
Safety is Not A Luxury

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As part of Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero initiative, DCAS implemented a Safe Fleet Transition Program (SFTP) to ensure that we require the highest level of safety feasible for the full set of vehicle types which we procure. Working with agency fleet directors and specifications specialists, DCAS has already added over 27,000 safety improvements to the City's fleet in the first two years of this initiative. These improvements include automatic braking, driver alerts, backup camera and alarms, surround cameras, truck side-guards, telematics, and more. We recently completed our first update to the SFTP and we have published the plan on our website. We encourage other public and private fleets to adopt similar policies.

Fleets and consumers depend on vehicle manufacturers to adopt these safety changes. A major challenge and barrier to safety efforts is the pervasive inclusion of safety outfitting only as part of vehicle luxury packages. Imagine going to a car dealership and being told your new vehicle will not come with seatbelts or airbags unless you also purchase a sun-roof, backseat entertainment systems, and chrome wheels. That sounds absurd. Yet today, those exact conditions apply to critical and widely established safety outfitting including automatic braking, collision and lane departure alerts, and automatic high beams.

As we have worked to implement our Safe Fleet Transition Plan, we are colliding directly with these market limitations. Based on current market options, potential customers can be required to spend thousands of dollars on optional, and in our case unwanted, luxury items as the only way to procure needed and potentially life-saving safety outfitting. No fleet or retail customer should face such a choice.

We all understand that advanced or additional safety outfitting can have additional costs. That's fair. Bundling that safety with luxury items is not. We need vehicle manufacturers to offer safety packages for all vehicles that are separate from optional luxury items, and we will need all fleets and retail customers to press for this change. Safety is not a luxury item.



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