

Handicapped-Accessible Accelerator Pedal Redesigned Based on Fatality

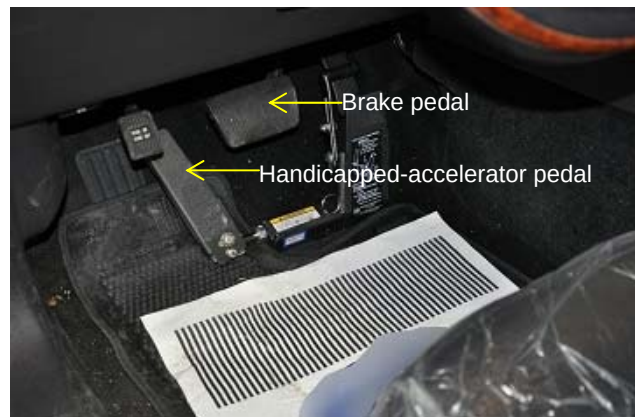
A 50-year-old certified master auto technician died after he was struck by a car while sitting at a desk in a dealership's service bay. The Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program investigated the death and produced a fatality report with prevention recommendations. A manufacturer read the disseminated report and redesigned the affected equipment.

The Challenge

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 157,605 automotive repair and maintenance employers with 826,286 employees in the U.S. in 2013. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in the same year 71 fatal injuries and a nonfatal injury rate of three cases per 100 full-time workers in automotive repair and maintenance.

The Response

An auto technician entered a passenger vehicle to drive it to the automotive service area. The passenger vehicle was equipped with a handicapped-accessible accelerator pedal that provided left-foot acceleration instead of right-foot acceleration. The auto technician mistook the accelerator pedal for the brake pedal and the vehicle struck and killed the certified master service technician, who was seated at a desk facing away from the passenger vehicle. Kentucky FACE produced a report on the fatal incident that contained a number of prevention recommendations and mailed it to 45 Kentucky vehicle dealerships and to 11 handicapped-accessible accelerator pedal manufacturers.



The Impact

Veigel North America LLC Mobility Products & Design read the fatality report, contacted the Kentucky FACE program, and then redesigned their Left Foot Accelerator, Model 3545, to retrofit a vehicle's steering column with a key switch. The left accelerator pedal is now only activated when a driver turns this key switch on and presses the accelerator function switch to the left. Otherwise, the pedal defaults to a standard right-foot accelerator pedal. The redesigned pedal became available for purchase in June 2015.

In addition, based on the Kentucky FACE fatality report recommendations, the car dealership established and implemented new policies that require employees to remove all handicapped-accessible equipment before a vehicle is serviced and to perform vehicle service intake paperwork away from the service area.

For more information, visit the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center:
<http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/projects/KOSHS/index.html>.