

NHTSA have proposed a rule ordering automakers to put event data recorders, commonly known as "black boxes", in all new light vehicles manufactured after September 2014.



Under the proposal, all passenger vehicles weighing less than 3855 kg will need to be equipped with event data recorders. It will cost an estimated \$26.4m to make them standard across the industry. The agency say that price tag is justified because black boxes will help regulators learn how to prevent crashes.

The devices "provide critical safety information that might not otherwise be available to NHTSA to evaluate what happened during a crash -- and what future steps could be taken to save lives and prevent injuries," NHTSA Administrator David Strickland said in a press release.

The rule has been in the works for years. Early last year, NHTSA said it would propose making the black boxes mandatory by the end of 2011, but the White House Office of Management and Budget reviewed the regulation for more than a year.

NHTSA must now take public comment on its proposal and decide whether to make changes before writing the requirements into law.

Industry groups such as the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers have raised concerns about the privacy of data gathered from black boxes.

These data can include the speed of the vehicle, whether the driver pressed the brake and whether the driver's seat belt was buckled at the time of the crash.

NHTSA have proposed to keep their current privacy policy, which says that any data belong to the owner of the vehicle and cannot be used without consent.