



NEWS

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POPULAR FORD SYNC SYSTEM UPDATED, EXPANDED; '911 ASSIST' CONNECTS EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP

- Ford-Microsoft SYNC system to be available in nearly all Ford, Lincoln and Mercury vehicles later this year
- New "911 Assist" feature will help quickly connect vehicle occupants directly to a local 911 emergency operator following an air bag deployment in a SYNC-equipped vehicle – with no monthly fees
- Since SYNC is updatable, customers with 2008-model-year SYNC-equipped vehicles will be able to have their systems improved with the new applications

LAS VEGAS, Jan. 6, 2008 – Ford Motor Company and Microsoft announce today that the award-winning Ford SYNC™ in-car connectivity system will be available to even more customers and with even more functionality later this year.

In his keynote address at the 2008 International CES in Las Vegas, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates announced that Ford will expand SYNC to nearly all Ford, Lincoln and Mercury cars and trucks by the end of 2008. Gates also confirmed a new "911 Assist" feature that will help drivers connect with emergency assistance in the event of an air bag deployment.

Introduced in the fall of 2007 and developed jointly by Ford and Microsoft, SYNC provides customers the convenience and flexibility to bring digital media players – Apple iPods, Microsoft Zunes and other MP3 players – and Bluetooth-enabled mobile phones into their vehicle and operate the devices via voice commands or with the buttons on the steering wheel or radio.

SYNC has been very popular. The new technology – which is exclusive to Ford, Lincoln and Mercury vehicles – topped 30,000 unit sales in its first three months on the market. In fact, Ford says SYNC is on track to reach 1 million sales in early 2009.

The technology is available today on 12 Ford, Lincoln and Mercury vehicles. Later this year, it will be offered on nearly every new Ford, Lincoln and Mercury vehicle.

In addition to the new 911 Assist feature, SYNC is being updated this year to create, on demand, easy-to-understand reports that owners can use to monitor the health of their vehicles.

Because SYNC is a software solution, owners of 2008 models equipped with SYNC already on the road will be able to have their systems updated with the new functions, as well.

“From the start, we pursued an updatable software solution with SYNC, using the consumer electronics business as our model,” said Derrick Kuzak, Ford’s group vice president of Global Product Development. “The ability to add functionality and update the system to work with new devices is what makes SYNC unique in the industry right now. It is a strategy that will benefit our customers over time by ensuring their systems do not become outdated.”

911 Assist

Research shows that safety continues to be a leading driver of purchase consideration, and Ford is already a safety leader. In fact, Ford Motor Company has earned more National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) five star safety ratings and more Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) Top Safety Picks than any other manufacturer.

But, in the event of a serious accident with an air bag deployment, the ability to directly contact the local 911 emergency operator could be a critical need – for both vehicle occupants and the first responders. Beginning later this year, SYNC can help.

When a phone is properly paired, turned on and connected to SYNC – which is designed to happen every time the driver enters the vehicle with his or her cell phone – the system will be ready to assist in placing a call to a local 911 emergency operator should an air bag-deploying accident occur.

Before initiating the emergency 911 call, SYNC will provide a 10-second window to allow the driver or passenger to decide whether to cancel the call. If not manually cancelled within the 10-second window, SYNC will place the emergency call. A pre-recorded message will play when the call is answered, and occupants in the vehicle will then be able to communicate directly with the 911 operator.

“Being connected means being able to get the help you need, when you need it,” Kuzak said. “With SYNC, and specifically with the 911 Assist feature, we will be providing our customers an extra layer of security and peace of mind.”

The key advantage of SYNC 911 Assist is speed, as calls are placed directly to local 911 operators. A SYNC-assisted call should reach 911 operators faster than competitive systems, as there are no handoffs and no need to speak to a call-center operator. Further, there is no additional monthly fee for this feature, as SYNC utilizes a customer’s existing mobile phone.

Once the call is connected, 911 operators can respond to the situation exactly as they would with any 911 call. Emergency services can even determine the medical priority and dispatch the appropriate assistance based on the situation. If necessary – if vehicle occupants are non-responsive, for example – the location of the vehicle can be determined through voice-signal triangulation or, on some phones, the GPS location feature.

The new SYNC 911 Assist feature is expected to be high on every “customer want” list. It will become available later this year, and earlier SYNC software and vehicles will be updatable to support this additional application.

Vehicle Health Reports

Properly maintaining vehicles can save time, money and improve customers' ownership experiences. Later this year, with SYNC's added functionality, staying up to speed with a vehicle's maintenance needs will be easier than ever.

Using the SYNC website (www.syncmyride.com), customers will be able to set up personal preferences for Vehicle Health Report (VHR). Once established, a report can be requested at any time, at no cost, using simple voice commands.

In creating a health report, SYNC will gather relevant information from the major vehicle control modules and send that information to Ford via an 800-number using the customer's paired and operable mobile phone. The whole process, which in some vehicles will include a routine check of more than two dozen systems, takes a matter of minutes.

Once sent, the information is automatically analyzed by Ford and a complete report is created. Notification is then sent via text message or e-mail, based on customer preference. Reports will be accessible through www.syncmyride.com and will use simple, customer-friendly language, suggest next steps and, when appropriate, allow customers to schedule service online. Reports can also be printed or emailed as necessary.

Owners that need reminding about vehicle maintenance will be able to have SYNC prompt them to run a report at mileage intervals consistent with Ford's maintenance schedule.

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About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles in 200 markets across six continents. With about 250,000 employees and about 100 plants worldwide, the company's core and affiliated automotive brands include Ford, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lincoln, Mercury, Volvo and Mazda. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford's products, please visit www.ford.com.