

40 countries agree cars must have automatic braking

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Forty countries led by Japan and the European Union—but not the U.S. or China—have agreed to require new cars and light commercial vehicles to be equipped with automated braking systems starting as soon

as next year, a U.N. agency said Tuesday.

The regulation will require all vehicles sold to come equipped with the technology by which sensors monitor how close a pedestrian or object might be. The system can trigger the brakes automatically if a collision is deemed imminent and if the driver doesn't appear set to respond in time.

The measure will apply to vehicles at "low speeds": 60 kilometers per hour (42 mph) or less, and only affects new cars sold in the markets of signatory countries—so [vehicle](#) owners won't be required to retrofit their cars and trucks already on the roads today.

The [regulation](#) will start taking effect next year first in Japan, where 4 million cars and light [commercial vehicles](#) were sold in 2018, said Jean Rodriguez, the spokesman for the agency, called United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, or UNECE. The European Union, and some of its closest neighbors, is expected to follow suit in 2022.

The United States, China and India are members of the U.N. forum that adopted the new regulations. However, they did not take part in the negotiations because they want to ensure that their national regulations keep precedence over U.N. rules when it comes to the auto industry.

UNECE says the countries that agreed to the deal want to be more proactive in fighting roadway accidents, particularly in urban settings where obstacles like pedestrians, scooters, bicycles and other cars in close proximity abound. The agency pointed to more than 9,500 roadway deaths in the EU in 2016, and EU Commission estimates that the [braking systems](#) could help save over 1,000 lives a year in the bloc.

Apparently wary that the regulations might be seen as a step toward giving artificial intelligence precedence over humans, the drafters put in clear language in their resolution: A driver can take control and override

these automated braking systems at any time, such as through "a steering action or an accelerator kick-down."

UNECE says the new rules build on existing U.N. rules on the braking system for trucks and buses, mainly for safety in higher-speed motorway conditions.

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