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For the past few years, various carmakers have been offering blind-spot detection systems for their cars’ side mirrors. Often complex, these systems employ cameras or radar to scan the adjoining lanes for vehicles that may have disappeared from view.

The Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) published a paper in 1995 suggesting how outside mirrors could be adjusted to eliminate blind spots. The paper advocates adjusting the mirrors so far outward that the viewing angle of the side mirrors just overlaps that of the cabin’s rearview mirror. This can be disorienting for drivers used to seeing the flanks of their own car in the side mirrors. But when correctly positioned, the mirrors negate a car’s blind spots. This obviates the need to glance over your shoulder to safely change lanes as well as the need for an expensive blind-spot warning system.

The only problem is getting used to the SAE-recommended mirror positions. The cabin’s rearview mirror is used to keep an eye on what is coming up from behind, while the outside mirrors reflect the area outside the view of the inside rearview mirror.

Those who have switched to the SAE’s approach swear by it, however, some drivers can’t adjust to not using the outside mirrors to see directly behind the car and miss being able to see their own car in the side mirrors. To them we say, “Have fun filling out those accident reports.”