

USDOT Delays Car-Backup-Camera Adoption Regulations

By JOAN LOWY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) – Rules aimed at helping drivers avoid unintentionally backing over children, already overdue, are being delayed again following complaints from automakers that requiring rearview video cameras systems on new cars and trucks would be too expensive.

In a letter to lawmakers, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said his department needs more time for “research and data analysis” before it can issue regulations.

“I believe it is important to allot additional time to ensure

that the final rule is appropriate and the underlying analysis is robust,” LaHood wrote last week. The letter didn’t mention the auto industry’s concerns.

More than a year ago, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration proposed requiring improved driver rear visibility in new vehicles, a standard that in most cases would necessitate rear-mounted video cameras with in-vehicle display screens. The regulations were to be phased in, applying to all cars and light trucks by the 2014 model year.

“We’re disappointed the government did not take final

action today to address this problem, but we understand they are still on a path forward to issuing a rule this year,” said Ami Gadhia, an attorney for the Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy arm of Consumer Reports magazine. “We hope that day comes as soon as possible so that rear visibility for all vehicles is improved and needless deaths and injuries are reduced.”

The new rear visibility standard was required by a law that Congress passed in 2008 in response to dozens of accidents in which children were backed over.

At issue in particular were

the blind zones found when driving in large sport-utility vehicles and pickups.

Nearly 300 people are killed and 18,000 injured each year because of back-over accidents, according to NHTSA data. Many occur in driveways and parking lots. Nearly half the deaths involve children under age 5. The elderly also are frequent victims.

Lobbyists for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers met with White House officials in December about the proposed rules. Documents brought to the meeting by lobbyists, and posted online by the White House, urged the administration to permit man-

ufacturers the option of meeting the proposed visibility standard through expanded mirrors on vehicles rather than cameras.

The documents pegged the cost to the industry of requiring cameras at \$2.7 billion annually. But they said allowing automakers to meet the standard with mirrors instead would cost about \$1 billion.

“We had urged the government to explore all the options, including mirrors with a wider field of vision,” Gloria Bergquist, vice president of the alliance, said in an interview. “There are a variety of tools that could be used. Certainly the rearview cameras

are available, and many people are buying them, so it would give consumers more options in how much extra they paid for these technologies.”

Clarence Ditlow, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety, a consumer group, said providing that flexibility is a bad idea, especially since it is people outside the car who are being killed and injured, not the drivers.

“Safety should be for all, not some,” he said. “Sure, a mirror is going to be cheaper, but will a mirror get the job done? The answer is no.”

Also, mirrors only work if drivers remember to use them, Ditlow added.

GM Trio Part of ‘Coconuts’ Rescue Ski Patrollers

While many think that this winter has not provided much to do without snow, five local members of the National Ski Patrol have been busy all year in preparation for the upcoming National Ski Patrol Certified Patroller Exam being held March 1-3.

Keith Natrass, Mike Rhadigan, Chris Karnes, Jeff Jurcak, and Jamie Roell are all currently certified as “Senior Patrollers” at Clarkston’s Pine Knob Ski Resort.

Three of the group work for General Motors in the Detroit area:

- Keith Natrass (GM Global Product Development, Warren);
- Mike Rhadigan (GM Human Resources, Warren);
- Jamie Roell (GM Vehicle Testing, Milford)

The other two local Ski Patrol participants are:

- Jeff Jurcak (Shuert Industries, Sterling Heights);
- Chris Karnes (City of Auburn Hills).

The five participants said that, contrary to one of the worst snow seasons on record, Pine Knob Ski Resort has been open non-stop since mid-December with a combination of machine-made snow and excellent grooming of the Clarkston slopes.

For the five Clarkston patrollers, having the ability to



Five local men competing on the National Ski Patrol at Pine Knob are, from left, Keith Natrass (GM Global Product Development, Warren); Mike Rhadigan (GM Human Resources, Warren); Jamie Roell (GM Vehicle Testing, Milford); Jeff Jurcak (Shuert Industries, Sterling Heights); and Chris Karnes (City of Auburn Hills).

train weekly at Pine Knob has raised their level of development and training in order to qualify as candidates for this national certification exam.

According to the National Ski Patrol website, “The National Ski Patrol is a member-driven professional organization of registered ski patrols striving to be recognized as the premier provider of training and education programs for emergency rescuers serving the outdoor recreation community.

“To meet that goal, and pro-

vide the safe enjoyment of snow sport enthusiasts, NSP supports its members through accredited education and training in leadership, outdoor emergency care, safety programs and transportation services.”

To put the exam into perspective, there are more than 250,000 registered patrollers in North America, of which less than 800 have achieved the “Certified Patroller” level of qualification.

