

Fleets play pivotal role to standardise

Safety campaigners are calling for anti-skid systems to be fitted to all cars in a bid to cut accidents by 40%. ASHLEY MARTIN explains how fleets can help out

ELECTRONIC stability control should be fitted as standard on all new cars, according to European safety leaders as pressure mounts on legislators to make the life saving technology mandatory.

The call for action on ESC – billed as ‘the biggest lifesaver since seat belts’ with the potential to cut accident risk by up to 40% – comes as a survey of European Union countries reveals that the UK is close to the bottom of the league for fitment rates to new models.

However, fleet decision-makers can play a pivotal role in increasing pressure on vehicle manufacturers to fit ESC as standard through their car-buying decisions and effectively boycott models where the technology is unavailable.

Until the European Commission makes it mandatory for vehicle manufacturers to fit the anti-skid technology to all vehicles – possibly by 2012 – Brussels is reliant on drivers making the voluntary choice.

At least 40% of fatal road accidents are the result of skidding and studies show that ESC could reduce skidding accidents by up to 80%.

Thatcham, the Motor Insurance Industry Research Centre, calculates that more than 400 lives and 3,000 serious injuries on UK roads could be saved if all new vehicles were equipped with ESC (*RoadSafe: winter 2006/7*), which can turn potentially serious accidents into near misses and could drastically reduce accident occurrence across the UK and Europe.

Campaigners claim that across Europe 4,000 road traffic deaths and 100,000 injuries could be avoided if all cars were equipped with ESC, which is also known under a series of other names such as electronic

Average ESC fitment rates by manufacturer

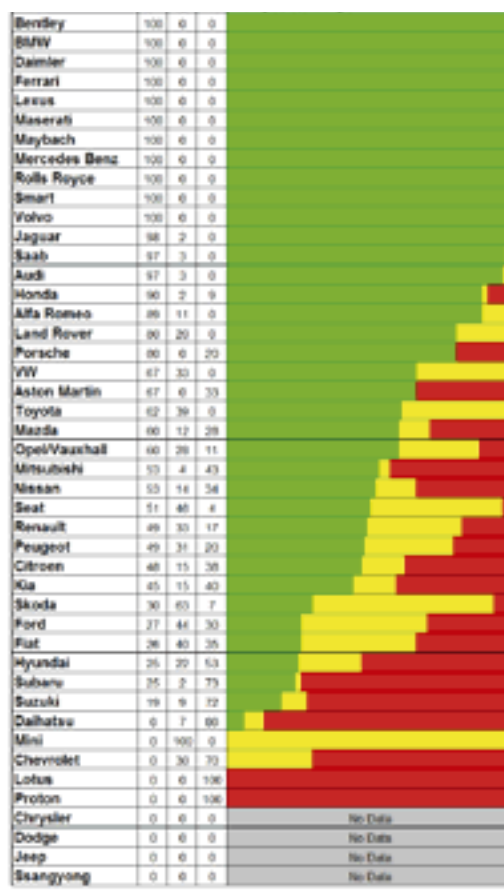


Table 1

Statistics reveal that those people driving cars fitted with ESC are significantly safer than those without it. For each of some 280 car models from more than 40 manufacturers (above) and for each of 25 European countries (see table 2 opposite), the Euro NCAP survey shows at a glance the extent to which ESC is fitted as standard or as an option or is unavailable in a model range. The proportion of standard fit is represented by green, optional fit by yellow and unavailable by red.

stability programme, dynamic stability control, vehicle dynamic control, vehicle stability control and vehicle stability assist.

Lack of business and consumer awareness is one of the reasons why ESC is not on every car drivers’ ‘must have’ list of features but, said European Commissioner Viviane Reding: “The European Commission’s comprehensive Eurobarometer study shows that over 80% of drivers who are explained about ESC want it fitted in their next car. The problem is that so far the drivers remain largely unaware, or have only a vague idea what ESC is about.”

The eSafety Aware! organisation is a European Commission-backed group, whose members include RoadSafe as well as industry, public authorities and user organisations. Under the banner ‘Choose ESC!’, it has launched a campaign, also backed by the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) and the FIA (Federation Internationale de l’Automobile) Foundation, to raise both awareness among drivers and encourage more vehicle manufacturers to fit ESC as standard.

David Ward, chairman of eSafetyAware! and the ‘Choose ESC!’ campaign, said: “Cars today are much safer that they were 10-15 years ago. Now we are protected by crumple zones, seatbelts, and air bags. These systems help you when a crash happens. New technologies like ESC are now available that can help avoid a crash from happening at all. If buying a new car make sure that it has ESC on board. Remember, three letters that can save your life and ‘Choose ESC!’.

The Euro NCAP ESC fitment survey reveals that among 25 European Union member states – work is currently in progress to collate data for Romania and Bulgaria which joined in 2007

– Denmark leads the way in ESC fitment with the anti-skid technology standard on 77% of all models in showrooms, available as an option on

role in campaign ESC systems



a further 8% and not available on the remaining 15% of vehicles (see table 2). By comparison, the UK languishes in 21st place just ahead of the Netherlands, Greece, Malta and Ireland, with 57% of vehicles on sale equipped with ESC, 21% having the feature available as an option and it being unavailable on a further 22% of new cars.

