

## **RAC Foundation Supports Launch Of The eSafetyAware 'Choose ESC' Campaign**

Road crashes could be reduced by more than 20 per cent, especially in wet or icy conditions, by cars being fitted with Electronic Stability Control (ESC), according to the RAC Foundation.

The Europe wide 'Choose ESC!' campaign will be launched at the Bridgestone European Testing ground near Rome on 8th May 2007. The campaign, lead by the FIA Foundation, under the patronage of European Commissioner Viviane Reding and FIA President Max Mosley, aims to raise awareness of Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and increase the take-up of this life-saving technology.

The Rome launch will feature the release by the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) of an EU wide ESC availability survey. The event will also include live demonstrations comparing the performance of a car with and without the system engaged.

ESC should feature high on the shopping list of priorities when choosing a new car according to the RAC Foundation. While the Euro NCAP testing results have traditionally concentrated on highlighting to consumers the cars which offer the greatest protection in an accident – the Foundation wants drivers alerted to developments in technology which will help to prevent a collision.

The Foundation recommends that motorists ensure their next car is fitted with a stability control system. Available from most manufacturers, these systems dramatically reduce the chances of being involved in an accident by helping drivers to maintain control of their vehicles. If a driver has misjudged a corner or suddenly swerves to avoid an obstacle, stability control can help avoid a skid and can turn an accident into a near miss.

Stability control evolved from other technologies such as traction control and anti-lock brakes. This tried and tested technology, along with some additional sensors, feeds information to a computerised control unit. The signals are continuously monitored to determine whether or not the vehicle is losing control. If a deviation from the intended course is detected, the control unit applies a small amount of braking to whichever wheel is needed to help stabilize the course of the vehicle. Some systems also adjust the power output of the engine to help further. This is all done by the control unit which reacts faster than even the best driver could manage. The driver may not know that the system has intervened.

Studies have shown that cars fitted with Stability Control are less involved in certain types of accidents than those without. In Sweden\*, an overall reduction of 22% has been detected, rising to 32% just in wet conditions, and a study in Japan\*\* has

suggested a decrease in accident involvement of some 30 to 35 percent. American and German studies have shown similar positive results.

Edmund King, executive director of the RAC Foundation said:

"The safest car on the road is the one which does not get involved in accidents. Driving carefully and attentively is perhaps the best way to reduce the chances of being in a crash but technology can play an important role, too. That is why advice is being extended to cover developments in technology, such as Electronic Stability Control, which will help protect drivers and their passengers."

FIA President Max Mosley, said:

"There is no doubt that ESC could contribute significantly to the European Union'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."

European Commissioner Viviane Reding said:

"The European Commission fully supports the 'Choose ESC!' Campaign as we want to reach the consumers with this campaign. I believe more and more drivers will make the intelligent choice and choose ESC, making the roads in Europe safer for everyone."

Mosley and Reding will be speaking at the Rome event alongside Ivan Hodac, Secretary General of the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, Nicole Nason, Administrator of the US National Highway Administration, and Claes Tingvall, Chairman of Euro NCAP.