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Ford to Make Stability Control Standard by Late 2009

By [Ken Thomas](#)
September 14, 2006

Ford Motor Co. will make rollover-reducing technology a standard feature on all new vehicles by the end of 2009, the company said Tuesday in advance of new government rules on the safety technology.

Ford said it was accelerating its plans to standardize the stability control systems, which have become more widely available on sport utility vehicles, vans and pickups as studies have found they can reduce vehicle rollovers and deaths.

"We believe our electronic stability control systems are further improving vehicles safety by helping prevent many accidents from occurring in the first place," said Sue Cischke, Ford's vice president for environment and safety engineering.

Dearborn, Michigan-based Ford made the announcement in advance of a proposal expected to be released by the government on Thursday mandating the safety technology in the coming years. Ford spokesman Dan Jarvis said the late 2009 deadline would put the company ahead of the government's timeline.

Auto industry officials have touted stability control as the most significant safety development since the air bag. The technology automatically applies brakes to individual wheels if they sense a vehicle is veering off course.

Rollovers are considered extremely dangerous, accounting for only a small number of all crashes but leading to more than 10,000 deaths a year in the United States. An estimated 43,443 people were killed in motor vehicle-related crashes nationwide in 2005.

A study released earlier this year by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that 10,000 deaths could be prevented annually if passenger vehicles were equipped with the technology. It found stability control reduced the risk of single-vehicle rollovers involving SUVs by 80 percent.

Automakers have been deploying the technology into their fleet in recent years, with an emphasis on SUVs and other vehicles more prone to rollovers.

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has estimated that 70 percent of new SUVs have stability control as standard equipment. The Institute said the feature was standard on 40 percent of all 2006 passenger vehicles and optional on another 15 percent from the 2006 model year.

General Motors Corp. said last year that it would make the equipment standard on all vans and SUVs by the end of 2007 and standard on all vehicles by the end of 2010. All DaimlerChrysler AG SUVs from the 2007 model year have the technology available and more than half of the automaker's 2007 vehicles offer it.

Toyota Motor Corp. said all of its Lexus models have the technology as standard equipment and virtually all Toyota vehicles have it as an option. It has been standard on all Toyota SUVs since the 2004 model year.

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