An analysis of manufacturers from Alfa Romeo to Volkswagen shows that while ESC is standard on all models from some carmakers, including BMW, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz and Volvo, many others choose to make it available only as an option on models (Mini) or not available at all (Proton) (see table 1).

A further analysis across eight model segments shows that while the UK leads the way in ESC fitment on executive cars – 98% of models on sale have the technology fitted as standard – it is almost bottom of the supermini class with just 11% of cars equipped, while Denmark leads the way in the sector with 42% of models.

In the popular lower medium and upper medium car segments – known as small family and large family cars in the report – the UK

is again amongst the worst for standard fitment of ESC with 56% and 69% of models equipped compared with 83% and 91% respectively for cars on sale in Denmark

The Euro NCAP report also highlights that some carmakers choose to fit ESC as standard on models available in some countries, but not in others. For example, ESC is fitted as standard to the Honda Jazz in Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia but the equipment is not available on the UK model. Similarly, the Mazda2 has ESC as standard in Denmark and Germany but not in the UK and on the Kia

Average ESC fitment rates by country

Country	Std	Opt	NA	Average ESC Ratings
Denmark	77	8	15	
Sweden	74	11	15	
Germany	71	11	18	
Finland	68	15	17	
Austria	66	15	19	
Latvia	65	16	19	
Lithuania	65	15	20	
Estonia	65	15	20	
Italy	64	16	20	
Spain	63	18	19	
France	63	17	20	
Portugal	62	16	22	
Slovakia	61	18	21	
Luxembourg	61	17	22	
Hungary	60	21	20	
Poland	59	21	21	
Czech Republic	58	20	22	
Cyprus	58	19	22	
Slovenia	58	20	21	
Belgium	58	20	22	
United Kingdom	52	21	27	
Netherlands	56	20	22	
Greece	56	21	24	
Malta	56	20	24	
Ireland	53	19	28	

Table 2

Carens it is standard in Sweden, Germany, Estonia and Portugal but not in the UK. Euro NCAP, which recommends that cars where

More information on the 'Choose ESC!' campaign is available at www.eSafetyAware.eu

Fleets play pivotal role in ESC campaign

ESC is unavailable are not bought, called the results of its fitment survey disappointing. Secretary general Adrian Hobbs said: "We must all do what we can to raise awareness of ESC's importance."

"Car manufacturers respond to the demands of customers but customers will only demand ESC when they become aware of the benefits. The media and organisations such as fleet buyers can play a pivotal role in increasing this awareness and in helping to bring pressure to bear on manufacturers and distributors to fit ESC as standard on all new cars, in all countries."

RoadSafe is leading the UK element of the 'Choose ESC' campaign and director Adrian Walsh said: "Stability control braking is as important as the introduction of the compulsory wearing of seat belts some 20 years ago."

"If all vehicles across Europe were to be fitted as standard equipment with stability

control we could reduce skidding accidents by 80%. Of course vehicle technology is only part of the answer, we must also focus on driving ability, road design and management, in fact a total holistic approach to road safety. However, having experienced ESC in a controlled test, I am confident that standard fitment of this technology would contribute massively to making driving safer."

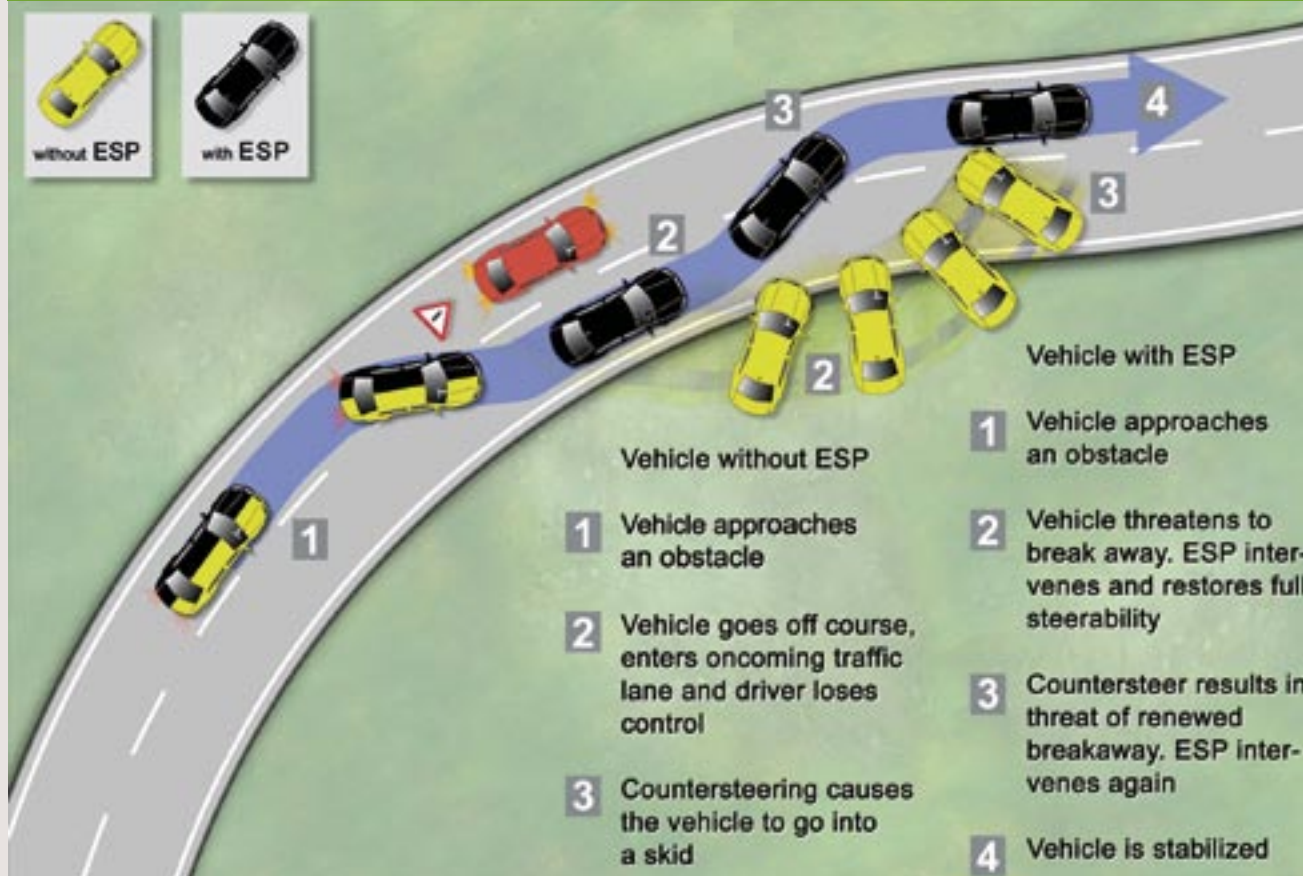
Campaigners want the European Union to follow the lead of the United States National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which has introduced legislation to make ESC mandatory in all cars in the US by 2011. The organisation estimates 4,200 to 5,400 of the 10,000 deaths caused each year in the US in rollover accidents could be prevented if ESC were on all vehicles.

