

Is MirrorEye the blind back-in solution?

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I was always jealous of the guys who could do a blindside back-in with no problem. I sucked at it. It's way too late for me, but a solution may be at hand for everybody else.

On April 5, the FMCSA published a request for comments on an application for an exemption from the requirement that trucks have two rear-view mirrors. Stoneridge Inc., Novi, Mich., would replace them with what it calls the MirrorEye [camera system](#).

According to Stoneridge, the small cameras are mounted on arms that extend out just like the mirrors, but have a much wider field of view and could be adjusted from inside the cab. No more blind spots.

They are retractable electrically from inside. The high-res images appear on displays that resemble standard, West Coast mirrors mounted inside the cab on the left and right edges of the windshield. You look in the same directions, just not quite as far. Of course, the camera arm presents a much slimmer profile to the wind than traditional mirrors. The resulting aerodynamics will save fuel – enough to pay for the system, the company suggests.

A little over the top? Maybe. You get the impression MirrorEye will do everything but polish your grille. But I really hope at least some of it is true, because Stoneridge's claims caught my attention.

For example, on its website Stoneridge says MirrorEye has “night vision to make maneuvering at night safer and easier and advanced image handling to minimize glare caused by direct sunlight.” I never liked being blinded by my own mirrors at dawn and sunset. Who does?

Is it possible that MirrorEye image handling can make a difference when backing from bright sunlight into a dark, interior bay? In my experience, mirrors showed nothing but a black hole until almost the entire truck was inside. By that time my back and neck hurt from hanging out the window and looking backwards. Or I was exhausted from hopping out to walk inside and eyeball my progress firsthand. I emailed Stoneridge about that; they haven’t gotten back to me.

But even if that’s not the case, there’s still the wide and adjustable field of view. MirrorEye “can be set up to follow trailers, merging lanes and more,” according to Stoneridge.

Merging lanes is cool. “And more” may be even cooler. But the very coolest to a blind-back-in hater like me is the idea of following the right side of your trailer in a blind back-in.

The drivers and instructors in YouTube videos make it look easy. For them, I suppose it is. But not for me, and I suspect I’m not the only one. So I like this MirrorEye idea a lot.

Yes, it’s more electronics, and stuff can go wrong. However, when it comes to mirrors all kinds of stuff goes wrong now. The damn things get frosted over or too dirty to see. They shatter and make much larger targets than the little cameras. And at least those little cameras are not on the internet – not yet, anyhow.

Of course, I’ve only seen MirrorEye in videos, and I’m reluctant to plug commercial products, but this one looks cool indeed.

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