For auto show operating hours, ticket information and discounted "e-tickets," visit the Washington Auto Show online at www.washingtonautoshow.com or contact WANADA at 1-866-WASH-AUTO or 202.237.7200.

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