Each year more than 40,000 people die and 1.7 million are injured on Europe's roads and the EU wants to halve those figures by 2010.

FIA President Max Mosley, said: "There is no doubt that ESC could contribute significantly to the EU's goal to halve the number of road traffic fatalities by 2010. But to achieve this, much more needs to be done to inform the consumer about why they must choose ESC when buying a new car. It is frustrating to see that the use of ESC in new cars in Europe is actually falling behind the USA."

"We should be leading the world in the introduction of a technology that was invented in Europe. Although ESC is often standard equipment in luxury and large cars, in smaller family cars it is not. Across Europe only 42% of new cars are equipped with ESC. We want governments in the EU to give incentives, such as tax breaks to encourage people to buy cars with ESC on board. Thousands of lives could be saved and huge crash costs avoided so it makes sense to give the public a reason to choose ESC on their next car."

Critical manoeuvre with/without ESC



THE BENEFITS OF ESC

OVERSTEER: If a driver swerves, oversteer can occur making the vehicle turn more than intended. The rear of the car might skid out and turn the car in the same direction as the intended steered direction, but at a faster rate and not under the control of the driver. ESC can prevent this by braking individual wheels to maintain control.

UNDERSTEER: If a driver travels too fast into a corner, understeer can occur. This results in a loss of steering control as the car continues to follow a straight path.

ESC can help retain steering control and allow the vehicle to continue travelling in the required direction.



Commercial vehicles are getting in on the ESC act too. The new Ford Transit (above) comes with ESC as standard across the range. The new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter and Volkswagen Crafter have the safety device fitted as standard too while many other manufacturers offer it as an optional extra

ALD calls for all cars to be fitted with ESC

ESC are three letters that could save your life and contract hire and leasing company ALD Automotive wants all businesses to have electronic stability control as a mandatory feature on company cars.

Not only will the risk of death or serious injury to company car drivers and other road users be reduced if vehicles are equipped with ESC, but one of the UK's largest contract hire and leasing companies with more than 46,000 vehicles on its fleet, says organisations will save on operating costs as 'bent metal' costs will be cut as a result of fewer crashes also leading to insurance premium savings.

Last year 46% of company cars supplied by ALD Automotive had ESC fitted.

Almost all the vehicles were equipped with ESC as standard with less than 2% of customers requesting

the technology to be added. Just over half of vehicles were supplied without ESC as it was either unavailable as a vehicle option or not specified by customers.

Looking forward ALD Automotive expects to supply more company cars with ESC as 55% of vehicles now have the technology fitted, according to its database and a further 24% of cars could be supplied with ESC following a request for fitment; 21% of vehicles, however, do not have ESC available as an option.

ALD Automotive marketing director David Yates said: "We

would, wherever possible, encourage companies to have ESC as a mandatory feature within their car fleet policies, particularly as more manufacturers are offering the technology either as standard or an option. We believe that the mandatory fitting of ESC can significantly assist fleets with their ongoing duty of care responsibilities.

"While many company cars do have ESC or an equivalent fitted as standard, on other models the technology remains either an optional extra or is not available. All the evidence points to ESC having the ability to significantly reduce

vehicle crashes. As well as recommending its mandatory fitment we are also calling on fleet operators to ensure that all drivers are aware of its life-saving and crash avoidance potential."

