



## Ford brings hands-free driving technology to motorways in Great Britain

- Ford becomes the first automaker to introduce “hands-off, eyes-on” advanced driver assistance technology approved for pre-mapped motorways in Great Britain
- Drivers of 2023 Ford Mustang Mach-E vehicles can activate subscription for top-rated system that has already enabled 64 million hands-free miles (102 million km) driven in the US and Canada
- Safety of driver, passengers and other road users was central to development and approval; BlueCruise monitors traffic, speed signs and driver attentiveness for ultimate confidence

**COLOGNE, Germany, April 13, 2023** – Ford today delivered a watershed moment with the introduction of a Level 2 hands-free advanced driver assistance system<sup>1,2</sup> with regulatory approval for use on the motorway network in Great Britain – the first system of its kind approved in Europe.

Drivers of 193,000 BlueCruise-equipped Ford and Lincoln vehicles have already driven more than 64 million hands-free miles (102 million kilometres) in Canada and the US, where BlueCruise was also recently named the [Consumer Reports Top Rated Active Driving Assistance System](#).

Now, a green light for Ford BlueCruise<sup>2,3</sup> technology from the UK’s Department for Transport means drivers of enabled Mustang Mach-E models can use “hands-off, eyes-on” driving technology on 2,300 miles (3,700 km) of pre-mapped motorways in England, Scotland and Wales,<sup>4</sup> designated as Blue Zones.

BlueCruise takes the comfort and convenience benefits of advanced driver assistance to the next level. The system monitors road markings, speed signs and evolving traffic conditions to control steering, acceleration, braking and lane positioning, as well as to maintain safe and consistent distances to vehicles ahead – right down to a complete halt in traffic jams.

In addition, sophisticated infrared camera technology continually checks driver attentiveness for safety and confidence.

“It’s not every day that you can say you’ve placed one foot in the future, but Ford BlueCruise becoming the first hands-free driving system of its kind to receive approval for use in a European country is a significant step forward for our industry,” said Martin Sander, general manager, Ford Model e, Europe. “Modern highways can be demanding even for the most confident drivers, and intimidating for many. BlueCruise can do some of the ‘heavy lifting’, to make highway driving less of a chore, and give drivers that little extra confidence and convenience.”

Owners of Ford Mustang Mach-E model year 2023 vehicles<sup>5</sup> in Great Britain are the first to be able to activate BlueCruise via subscription.<sup>6</sup> The first 90 days are included with the vehicle purchase and, thereafter, a £17.99 monthly subscription provides the flexibility to cover extended road trips and holidays, and enable the advanced driver assistance system around anticipated vehicle use.

“Today marks a significant moment for our industry as Ford BlueCruise becomes the first hands-free driving system of its kind to receive approval for use in Great Britain,” said Lisa Brankin, managing director, Ford UK & Ireland. “We have always strived to make technology accessible for our customers, and BlueCruise is this next step on this journey, making motorway driving a more comfortable experience.”

Fine-tuned to deliver an intuitive and confidence-inspiring experience during more than 700,000 miles (1.1 million km) of Ford advanced driver assistance system testing globally, BlueCruise is a milestone in Ford’s journey to establishing leadership positions in mobility solutions.

“It is great news that Ford has chosen us for the European launch of its BlueCruise technology, and I am delighted that this country is once more at the forefront of innovation,” said Jesse Norman, UK Transport Minister. “The latest advanced driver assistance systems make driving smoother and easier, but they can also help make roads safer by reducing scope for driver error.”

Ford expects BlueCruise to be activated in further European countries as and when regulatory conditions permit, and will roll out the system to further Ford vehicles in the coming years.

### **Hands-off, eyes-on driving**

BlueCruise builds on the capabilities of Ford’s Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control (IACC),<sup>2</sup> which can automatically keep pace with traffic within legal speed limits, right down to a complete halt. Hands-free mode allows drivers on approved Blue Zone sections of motorway to drive with their hands off the steering wheel if they continue to pay attention to the road ahead – granting an additional level of comfort during long drives.

Before transitioning to hands-free driving, BlueCruise-equipped vehicles confirm that lane markings are visible, that the driver has their eyes on the road and that other conditions are appropriate. The system uses animated cluster transitions featuring text and blue lighting cues to communicate that the feature is in hands-free mode, effective even for those with colour blindness.

Operating up to a maximum speed of 80 mph (130 km/h), BlueCruise uses a combination of radars and cameras to detect and track the position and speed of other vehicles on the road. A forward-facing camera detects lane markings and speed signs and, crucially, the system also uses an infrared driver-facing camera located below the instrument cluster to check the driver’s eye gaze and head pose – even when they are wearing sunglasses – and ensure their attention remains focused on the road.

