

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus paves way for future automation with car communication

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Lexus is letting cars talk to each other and infrastructure. Image credit: Lexus

By STAFF REPORTS

Lexus parent company Toyota Corporation is looking to make driving safer by allowing its vehicles to communicate with other cars and infrastructure.

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From 2021, Toyota and Lexus will begin equipping models in the United States with Dedicated Short-Range Communications (DRSC) technology, which can help prevent collisions and give drivers a heads up about upcoming road conditions. Toyota sees DRSC as a means of advancing both connected and autonomous driving, two areas seeing significant focus among automakers.

Connecting cars

DRSC technology broadcasts information such as a car's location, speed and acceleration, which can be used by DRSC-enabled vehicles and devices to avoid crashes. These vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication technologies have been tested by the U.S. government in collaboration with the automotive industry.

The technology is standardized, allowing cars from different brands to communicate with each other.

Drivers can also get notifications based on their position, warning them about a stopped car or hard to see road signs.

Toyota Corp. first went to market with DRSC-enabled vehicles in Japan in 2015, becoming the first automaker to sell cars with the technology. Today there are more than 100,000 cars with DRSC on the road in the country.



DRSC can warn drivers about upcoming dangers. Image credit: Lexus

The company plans to have DRSC installed on most of its lineup by the middle of the next decade.

“By allowing vehicles’ intelligent systems to collaborate more broadly and effectively through DSRC technology, we can help drivers realize a future with zero fatalities from crashes, better traffic flow and less congestion,” said Jim Lentz, CEO of Toyota Motor North America, in a statement.

“Three years ago, we pledged to have automatic emergency braking in almost every vehicle we sell by the end of 2017,” he said. “Today, 92 percent of all Toyota and Lexus vehicles sold in the U.S. have Toyota Safety Sense or Lexus Safety System + with AEB standard, and other automakers’ deployment of this life-saving technology is accelerating, three years ahead of the 2022 industry target.

“In that same spirit, we believe that greater DSRC adoption by all automakers will not only help drivers get to their destinations more safely and efficiently, but also help lay the foundation for future connected and automated driving systems.”

While consumers are still hesitant to embrace driverless vehicles, the industry’s overall success will lie with autonomous services rather than individual ownership.

The United States is expected to lead the race in production of autonomous technology deployment and production likely by next year, with Europe and China joining in 2021. Ride-sharing economy and mobility services will be the forces that help driverless vehicles takeoff instead of consumers owning these cars themselves ([see story](#)).

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