

# EU cars to be fitted with automatic dial for help in a crash

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The European Parliament voted Tuesday to require all cars EU-wide to be fitted out by 2018 with an automatic dial-up system so emergency workers can get to crash sites as swiftly as possible.

Last year 25,700 people died on EU roads and MEPs believe this technology could reduce the [death toll](#) by 10 percent.

"The European Parliament has repeatedly stressed that reducing deaths and the severity of injuries on the roads is its priority," said socialist MEP Olga Sehnalova, lead negotiator of the legislation.

Dubbed eCall, Sehnalova said it would be "a public service, free of charge for all citizens, irrespective of the type of vehicle or its purchase price."

The European Commission, the EU's executive, says the automatic eCall system could speed up emergency response by 40 percent in built-up areas and 50 percent in the countryside—saving up to 2,500 lives a year.

The eCall system automatically calls 112—Europe's single emergency number—in the event of a serious crash, communicating the vehicle's location, even if the driver is unconscious or unable to make a call.

The idea was introduced in 2012 but has been held up due to concerns over privacy.

Erik Jonnaert, head of the European auto-maker industry group ACEA welcomed the law.

"The industry feels that the final text strikes a good balance between saving lives and protecting data," he said.

In the new regulation, all new models of [passenger cars](#) and light utility vehicles will be fitted with 112 eCall and infrastructure put in place to ensure handling of the calls at response centres across the European Union.

The number could also be triggered manually by a driver in trouble, a passenger or even a witness by pushing a button in the car.

Addressing concerns over privacy, MEPs strengthened the draft law's data protection clause to block the tracking of vehicles before an accident occurs.

Additionally, the automatic call would give the emergency services only basic data, such as the type of vehicle, the exact location and the number of passengers.

The Commission has tried for several years to introduce the system, estimated to cost around 100 euros per new car.

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