While commonly known as the “Ski Patrol,” the Clarkston

group will actually be put to the test in other areas besides skiing, such as Advanced First Aid, Rescue & Toboggan extraction, Chair/Tramway Evacuation, Ski Performance, Avalanche Rescue, and Resort Area Management, just to mention a few.

According to Keith, “Many folks think that you need to be a downhill racer level of skier to join this national volunteer program, but as you can see from our upcoming exam, skiing is actually a small portion of the overall qualification process.

“Our involvement in this sport allows us to volunteer in the community as trained medical responders at various civic events, charity walks, and other types of community activities.”

Besides being on-hill certified ski and toboggan instructors during the winter months, they are also certified to teach advanced first aid “Outdoor Emergency Care,” Professional Rescuer, and American Red Cross CPR/AED training to new recruits during the summer.

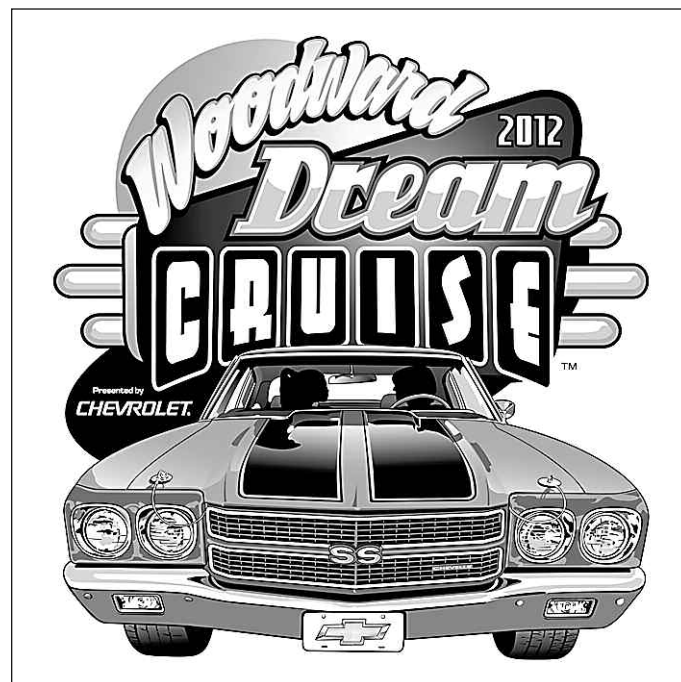
On the lighter side, the Clarkston group has been nicknamed the “Coconuts” based on feedback during a medical testing scenario test last winter which required “untrained helpers” to assist a candidate trainee.

The examiner at the time was quoted as saying, “I asked for a helper, not a coconut,” and the name stuck.

With the creativity of a local artist, “Team Coconut” was born, complete with a logo and T-shirts stating, “Go Coconuts.”

Of course, the five local patrollers hope to be soon called, “Certified Coconuts.”

Meanwhile, Pine Knob Ski Resort continues to be a busy place. According to the resort’s Web site, its next big public function will be held on Saturday, May 19, when it hosts the 2012 Ridge Rocker Challenge. The event runs from 12 noon to midnight and includes 3-, 4- and 7-mile runs and rock music bands all day.



Chevrolet, in the second year of a three-year sponsorship of the annual Woodward Dream Cruise, introduced the 2012 event logo last week. This year’s Cruise will be held Saturday, Aug. 18.

Woodward Dream Cruise Debuts 2012 Event Logo

ROYAL OAK – The Woodward Dream Cruise, Inc. (WDC), has introduced the 2012 event logo for its 18th annual Woodward Dream Cruise presented by Chevrolet.

This year’s Cruise will be held on Saturday, Aug. 18.

The logo had its first public showing at the WDC booth at the 60th annual Meguiar’s Autorama held in Detroit last week.

The WDC sold Woodward Dream Cruise T-shirts emblazoned with this year’s new event logo. The T-shirts will also be available for purchase on the WDC website.

“Chevrolet is proud to continue our exclusive partnership with the Woodward Dream Cruise,” said Chris Perry, Chevrolet VP of Global Marketing.

“We give our support to the Woodward Dream Cruise so that the event can remain the world’s largest, most-unique, one-day free show that ignites and celebrates our passion for automobiles.

“The Chevrolets of the past were the cornerstone of American cruising culture and the Chevrolets of today – such as the new Camaro ZL-1, Corvette, and even the Volt – will be the icons that drivers remember years from now.”

The new WDC event logo was once again designed by Mark Brendel and features a cranberry red 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle SS with black interior.

When originally released, the Chevelle SS featured in the logo would have cost around \$5,000 new (depending on options). Current values for original, rare SS 454 LS-6 Chevilles can be more than \$100,000.

The Woodward Dream Cruise presented by Chevrolet is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and is the world’s largest one-day celebration of car culture. The first Cruise was held back in 1995. Today, it attracts more than 1 million visitors and more than 50,000 muscle cars, street rods and customs.

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