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Road Transport



Facts & Figures

Road Safety

Transport Policy

Legislation

Research

Publications

▶ Human behaviour

VEHICLES & VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

Blind spot mirrors

The problem of blind spots for trucks

▼ Vehicles & vehicle equipment

- ▶ [Seat belts](#)
- ▶ [Tachograph](#)
- ▶ [Speed limiters](#) 
- ▶ [Blind spot mirrors](#)
- ▶ [Technical control](#)
- ▶ [Euro NCAP](#)
- ▶ [Weights & dimensions](#)
- ▶ [Abnormal transport](#)
- ▶ [Cargo securing](#)
- ▶ [Pedestrian protection](#)

Every year a large number of people, mostly vulnerable road users, are killed or severely injured in road traffic because of trucks turning right. The main cause of these accidents is the bad visibility field of the truck driver on the right side of his vehicle. Although there is already an obligation to install three mirrors on this right side, there is still a considerable dead angle or blind spot area on that side.

Scope of the problem

Although there are no reliable statistics available on European level about this type of accident, an example of the Dutch situation (one of the best performing EU countries regarding road safety) can shed light on the importance of such accidents. In 2000 19 vulnerable road users were killed and 47 seriously injured in The Netherlands due to right turning trucks. This figure is rather stable from year to year (20 fatalities in 1996, 14 in '97, 21 in '98, 17 in '99).

In Belgium it is known that on average one cyclist is killed every month in similar accidents.

Extrapolating these figures to the rest of the EU (and correcting them to eliminate the "Netherlands bias" due to the very high cycle population in that country) one could derive that about 500 fatalities of the 40000 yearly ones are caused by right turning trucks.

Possible solution

The problem could be solved or at least considerably reduced by equipping the heavy trucks with a special mirror eliminating the blind spot (estimated cost: 225 EUR) or with a combined camera/monitor system (estimated cost 900 EUR). A legal obligation already exists in Belgium and The Netherlands for retrofitting existing trucks with such mirrors or cameras

Activities underway at European level

The Commission has recently issued a proposal to amend the existing directive related to the type-approval of mirrors and supplementary systems for indirect vision and of vehicles equipped with these devices ([COM/2001/0811 final](#) dd. 07.01.2002 – see [explanatory memorandum](#) in annex I). This directive would impose the special mirrors to all new trucks.

CARE - Community road accident database
Statistics on road accidents resulting in death or injury

The Motor Vehicle Working Group in the Council arrived at a consensus at its latest meeting on 14 June 2002. A deadline for implementing these mirrors/supplementary devices for indirect vision of 36 months for all new heavy vehicles (categories M2,M3,N2,N3) and of 72 months for all new M1 and N1 vehicles has been approved.

This common position will be sent to the EP for second reading around March 2003.

Legal documents :

- [COM/2001/0811 final](#) : on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the type-approval of mirrors and supplementary systems for indirect vision and of vehicles equipped with these devices
- [Directive 71/127/EEC](#) : on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the rear-view mirrors of motor vehicles
- [Directive 71/156/EEC](#) : on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the rear-view mirrors of motor vehicles

[Retrofitting to all trucks](#)

The Commission is actually investigating whether it would be worthwhile to propose a directive to make the retrofitting of blind spot mirrors/cameras mandatory on all existing trucks from a certain date.