■ *ALD Automotive has issued an ESC advice bulletin to all customers – it is available by emailing ukmarketing@aldautomotive.com.*

Backing from race champ

SEVEN times Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher, who is backing the 'ChooseESC!' campaign, has told car buyers "Next time you are buying a car think about ESC.

"Ask your dealer for a model that is ESC equipped.

"You never know when a crash might happen so don't take chances with the lives of you or your family. Make sure you Choose ESC!"

Editor's comment

It would cost manufacturers just €130 per vehicle to fit electronic stability control on the production line as a standard addition to existing ABS technology, which is mandatory on all models across the European Union, according to a cost-benefit analysis by Cologne University.

Yet the performance of most vehicle manufacturers in fitting ESC is patchy and in small cars their efforts are little more than scandalous.

The evidence that ESC will save lives and prevent injuries is overwhelming. Yet many manufacturers appear more concerned with equipping vehicles with i-pod adaptors – one of the latest 'must have' gadgets among trendsetters.

Every manufacturer will argue that safety is at the heart of everything they do. However, the very fact that almost half the cars on sale on the UK do not have ESC fitted as standard is evidence to the contrary.

The sentiments behind the 'Choose ESC!' campaign are right and fleet decision-makers can play their part by removing all vehicles that do not have ESC fitted as standard from choice lists.

Given the volume of cars and vans bought annually by companies across the UK perhaps they can use their clout to ensure that by choosing only vehicles equipped with ESC, legislation will not be required to force manufacturers to take the sensible route.

Ashley Martin

Editor

Bosch targets fleets

BOSCH, the company that developed and launched vehicle stability control systems in 1995, has this summer launched a major new education programme targeted at fleet managers.

The Bosch ESPerience training and communications programme has evolved since its inception in 2004 and is now focused on bringing stability control information and demonstrations to fleets in a series of flexible modules.

Bosch has been developing a classroom presentation based upon its ESPerience training programme and it has been extended to incorporate the 'Choose ESC!' initiative.

David Fulker, Bosch's marketing manager chassis system, said: "The classroom session(s) can then be extended to include ESC driving in cars, vans and towing applications at various locations with the focus being the new purpose built skid facility at the Rockingham circuit near Corby in Northamptonshire.

"The course will be presented in association with RoadSafe and will be linked to the Department for Transport's 'Driving for Better Business' campaign, which is being managed by RoadSafe and is backed by the Rockingham circuit."

At the time of going to press the exact course dates had yet to be announced, but fleet managers can register their interest for the 'Choose ESC!' briefing and driver training course at www.bosch-esperience.co.uk

Experts describe the active driving safety system as the most significant addition to driving safety since the introduction of the seat belt.

Herbert Hemming, president of the Bosch chassis systems control division, said: "We are proud that ESP can deliver such a valuable contribution to road safety, both in Europe and worldwide. However, this can only happen if

How ESC works

THE anti-rollover technology senses when the driver loses control and automatically applies braking pressure to individual wheels to help stabilise the vehicle. ESC, controlled

by an on-board compute, recognises when a skid is starting to happen. In a fraction of a second the electronic control unit applies the brakes at individual wheels, helping to keep the car under control before the skid develops.

Whether the skid is the result of an emergency avoidance manoeuvre or a simple error of judgement, ESC can help a driver maintain control of the vehicle.

In some cases, the stability control programme may also reduce the engine power.



the system is installed in as many vehicles as possible. This is why ESP communication has been one of our marketing tasks for many years now."

In the UK, Bosch, the world leading

producer of stability control systems, has opened eight ESPerience driving centres throughout the UK staffed by trained instructors to help fleet managers with ESP information and training.

For further information on how to get the ESP road safety message across to company car drivers email your questions directly to Bosch.esperience@uk.bosch.com, or phone 01895-838531

ESC FACT FILE

- Every year more than 40,000 people die and over one million are injured in road crashes in the EU.
- Loss of control (eg. skidding) is the main cause of traffic accidents involving serious injury or death
- At least 40 % of fatal road accidents are the result of skidding. Studies show that ESC could reduce skidding accidents by up to 80%
- Only 57% of new cars sold in the UK have ESC fitted as standard
- In the UK it is estimated that if 90% of cars were fitted with ESC it would save 400 lives and prevent 3,000 serious injuries each year.

- It would cost €130 per vehicle to fit ESC as standard, according to a cost benefit analysis by the University of Cologne
- Mercedes-Benz data indicates that the installation of ESC as standard equipment on all of its vehicles has resulted in a 29% reduction in single-vehicle crashes and 15% fewer crashes overall.
- DEKRA Automotive Research in Germany indicates a 27% reduction in serious loss-of-control crashes. It also reports that 37% of corner accidents are definitively influenced by ESC
- A study by Toyota revealed that vehicles with ESC show a 35% reduction of single-vehicle crashes and a 30% reduction of head-on crashes.

Fleet chief leads way with ESC as standard

NAPP Pharmaceuticals is at the leading-edge of fleet safety, having changed its company car policy to make electronic stability control (ESC) mandatory on all vehicles.

