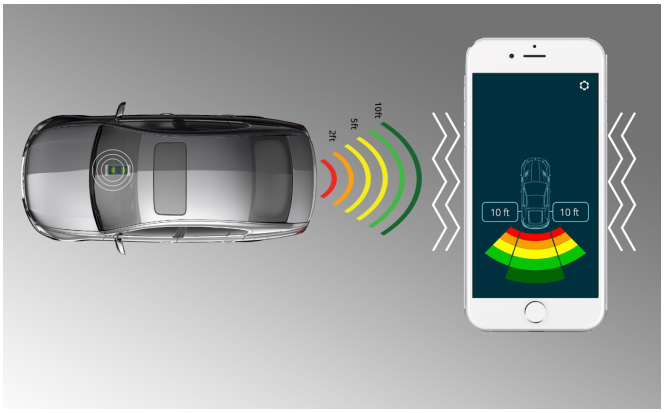
How a license plate frame may help drivers avoid parking woes

25 May 2016, by Nancy Owano



(Tech Xplore)—"There are 15,000 backup related injuries per year," said FenSens, makers of a new parking solution.

This is a license plate device paired with a smartphone app with the targeted result being more carefree parking with better chances that you will get it right.

Leave alone injuries; repairs for fender damage can cost $3,000 or more, according to the makers.

FenSens is offering interested viewers on its site an earlybird price of $99 for those who sign up on its list. The makers' promotional video shows a cartoon character.

"Bob is trying to parallel park but he does not have a backup sensor and can't see behind him. He could have used FenSens..." This is described as a smart parking device, and his phone would alert him as to how much room he has with audio beeps, visual display and "vibration assist."

How it works: This is a smart plate frame which you install using an included screwdriver and security screws over your plate. The team claims the device takes less than 5 minutes to set up on the car.

"The patent pending FenSens gives you eyes in front and behind your vehicle, so you can simply park safe" said the site page.

You download the app over your smartphone, open the app and pair your device with the smartphone.

You can dock the phone in your mobile phone dock or just leave it in your pocket.

The app will detect you backing up. Seeing exactly how far you are from an object, the app will provide beeps and will beep all the faster the closer you get to an object.

There is a visual display and even without having to take your phone out of your pocket vibration feedback as you get close to an object.

What kind of cars will it work for and are there vehicles where it will not work?

"FenSens is perfect for all consumer and commercial fleet vehicles not exceeding 30 feet in length," according to their site. "If your car has a recessed license plate frame above the bumper, you might need the FenSens Truck version, which has the sensors positioned at the top of the FenSens device. We advise the owner of any vehicle with a license plate frame higher than 4 feet off the ground to test the vertical range of the sensor before using, as it may have trouble seeing objects below 2 feet."

So how is their product special? There are parking aids available but this one has a certain advantage. Scott Collie, who covers automotive topics for *Gizmag*, paid tribute to the parking sensors and reversing cameras that "have done a lot to prevent

parking scrapes and reversing accidents in recent years" but still FenSens has an edge, as those other advances have been "generally the preserve of new cars. FenSens is aiming to change that with its new license plate frame, which wirelessly connects to your smartphone and gives you parking sensors regardless of how old your ride is."

Whether or not FenSens succeeds as a parking assisting mainstay, one thing is certain: Parallel parking is not fun. For some, it is just a matter of concentrating, gritting teeth and getting the job quickly done. For others it is a difficult pain. Add to the aggravation the fact that at times the attempt is not at all successful and accidents occur. A report last year in *Automotive Fleet* said about 14 percent of all vehicle collisions that result in damage occur in parking lots, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS).

The battery lasts about 5 months. Recharging involves popping off the detachable battery housing after unscrewing the security screw. The battery charge is 2 hours.

More information: fensens.com/

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