



# MEPs back deal with Council on automatic emergency call system for cars

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**An EP/Council deal on a life-saving automatic emergency call system for cars, agreed on Monday evening, was backed by Internal Market Committee MEPs on Thursday. The “eCall” system would use the 112 number to call the emergency services automatically, enabling them to reach crash scenes faster and thus save lives and reduce the severity of injuries. The deal would require all new car models to be equipped with eCall technology from 31 March 2018.**

"Too many people die in accidents on Europe's roads. The eCall system will help to improve road safety by enabling emergency services to locate and reach accident victims much faster. As a public service, eCall will be free of charge for all citizens, whatever car they drive and whatever its purchase price. The new rules will ensure that eCall works only as safety device. It will be illegal to use it to track a driver's movements or to misuse location data, which must be sent only to the emergency services", said rapporteur Olga Sehnalova (S&D, CZ).

Each year emergency services across the EU deal with road accidents which in 2013 took 26,000 lives.

The in-vehicle eCall system uses 112 emergency call technology to alert the emergency services to serious road accidents automatically. This enables them to decide immediately on the type and size of rescue operation needed, which in turn helps them to arrive faster, save lives, reduce the severity of injuries and cut the cost of traffic jams.

## **Data privacy: no vehicle tracking**

MEPs strengthened the draft law's data protection clause to preclude tracking of eCall-equipped vehicle before the accident occurs. Under the agreed deal, the automatic call would give the emergency only a basic minimum data such as the class of vehicle, the type of fuel used, the time of the accident and the exact location.

MEPs also amended the draft law to ensure that data gathered by emergency centres or their service partners must not be transferred to third parties without explicit consent of the person concerned, the "data subject". Manufacturers will also have to ensure that the eCall technology design permits full and permanent deletion of data gathered. Clear information about the processing of eCall data would have to be included in the car owner's manual and available online, MEPs added.

## **Alternative systems**

As some manufacturers are already offering eCall-type services to drivers through private call centres, the deal provides for the co-existence of two systems (public eCall and eCall-supported third party services (TPS)), provided that 112-based eCall is always automatically available should TPS fail to work and that vehicle owners may choose public eCall services rather than private ones at any time.

## **Ready from spring 2018**

All new models of passenger cars and light commercial vehicles will have to be equipped with the eCall system no later than 31 March 2018. In the following three years, the

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European Commission will assess whether eCall should be extended to other vehicles, such as buses, coaches or trucks, says the agreement text.

## Next steps

The agreement, approved by 30 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions, now needs to be formally approved by all EU member states and finally Parliament as a whole, probably in March 2015.

#eCall

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