The Cambridge-based company, part of a worldwide association of independent pharmaceutical companies that have been developing vital new drugs for more than half a century, is one of the first UK fleets to answer calls for companies to take a lead in ensuring the life-saving anti-skid technology is a 'must have' feature.

Following the launch of a Europe-wide 'Choose ESC!' campaign, which is designed to speed-up the take-up of the technology by fleets and private motorists, Napp Pharmaceuticals has taken its pioneering stance.

At least 40% of fatal road accidents are the result of skidding and studies show that ESC could reduce such accidents by up to 80%. Thatcham, the Motor Insurance Industry Research Centre, calculates that more than 400 lives and 3,000 serious injuries on UK roads could be saved if all new vehicles were equipped with ESC.

Jill Grimes, fleet co-ordinator at Napp Pharmaceuticals and chairman of the company's fleet committee, said: "What price can you put on a life? If just one life is saved as a result of the company making ESC on all new vehicles compulsory then the right decision has been made."

The company operates an open choice 340-strong user-chooser company car fleet with Audi, BMW and Volkswagen models making up the majority of vehicles.

"Some of the vehicles already have ESC fitted as standard, but on others it is a manufacturer cost option or is not available," said Mrs Grimes. "If it is not standard equipment then it is generally not chosen by drivers."

The company, which has health and safety as part of its corporate DNA, has updated its driver



Jill Grimes

electronic car ordering system to make it impossible for company car drivers – sales representatives visiting pharmacists, hospitals and doctors' surgeries and headquarters' staff – to select a new vehicle that does not have ESC fitted.

The company car policy already states that all vehicles must have a European New Car Assessment crash test rating of at least four stars and, additionally, Napp Pharmaceuticals elects to fit rear parking sensors to all models to reduce the risk of crashes.

Mrs Grimes said: "Ensuring our employees and all other road users are safe on the road has always been part of the company's ethos. However, even though we believe our incident record is good we are always looking for new initiatives to further reduce the risk of a crash."

She made the recommendation that ESC should be fitted as standard to all new vehicles, which are supplied on three-year/80,000-mile contracts by Bank of Scotland Vehicle Finance, after attending an ACFO (Association of Car Fleet Operators) East Anglia regional meeting.

The meeting featured a presentation by Bosch, the company that developed and launched vehicle stability control

systems more than a decade ago.

"They explained how much safer cars fitted with ESC were than vehicles that were not equipped so I made the recommendation to the fleet committee and it was approved," she said. "I consider ESC to be an essential piece of equipment. If ESC is available then given its clear benefits in improving road safety why wouldn't anyone insist on having the feature. Employees are a company's most valuable asset so why would we not want to protect them and other road users?"

Bank of Scotland Vehicle Finance is actively working with its fleet customers to encourage them to follow the lead of Napp Pharmaceuticals, which is ranked 18th by size of prescription-only medicine sales among 230 companies in the UK pharmaceutical industry.

Graham Kerr, associate director of Bank of Scotland Vehicle Finance – Corporate, said: "ESC is such a key safety feature and because it is only fitted to about half the vehicles on the UK's roads it is vital that we work to influence companies and drivers. Whether or not to take ESC as an option should not be left to individual drivers. We want safe fleets and we want to see ESC as standard."

Picture: Chris Lowndes



Graham Kerr

"We must work to raise awareness of the benefits of ESC and its life-saving potential by providing guidance and advice because, in our experience, fleet managers have very limited knowledge of the benefits of ESC. We also need buy-in from HR, procurement and finance departments."

"If fleets ensure car choice policies are restricted to only vehicles fitted with ESC then we will have safer roads. If the choice is left to drivers then they will specify satellite navigation systems, alloy wheels or air conditioning."

■ *Fleets play pivotal role in campaign to standardise ESC systems - page ???*

ALARM over huge road repair backlog

CONCERN over road user safety is mounting as the condition of roads in England and Wales worsens, with a pothole backlog predicted to take more than 11 years to clear, according to the 12th Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) Survey published by the Asphalt Industry Alliance.

Across England and Wales, local authority departments responsible for roads again report a shortfall of funds totalling more than £1 billion while they continue to struggle with the backlog of work. Most of the highway engineers (96%) responding to the survey saw this as a threat to road user safety. Last year engineers say they filled in 944,000 potholes on roads in England and Wales. The survey has consistently

reported a significant shortfall of funding for maintaining carriageways on local authority controlled roads which account for 95% of the network. An emphasis on reactive work – such as filling potholes – rather than on preventative maintenance, has become the norm.

Calling for the funding shortfall to be addressed urgently, the AIA's chairman Jim Crick said: "The number of potholes is an indicator of the general poor condition of the local road network."

Commenting on the implications for road users, RoSPA's head of road safety, Kevin Clinton said: "There seems little point in having the highest safety standards if they are compromised by lack of funds. While driver

behaviour is the major factor in accidents, the road environment also contributes significantly."

Pothole damaged tyres and wheels are costing motorists as much as £100 million a year, according to Kwik-Fit. Britain's largest independent fast-fit company says the average cost of repairing the 1.1 million cars damaged each year is £95 – almost double the average pothole repair, which is currently £56. Customer service director David White said: "Hitting potholes can cause numerous problems, from blow-outs, slow punctures and bent wheel rims – through to damaged shock absorbers. Hitting a large pothole is the equivalent of your tyre striking a small kerb at speed."

