

ESP could save 380 lives a year

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The campaign to make electronic stability control (ESC) standard on all new cars by 2012 is gathering momentum - and it could save 380 lives a year, say ministers.

The UK's Department for Transport today claimed that hundreds of lives could be saved every year if all new cars had stability control fitted - totalling 4000 lives across Europe.

A campaign to raise awareness of the potential benefits of ESC was launched last month in Rome by European commissioners and FIA president Max Mosley. Dubbed ChooseESC!, the organisers have roped in seven-times Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher to publicise the campaign. Just don't expect Schumacher to recommend Ferrari fitting ESC to Kimi Raikkonen's company car.

At present only 10 percent of UK cars have ESC fitted, reckons the DfT. It claims that cars with stability control are 25 percent less likely to be involved in a fatal crash, 30 percent less likely to crash in snow, and 59 percent less likely to roll over.

Stephen Ladyman, minister for road safety, said the Government was lobbying to make ESC an obligatory requirement for all new cars by 2012.

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