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EU plans emergency calling for every new vehicle

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Brussels — All new vehicles in Europe should be equipped to make automatic emergency calls by 2009, according to European Union safety plans announced Thursday.

The new technology, named eCall, can be triggered manually by a button or automatically by air bag deployment or crash sensors. The car then transmits via GSM wireless technology to indicate its location.

The system is expected to reduce emergency response times.

Under the plan, agreements are to be made on the technology's standardization and specifications by the end of 2005. Extensive testing will be completed in 2006, and eCall should be in every new vehicle in 2009.

The project still has to overcome problems to ensure it can be used by cars travelling around the continent and work out payment issues.

The initiative is part of a drive to use technological advances to cut the 50,000 European deaths on the road every year.



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