

Moak

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mated emergency braking, forward-collision warning, blind-spot warning, rear cross-traffic warning and lane-departure warning. Consumer Reports noted that drivers were most appreciative of blind-spot warnings and rear cross-traffic warnings (although these systems have been panned in the past; the American Automobile Association in 2015 cited high error rates for RCTA systems).

In particular, for vehicle owners who said these features had saved them from accidents, blind-spot warnings were cited for preventing 35 percent of potential crashes. Even experienced drivers can fail to see a car that's in their own vehicle's blind spot and sideswipe neighboring vehicles when changing lanes. A blind-spot warning system sounds an alarm when it senses you're about to change lanes into another vehicle.

While many of these features simply give you a visual, auditory or even tactile warning that a collision is imminent, others actually take control of the vehicle if the system senses a dangerous situation. For example, lane-keeping systems use cameras to detect lane markings and will steer your vehicle back to its lane if you're drifting out of

the lane. AEB will automatically apply the brakes if it senses you're about to rear-end the vehicle in front of you.

Of course, with all of these technologies comes the potential for errors, which can annoy drivers and cause them to lose faith in the technology. For example, owners of vehicles equipped with forward-collision warning reported the highest number of false alerts. About 45 percent of these drivers reported getting at least one false alert.

Still, Consumer Reports (and many consumer advocates and regulatory bodies) think these technologies are a great idea (even with the occasional error) and recommend more of these technologies become standard equipment in the future. "Consumer Reports believes that FCW and AEB should be standard equipment, even with occasional false alerts," noted the survey authors. "The latest study from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety supports this: Rear-end crashes are cut by 27 percent when a vehicle has FCW and by 50 percent when it's also equipped with AEB."

To read Consumer Reports' full article, which includes more results about each of the technologies covered, visit <http://bit.ly/2twfCBc>. For more on each type of feature and videos to explain them, visit the NHTSA's site at <http://bit.ly/2oCBSVM>.

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