

The Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

Tuesday 9 July 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

We write as a collective with a shared interest in improving road safety to urge the Government to demonstrate its commitment to safety by adopting the latest vehicle General Safety Regulation updates to our GB Type Approval Scheme.

More than 30,000 people are killed or seriously injured on UK roads every year – this is equivalent to all the inhabitants of a medium-sized UK town dying or suffering catastrophic injuries every year. The annual societal and economic costs of road harm amount to an astonishing £43.5 billion.<sup>1</sup>

We write this letter on the second anniversary of the Vehicle General Safety Regulation being introduced in the European Union (EU).<sup>2</sup> Under this regulation, in July 2022, a number of important vehicle safety features became mandatory for all new vehicles in the EU. These include:

- Advanced emergency braking (AEB) – a system that will automatically brake in an emergency (e.g. if a pedestrian steps out in front of the car or a vehicle in front stops suddenly).
- Intelligent speed assistance – technology that ‘reads’ road signs and alerts a driver if they are exceeding the speed limit and/or reduces vehicle speed to keep within the speed limit.
- Attention warning in case of driver drowsiness – a system that monitors the steering wheel, head and eye movements for signs of drowsiness or distraction.

These safety features can play a significant role in improving road safety, helping to prevent crashes and therefore protect drivers and their passengers, as well as other road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. In addition to these driver assistance features, there are key measures that improve vehicle crash performance and will significantly improve the protection of women and the elderly in the event of a collision – providing much fairer and more equitable transport.

It has been estimated that adopting the proposed updates to the GB Type Approval Scheme could prevent more than 1,700 deaths and 15,000 serious injuries over the next 16 years, saving up to £7 billion in health costs<sup>3</sup> if the full package of measures were to be fully implemented in Britain. The regulations are already being rolled out in Northern Ireland.

Dev Naran was just eight years old when he died in a road traffic collision on the M6 near Birmingham. A lorry collided with the stationary car he was in. Advanced emergency braking technology can help reduce the risk of collisions in live lane breakdowns on any type of motorway or road. Dev’s mother Meera believes AEB could have saved Dev’s life.<sup>4</sup>

The UK played a significant role in the development of the Vehicle General Safety Regulation when it was part of the European Union, and we reiterate the call on the Government to adopt recommendations that it has already made a commitment to, only a few years ago.

Adding these updates to the GB Type Approval requirements will provide international harmonisation and clarity for manufacturers and vehicle users alike. Requiring no primary legislation through parliament, this is a time-efficient and very cost-effective way to save lives and prevent injury.

By aligning the UK with those countries that are at the forefront of vehicle safety design and innovation, we also help the UK industry to remain competitive with regard to the challenges of developing automated vehicles.

Now is the time to allow every UK citizen and business buying a new vehicle to benefit from enhanced safety features and, over time, to enable everyone to benefit from safer vehicles, safer roads and safer journeys.

Research conducted by Brake, the road safety charity, and AXA UK in 2023 showed that 63% of drivers are willing to pay more for safety features that would protect themselves and their passengers. More than two-thirds of drivers also said that intelligent speed assistance, advanced emergency braking and driver-drowsiness detection should be mandatory for all new vehicles in the UK.<sup>5</sup>

The cross-party support that was gained on the recent Automated Vehicles Act showed that the Government can unite behind legislation that will promote road safety in the long term. And we ask that the same cross-party collaboration is encouraged to support regulations that will significantly improve road safety.

In 2022, 1,766 people were killed on UK roads.<sup>6</sup> That's 1,766 families, communities, schools and workplaces whose lives will never be the same again. If the aviation or rail industry had the same safety record as roads, planes would be grounded, and trains would be stopped. It is time to make good on the promises you made in the run up to election, and deliver 'a new Strategic Road Safety Framework to address the terrible toll of death and injury'.<sup>7</sup>

We want to work with the Government to support the delivery of safer vehicles that will protect drivers and all road users and, ultimately, improve safety on roads across Britain. Let's do whatever we can to bring an end to road deaths and injuries through your commitment to adopt the latest Vehicle General Safety Regulation updates.

Yours sincerely,

**Ross Moorlock**, CEO, Brake the road safety charity

**Alain Zweibrucker**, Retail CEO, AXA UK

**Jamie Hassall**, Executive Director, Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety

**Adrian Berendt**, Director, 20's  
Plenty for Us CIC

**Edmund King OBE**, AA  
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**Symon Cook**, Head, National Motorcycle Dealers Association

**Heidi Duffy MBE**, Shiny Side Up Partnership and National Young Rider Forum Facilitator

**Chief Constable Jo Shiner**, Sussex Police, NPCC Lead for Roads Policing

**Rob Heard**, Chair and Founder of Older Drivers Forum, Older Drivers Forum

**Professor Gemma Briggs**, The Open University

**Sushila Dhall**, Chair, Oxford Pedestrians Association

**James Luckhurst**, Founder, Project EDWARD (Every Day Without A Road Death)

**Simon Williams**, Head of Policy, RAC

**Dr Nick Reed**, Founder, Reed Mobility

**Dr Suzy Charman**, Executive Director, Road Safety Foundation

**James Gibson**, Executive Director, Road Safety GB

**Rob Shearing**, CEO, Road Safety Markings Association

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**Steve Cole**, Director of Policy, Campaigns, and Public Affairs, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

**Irene McAleese**, Co-founder & Director, See.Sense

**Matthew Evans**, Director of Market Programmes and Chief Operating Officer, TechUK

**Mick Kiely**, Fleet Manager, TES 2000 Ltd

**Jonathan Hewett**, Chief Executive, Thatcham Research

**George K. Atkinson and Giulietta Galli-Atkinson**, Founders/Treasurers, The Livia Memorial Fund & The Livia Award for Professionalism and Service to Justice

**David Ward**, Executive President, Towards Zero Foundation

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**Richard Cuerden**, Director, TRL Academy

**Ruth Purdie OBE**, Chief Executive, UKROEd and The Road Safety Trust

**Professor Richard Rowe**, University of Sheffield

**Nikolina Kotur**, Head of Market, Nordics & UK, Vianova

**James Dewhurst**, Sales Director, Webfleet UKI

## Letter signatories and supporters





## References

<sup>1</sup> Reported road collisions, vehicles and casualties tables for Great Britain - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>2</sup> New rules to improve road safety and enable fully driverless vehicles in the EU

<sup>3</sup> Vaccine-for-Vehicles.-Final-1.pdf ([pacts.org.uk](http://pacts.org.uk))

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.devslaw.co.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> Vehicle safety systems and the future of driving | Brake

<sup>6</sup> Reported road collisions, vehicles and casualties tables for Great Britain - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/bill-esterson-311013156\\_the-poor-state-of-our-roads-has-become-something-activity-7206677192078934020-hYhD/?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/bill-esterson-311013156_the-poor-state-of-our-roads-has-become-something-activity-7206677192078934020-hYhD/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)