Lives at risk as road dangers go unintended

DRIVERS' lives are being put at risk by the country's inability to do any more than shore up the cracks of an ailing road maintenance programme, says the AA, which claims that road conditions at the end of the 1970s were 15-20% better than today.

Potholes, missing road markings, signs hidden in bushes and drains that are blocked even before it rains are the indicators of the nation's inability to improve the road conditions, which can only get worse without further large-scale and sustained investment, says the motoring organisation. The AA says that signing, road marking, drainage and other defects are not only placing motorists lives at risk but also laying drivers open to prosecution through no fault of their own.

Examples include:

■ **30 mph sign hidden by hedgerows** – in 2005, 30 mph signs hidden in overgrown hedgerows near Wilmslow, Cheshire, landed a driver with a prosecution for speeding. He spent a year challenging the allegation, and in 2006 the local authority painted a 30 mph sign on the road. The road signs remained largely hidden in the hedges.

■ **Worn road markings** – in



Blocked drains not only create flooded roads but leave drivers open to fines if they splash pedestrian



In 2005, 30 mph signs hidden in overgrown hedgerows near Wilmslow, Cheshire, landed a driver with a prosecution for speeding. He spent a year challenging the allegation

2005, an American tourist drove through a village in Southern England and over crossroads he could never have spotted because the road markings had been worn away to nothing. He hit and

severely damaged a car travelling across his front on the main road he should have given way to. Police considered charging him for driving without due care and attention. Some months later, Give

Way road markings and a road sign were reinstated at the junction.

■ **Blocked drains** – blocked drains not only create flooded roads but leave drivers open to fines if they splash pedestrians.

Look to safety of business will su

There are sound financial reasons why fleets should do more to protect their drivers, as leading campaigner Prince Michael of Kent tells ASHLEY MARTIN

COMPANIES that fail to heed the managing occupational road risk message when their competitors are focusing on improving the safety of their at-work drivers will be viewed in a bad light and will potentially end up at a commercial disadvantage.

That's the view of Prince Michael of Kent, a cousin to both the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, who learned to drive in a 1928 Rolls-Royce and by the time he was 15-years-old had driven more than 100 different vehicles.

Driven by a life-long interest in motor cars and in the past 30 years by a passion for motorbikes, the Prince's interest in promoting road safety and reducing death and injury on roads both in the UK and now globally has blossomed.

The Prince Michael Road Safety Awards celebrate their 20th anniversary this year and they went international in 2000. Over the last two decades hundreds of road safety initiatives have won awards ranging from local schemes such as Hull's 'Safe and Liveable Streets for Children' to technical developments by manufacturers such as Jaguar's 'pop-up' pedestrian-friendly bonnet on the XK.

Recognised

More recently fleet initiatives have been recognised such as BP's 'Safer Driving Programme' and schemes in the developing world such as the Delhi-based Institute of Road Traffic Education in India for its Student Traffic Volunteer Scheme, which won the first international award.

Key to improving road safety both in the UK and globally is education and awareness, said Prince Michael, who was born eighth in line to the throne but lost his right of succession, under the 1701 Act of Settlement, following his 1978 marriage to Baroness Marie-Christine von Reibnitz, a Roman Catholic.

Speaking exclusively to *RoadSafe* in his apartment at Kensington Palace in London, Prince Michael, who is now chairman of his own private company offering specialist consultancy advice to a number of businesses in sectors in which he has an interest including

BP's occupational road safety programme in operation in Azerbaijan and more recently visited Pickfords, which won an award last year.

Figurehead

As a figurehead within the road safety movement and with the presentation of his annual awards, Prince Michael believes that new programmes such as the Government-backed Driving for Better Business, which is being managed by RoadSafe, have crucial roles to play in cutting the carnage on the UK's

roads that daily sees more than 150 vehicles involved in a crash on a work-related journey.

"One simple step would be for fleet managers to require all new vehicles to be fitted with stability control. Other would involve tough rules on mobile phones and driving while tired,"

said Prince Michael, who is president of the Royal Automobile Club, the Motor Sports Association and the Brooklands Museum Trust and a fellow of the Institute of the Motor Industry.

"Companies that are seen to be socially responsible will become more successful and would find their employees, whose livelihood is driving, would be safer and their productivity will increase."

Moves are afoot to encourage fleets to only operate company cars fitted with electronic stability controls and the European Commission is looking to legislate for compulsory fitment from 2012.

However, Prince Michael, who has

You cannot run an organisation that pays no heed to road safety when your competitors are taking action in this area because it will show the business up in a very bad light

automotive, said: "Company car drivers, professional drivers and, indeed, all drivers need to understand the risks they face.

"Many companies, large and small, have some excellent road safety initiatives in place which are having an impact on crash reduction and that is a positive move."

Promoting these companies and their safe-driving initiatives to the world at large would, said Prince Michael, have a knock-on effect across business.

