

60+ People Injured or Killed Daily Along U.S. Roadways Due to Crashes into Disabled and Vulnerable Passenger Vehicles

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, March 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Despite universal adoption of hazard lights on both passenger and commercial vehicles and various regulatory initiatives aimed at enhancing roadway safety, the incidence of individuals being struck, injured or fatally wounded each year in America while attending to a disabled or vulnerable vehicle continues to escalate at an alarming pace.

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*Stephen Powers, co-founder
and COO of ESS*

This concerning trend, to be disclosed this week by Emergency Safety Solutions (ESS) at the 2024 New York International Auto Show, has been brought to light by Impact Research's recent update to its groundbreaking 2020 study of Federal motor vehicle crash data – the first-ever comprehensive effort to quantify the magnitude of crashes as well as associated fatalities and injuries involving stationary or disabled vehicles across U.S. roadways.

Results from the [updated study](#), which covers the period

from 2017 to 2021, highlight the intricate nature of this rapidly escalating road safety challenge and emphasize the critical need for a holistic solution. Key findings include:

1. High Number of Crashes and Casualties – Nearly 125,000 people were involved in crashes of this type in 2021, resulting in almost 23,000 injured or killed.
2. Inadequate Advance Warning – Drivers currently lack sufficient advance warning of disabled and vulnerable vehicles ahead of them. This deficiency results in a disabled or vulnerable vehicle crash occurring an average of every four minutes daily. Improved advance warning systems and driver education are essential to address this issue effectively.
3. Continued Increase in Injuries and Deaths – Despite efforts to enhance roadway safety, injuries and deaths within this safety case are increasing at a compounding rate of 8.4% per year. This upward trend persisted even during the COVID-19 pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 – when fewer vehicles and miles were driven – which suggests the existence of systemic challenges that must be addressed.
4. Disparate Impact – The study reveals stark disparities in road safety, with 80% of fatal victims

coming from below-average income communities, and Black Americans being twice as likely to be fatal victims. These findings emphasize the urgent need for equitable interventions to improve road safety for all.

"This new data on preventable collisions involving stranded motorists along our roadways is shocking – and serves as an enormous wake up call to automakers, auto safety regulators and advocates, and all motorists alike," said Stephen Powers, ESS co-founder and chief operating officer. "This growing deadly road safety problem has been hiding in plain sight for decades due to the way roadside crashes are tracked by the Federal government. But the good news is, we can solve this – and relatively quickly."

"We have readily available, cost-effective technology tools that can significantly enhance the visibility of disabled vehicles to oncoming drivers," Powers emphasized. "However, this is just one piece of the puzzle. We must engage in a comprehensive dialogue involving automakers, suppliers, legislators, regulators, insurers, and everyday motorists. Collaboration is key to implementing achievable solutions and making our roads safer for everyone."

Using NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System and its Crash Report Sampling System, the study defines three crash types where insufficient conspicuity of a disabled vehicle resulted in injury or death:

1. Moving vehicle strikes disabled vehicle (including secondary collisions/multi-car pile ups)
2. Pedestrian is struck while tending to a disabled or stopped vehicle (primarily motorists who exited their vehicle and Good Samaritans who provided aid)
3. Vehicle departs roadway and crashes, goes unnoticed, and rescue is delayed significantly

At the New York International Auto Show, ESS is showcasing a dramatically safer reality for drivers and occupants of disabled and vulnerable vehicles, presenting a breakthrough solution that significantly enhances foundational safety for all roadway users. The company is demonstrating its lifesaving H.E.L.P.[®] (Hazard Enhanced Location Protocol) solution suite on a 2024 Jeep Wrangler with pre-production software and a 2022 Ford Bronco with an aftermarket embodiment of the solution. Ready for OEM implementation, H.E.L.P. protects drivers and other vehicle occupants by providing two forms of advanced warnings to oncoming drivers to alert them to – and help them safely avoid – disabled and vulnerable motorists on the roadway ahead.

H.E.L.P. auto-deploys when conditions indicate a safety need, such as a tire blowout, driveline failure, airbag deployment or autonomous driving system safety stop. Drivers can also activate H.E.L.P. manually when their hazards are engaged, and the vehicle is in Park. Upon deployment, H.E.L.P. Digital Alerts are sent to oncoming drivers via their in-vehicle displays and GPS navigation apps such as Waze to provide advance warning as they are approaching a disabled vehicle. Simultaneously, H.E.L.P. Lighting Alerts deploy with a dramatically improved hazard flash pattern that is both faster and sharper than standard hazard lighting.

These combined alerts provide unmatched situational awareness to drivers approaching disabled and vulnerable vehicles:

- A 2022 study by Virginia Tech Transportation Institute showed H.E.L.P. Lighting Alerts are more attention grabbing and cause oncoming drivers to slow down and move over significantly earlier and more often than standard hazard lights.
- Digital alerts have been shown to reduce hard braking events by a staggering 80 percent, thereby reducing the likelihood of related crashes (source: Purdue University, 2021).

H.E.L.P. Lighting Alerts are available on most existing and new Tesla vehicles in the U.S., as announced by Tesla in October 2023 via social media platform X. Additionally, Stellantis announced in May 2023 it is assessing H.E.L.P. Digital Alerts and H.E.L.P. Lighting Alerts for integration into its connected safety platforms. ESS is also actively working with Volkswagen Group of America on testing and timing to bring H.E.L.P. to market, while collaborating with a range of other vehicle manufacturers to implement H.E.L.P. safety features across the industry.

About Emergency Safety Solutions

ESS' mission is to save lives by eliminating preventable crashes involving vulnerable vehicles that are disabled and stopped on or near active roadways. This growing safety issue affects nearly 125,000 people yearly in the U.S., with 23,000 injured or killed. ESS' suite of H.E.L.P. solutions provide advanced lighting alerts and digital location-based alerts and digital location-based alerts to greatly improve advance warning communication to drivers.

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