

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has delayed publication of a new rule requiring backup cameras for cars. The rule would have phased in the backup cameras, with all cars required to have cameras by September 2014.

NHTSA may take up to 10 additional months to publish the rule. The agency did not say whether this delay would also push off the rule's full implementation in 2014. NHTSA has authority to create the rule under the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2007.

Backup cameras markedly improve drivers' ability to see what is behind their cars, and thus reduce car accidents. The auto industry, however, has been debating what type of technology should be required and how long the image should take to appear on the screen. The cost of the cameras could be relatively substantial, at up to \$200 per car. In addition, some car manufacturers do not support the proposed rule.

The reason backup cameras are so important is the number of lives that they could save. As our previous article on backup cameras illustrated, many of the lives the cameras could preserve belong to children. More than two hundred people are killed each year in backup accidents, and nearly half of them are young children, according to NHTSA.

Of course, pedestrians are in danger in numerous venues – driveways, sidewalks and roads. The requirement for in-car cameras to aid with backing up could reduce the number of pedestrians who are hurt or killed, thereby making the streets and sidewalks safer places to be.

Source: "Feds postpone mandatory backup camera rule," USA Today, 2-28-11