



eCall: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the role of the European Commission? Does it include only the approval of standard solution, or will the European Commission provide its own solution, system and hardware?

The role of the European Commission is to support the roll out of eCall throughout Europe, for example by supporting research and cooperation between EU countries and industry on the standards involved, and between EU countries on the rules that will govern its use. Overall, a small minority of EU countries have been slow to support eCall which is why the Commission proposed common measures to ensure that eCall works in all 27 EU countries and in cars of all brands and countries of origin by 2014. At the moment, 15 EU countries (Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden) as well as 3 EEA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) have agreed common arrangements for implementing eCall. Another 7 EU countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania and Poland) support eCall and are willing to sign the agreement.

What will be the cost of the eCall? Who will pay for it? Who will provide the hardware?

The basic pan-European eCall service, based on 112, is a public service deemed to be offered by free. However, it is expected that the eCall technology platform capabilities (i.e., positioning, processing and communication modules) could be exploited commercially (e.g., advanced insurances schemes, stolen vehicles tracking, eTolling).

Agreeing common standards at EU level, and implementing eCall in all vehicles, will reduce costs of implementing eCall in a Single Market of 500 million consumers due to economies of scale. Around 230 million cars and 33 million trucks were in circulation in Europe in 2007. It is also very important that the same technology is used across the EU's single market so that the car and telecoms industries can very quickly roll out one single system. Imagine how much longer it would take if car manufacturers had to start making different cars for different countries. But automotive OEMs with their suppliers will produce their own products that will comply with the common European eCall standards.

The aim is to have the eCall device would cost around 100 € when implemented in all vehicles.

Will it be possible to retrofit cars with an eCall solution?

It is expected that there will be aftermarket solutions offering the eCall functionality. The price may be higher than embedded standard factory fitted devices, and will depend on possible added functionalities.

Will it be possible to manually send an SOS via the eCall, besides the automatic crash notification?

Of course, the eCall can be triggered manually, e.g. by pushing a button, as well as being triggered automatically in the event of a serious accident. Building on the single European emergency number 112 (which is now available throughout the EU), eCall will automatically transmit the location of the eCaller to the nearest emergency services – even when passengers do not know or cannot say where they are.

What is the role played by the company Qualcomm? Has Qualcomm been selected by the Commission for its Data Over Voice technology?

Qualcomm solution was selected by the European Telecommunication Standardisation Institute (ETSI) and 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) experts following an open and competitive procedure, and acknowledged by automotive and emergency services representatives.

Did the EC pay for the licensing agreement?

Although the Commission is satisfied with Qualcomm's policy of not charging any additional licence for the use of Qualcomm in-band modem solution for eCall, it has not imposed that its technology will be offered license free.

The European Commission stated that regulatory measures will be taken if the stakeholders don't show a clear commitment towards the deployment of the eCall by the end of 2009. Is a mandate by 2010 possible?

The Commission will examine the progress made next year. If it considers that EU countries and industry have not made enough progress for the implementation of the eCall, it can propose regulatory measures in 2010.

What role will the mobile operators play in the deployment of the eCall?

The mobile operators should support the deployment of the eCall in their networks, i.e., by implementing the eCall flag in their networks, and forward the eCall to the Public-Safety Answering Point (PSAP) responsible for responding to the eCall, as they did to manage the 112 calls. On the 9th of September 2009, the GSM Association, representing more than 800 mobile operators in 219 countries, showed its full support to the deployment of the eCall by signing the Memorandum of Understanding.