

Tesla have been upgrading some of their Model 3 cars already on the road in Europe with Dynamic Brake Lights. The California-based EV maker say the new feature will help avoid crashes.



It's part of the 2019.8.3 software update, which brings a variety of new and upgraded features to various Tesla vehicles depending on the model and market. Tesla describes the new feature: "If you are driving over 50 km/h (31 mph) and brake forcefully, the brake lights will flash quickly to warn other drivers that your car is rapidly slowing down".

In addition to flashing the brake lights, the new software also automatically activates the car's hazard warning lights under extreme deceleration. They're turned back off automatically as soon as the driver presses the accelerator or the hazard flasher switch.

It could be difficult for Tesla to introduce the feature in North America, where Federal regulations call for brake lights to be "steady burning" (i.e., of substantially unchanging intensity) and state regulations may also prohibit it. And besides, American-spec Model 3 cars use one and the same unusually-small red light on each side of the rear of the car for the brake light and turn signal/hazard flasher functions.

The feature, known in international UN Regulations as "Emergency Braking Display" (EBD) or "Emergency Stop Signal" (ESS), has been allowed and in use—in Europe and the many other countries where the UN Regulations are recognised—by other automakers for quite awhile.

Daimler requested a limited, low-volume exemption from the American steady-burn requirement in 2005 so as to test ESS under American conditions, and NHTSA granted it in 2006, but ESS has not been approved for general equipment in North America.

Meanwhile, the same Tesla software update contains a new Autopilot function called "Autosteer Stop Light Warning", which will notify drivers audiovisually when the brake lights or turn signals illuminate on the car ahead. The cars will also, it is said, be able to recognise other drivers' intent to change lanes. In such a case, Autopilot adjusts its speed and allows the nearby vehicle to change lanes. It is to be hoped that the update addresses concerns with Autopilot's behaviour in traffic, which sometimes involved un-humanlike brake applications immediately before or after lane changes.