"You cannot run an organisation that pays no heed to road safety when your competitors are taking action in this area because it will show the business up in a very bad light," said Prince Michael, who has seen at first hand

For further information on the Prince Michael Road Safety Awards go to <http://www.roadsafetyawards.com/roadsafe/RoadSafetyAwards/index.htm>

r your uffer

experienced the benefits of ESC at first hand and as *RoadSafe* went to press was due to support the Driving for Better Business campaign and stability control developers Robert Bosch at a safe driving event at the Rockingham circuit in Northamptonshire, said: "Driving cars with and without stability control is chalk and cheese."

"Stability control should be standard on all new cars because the benefits are so obvious. The technology is available and quite why it appears to be taking so long to become a standard feature I don't know. If you can have a device which is so obviously going to reduce accidents I don't see how it can't be fitted to all vehicles."

Twenty years ago when Prince Michael launched his own awards programme a number of organisations ran their own similar road safety schemes. "What they were doing was laudable but I didn't believe they carried as much weight as they should have done," he said.

Interest

"I believed that if I could get the motor industry as a whole to take an interest - vehicle manufacturers and suppliers - and then also involve the police and other organisations, such as the RAC and AA, then they would carry more weight. I think the awards mean a lot to the winning companies and organisations."

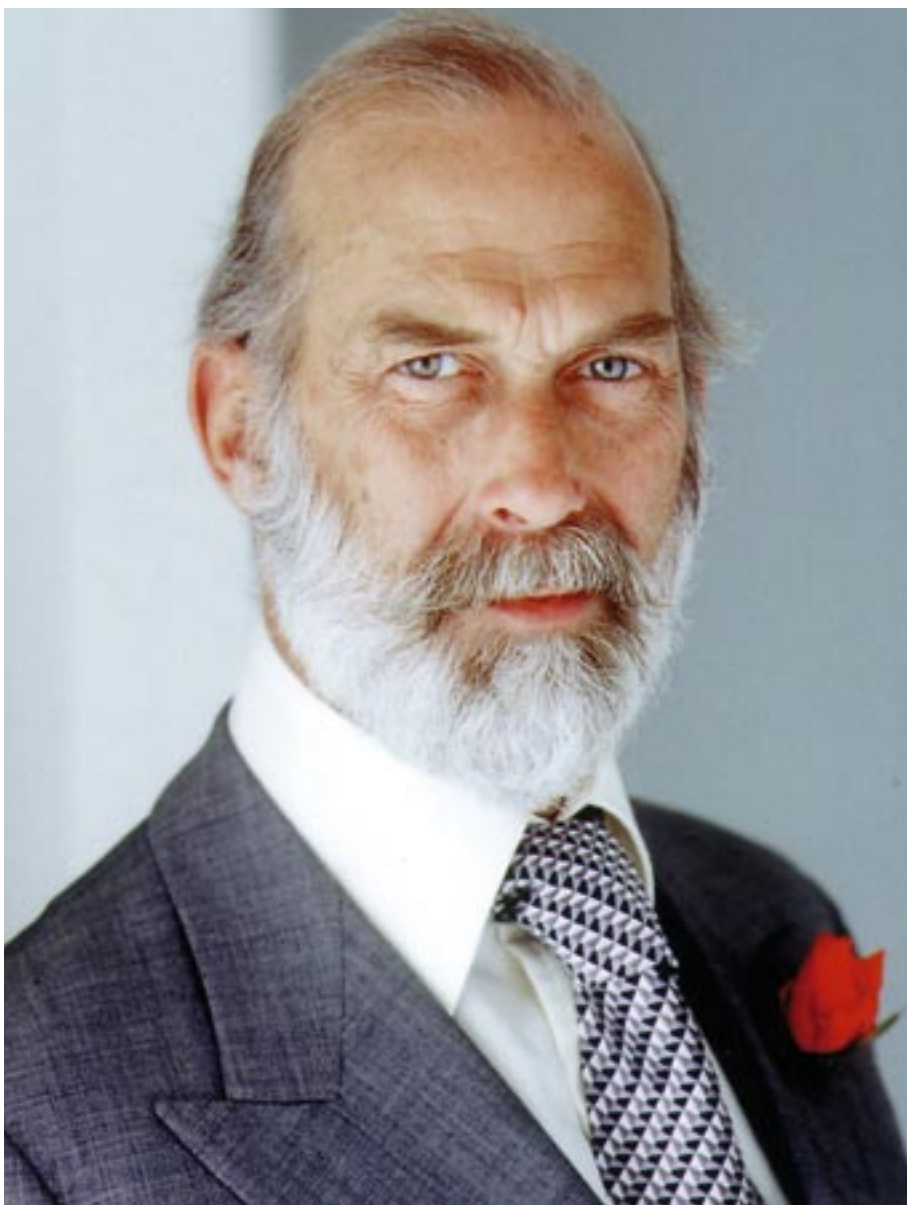
That is what happened and today more than 60 different organisations, who are all road users, are involved in the Prince Michael Road Safety Awards.

"We plan to use this year's 20th anniversary to celebrate the achievements of some key leading agencies who have made a real difference and also to make a further push to raise awareness in the developing world," said Prince Michael, who has yet to finalise celebration plans.

The safety awards expanded internationally because Prince Michael 'wondered what else was going on in other parts of the world'.

"We have given awards to a wide range of organisations in a wide number of countries," he explained.

"Some are more obvious than others such as Volvo in Sweden for a variety of safety initiatives. Others are less obvious such as in Costa Rica where a campaign was fought



for the wearing of seatbelts, which is terribly important in developing countries."

Prince Michael is conscious that road safety is a difficult concept to 'sell' and accepts that there is an element of complacency among many drivers whose attitude is based around the fact that 'road accidents happen to other people'.

Involved

"Until someone 'close to home' is involved in a road accident there is no personal involvement so we must change attitudes," said Prince Michael, who learned to drive in the 1960s when 'driving was fun' and represented Great Britain as a bobsleigh driver for many years including being a reserve for the 1972 Olympic Games. "Company drivers and young motorists need to understand the risks they face."

Such is Prince Michael's passion for motorcycles that two years ago he took part in a ride from Vladivostok to St Petersburg on an 1100cc BMW cross-country motorcycle to raise money for children's charities in Russia.

In preparation for the ride and the rough

terrain he joined other riders on a training course in Wales. "I have driven many vehicles and ridden many motorbikes, but we needed to undergo special training because of the terrain we would be crossing. We needed to prepare for the risks we would face."

Over the years Prince Michael has driven in a number of car rallies and has a passion for vintage Bentleys. He has owned more than one Aston Martin but now has a BMW 5-Series and a 3-Series drophead in his garage.

Those vehicles may soon be joined by an electric car, the acquisition of which he is currently investigating as he seeks to link the benefits of safe driving with environmentally-friendly motoring (*see page ??*).

"In the 1930s the idea was to get from A to B as fast as possible in beautiful Bentleys and Bugattis. The whole profile of motoring is changing and that is a personal sadness but from a public spirited point of view it makes sense," said Prince Michael.

"People want to travel and you can't stop demand for mobility. But we must always think about safety, promote safety and keep safety at the forefront of people's minds."

Prince calls for global driving standards

GLOBAL driving standards embracing legislation, teaching and vehicle maintenance should be the ultimate aim of the 'Make Roads Safe' campaign, launched by the independent Commission for Global Road Safety.

Prince Michael is patron of the Commission and the campaign, which was launched last year with the aim to reduce the 1.2 million annual death toll on the world's roads and up to 50 million injuries, was given new impetus in the spring with a rally in London held to coincide with the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week (*RoadSafe*: spring 2007).

"We want to share our experiences and our aim is to set global standards – I doubt vehicles have to undergo an MoT in Bolivia," said Prince Michael. "That is why we hope to soon have a United Nations summit of transport ministers from around the world to agree high-level political commitment for action on road deaths in developing countries.

"There are some good safety initiatives taking place in parts of the developing world and a momentum is being created but we must speed that to other countries.

"All motorcyclists wearing helmets, all drivers and passengers wearing seat belts and speed limits are basics that we in the UK take for granted, but we need to focus on encouraging their uptake in the developing world.

"We also need to work hard to promote good practice in companies which employ drivers – here the work we do in the UK can be replicated elsewhere."

Last year, Prince Michael visited Muscat in the Oman to present his International Road Safety Award to the Sultanate in recognition of the country's 'outstanding effort' to promote global road safety issues at the United Nations. The visit also coincided with the sixth meeting of the UN Road Safety Collaboration, which discussed a range of issues including fleet safety.

Speaking at the award ceremony, Prince Michael said: "For a small nation, Oman has achieved a tremendous amount in promoting the issue of global road safety onto the international agenda."

He told *RoadSafe*: "Oman has helped raise the whole aspect of road safety on to a new level and is bringing together governments at a senior level."

In April 2004, acting on a proposal by the Sultanate, the UN General Assembly adopted



HRH Prince Michael presents his International Road Safety Award to H.E. Talib Miran Al-Raisi of the Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman

an historic resolution which drew attention to road safety, endorsed the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention published jointly by the World Health Organisation and the World Bank, and established the UN Road Safety Collaboration. In October 2005, Oman proposed a further resolution which mandated the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

Noting that 'none of these recent developments would have been possible had the Government of Oman not played a crucial role in raising political awareness' the Prince presented his award to H.E. Mr Talib Miran Al-Raisi of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Further information at www.makeroadssafe.org

'Children should be taught to drive at school'

DRIVING should be included in the school curriculum, says Prince Michael, who was instrumental in the launch of UK Youth's vehicle education programme, First Gear.

The initiative, which has Ex-Formula One world champion Nigel Mansell as its president, aims to encourage young people aged between 15 and 17 to develop positive attitudes towards the responsibilities inherent in the safe use of motor vehicles.

Extended five years ago to include motorcycles – this scheme is called On Two Wheels – Prince Michael said:

"Although the schemes only account for a small number of young people they are invaluable and we must do more to encourage our youngsters to gain valuable driving and riding experience before they take their tests.

"We need to have driving on the curriculum. We need to educate young minds about the importance of restraint, awareness of other road users, the recognition of danger and the importance of anticipation.

"It is all about mental preparation

and thinking about what might happen in a given situation. The earlier you can teach someone something then the more automatic it will become.

"If driving became part of the school curriculum it would be one of the most important ways to reduce road casualties."



Further information at www.ukyouth.org