If the system detects driver inattention, warning messages are first displayed in the instrument cluster, followed by audible alerts, brake activations, and finally slowing of the vehicle while

maintaining steering control. Similar actions are performed if the driver fails to place their hands back on the steering wheel when prompted when leaving a Blue Zone.

Ford is also working with regulatory authorities and exploring opportunities to deliver BlueCruise via a future Ford Power-Up software update to Mustang Mach-E models equipped with the optional Tech Pack or Tech Pack + and built prior to 2023.

### **The Mother of All Road Trips**

Ford engineers undertook 100,000 miles (160,000 km) of testing on European roads to validate latest-generation advanced driver assistance systems including BlueCruise and its supporting features, in addition to over 600,000 miles (965,000 km) covered in the US and Canada before the system was introduced to those markets last year. Validation drives in Great Britain helped prove out the ability to handle circumstances drivers encounter every day, such as worn-out lane markings, poor weather and roadworks.

“There’s a good reason why Ford BlueCruise is the first hands-free driving system of its kind to be cleared for use in a European country: We’ve proven that it can support the driver while still requiring that they keep their eyes on the road for their safety and that of their passengers while the system is active. That means BlueCruise can help make other road users’ journeys more comfortable too,” said Torsten Wey, chief engineer, Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, Ford Europe.

BlueCruise is the latest addition to the Mustang Mach-E’s suite of technologies that also includes Pre-Collision Assist,<sup>2</sup> Active Park Assist 2.0<sup>2</sup> and Ford’s SYNC 4A connectivity system<sup>7</sup> supported by a 15.5-inch touchscreen.

In addition, Ford Power-Up software updates can use the connectivity provided by FordPass Connect<sup>8</sup> to continuously improve the vehicle and add new features without leaving home.

Offering up to 372 miles (600 km) pure-electric driving range<sup>9</sup> between charges and supported by Ford’s BlueOval Charge Network – Europe’s largest, with more than 450,000 chargers and growing – the Mustang Mach-E is among nine all-electric vehicles Ford plans to offer in Europe by 2024. Ford plans to achieve zero emissions for all vehicle sales and carbon neutrality across its European footprint of facilities, logistics and suppliers by 2035.

For more information, visit: <https://www.ford.co.uk/technology/driving-assistance/ford-bluecruise> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dotX0NIXSW0>

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### **Editor’s notes: How Ford BlueCruise works**

When engaged by the customer via the vehicle’s driver assistance settings menu, BlueCruise hands-free driving becomes available when the vehicle detects it has entered an approved Blue Zone on the public highway, and IACC<sup>2</sup> is active. The system will revert to IACC when leaving a Blue Zone.

For BlueCruise to activate, drivers must first have their hands on the wheel and eyes on the road. When directed by the instrument display, drivers can take their hands off the steering wheel while keeping their eyes on the road, allowing the vehicle to:

- Keep pace with other vehicles up to a chosen maximum speed and down to a complete stop, making it less demanding than ever to negotiate traffic on Blue Zone highways whether free-flowing or stop-start traffic jams
- Adjust the vehicle's maximum speed to limits posted at the roadside, on overhead gantries and in the navigation system, as well as using Predictive Speed Assist<sup>2</sup> that smoothly adjusts speed as drivers approach a sharp curve
- Position itself according to lane markings, including using In-Lane Repositioning<sup>2</sup> to make the experience feel more natural by subtly shifting away from vehicles in adjacent lanes – something drivers tend to do intuitively when alongside larger trucks
- Allow drivers to temporarily retake control of steering, before automatically reactivating BlueCruise steering control if the driver removes their hands from the wheel while still within a Blue Zone

<sup>1</sup> [SAE International](#) defines Level or Category 2 – Partial Driving Automation – as the sustained and operation design domain-specific execution by a driving automation system of both the lateral and longitudinal vehicle motion control subtasks of the dynamic driving task with the expectation that the driver completes the object and event detection and response subtask and supervises the driving automation system.

<sup>2</sup> Driver-assist features are supplemental and do not replace the driver's attention, judgment and need to control the vehicle.

<sup>3</sup> Ford BlueCruise is a hands-free highway driving feature. Only remove hands from the steering wheel when in a Hands-Free Blue Zone. Always watch the road and be prepared to resume control of the vehicle. It does not replace safe driving. See Owner's Manual for details and limitations. [The BlueCruise Prep Kit contains the hardware required for this feature.] Requires purchased BlueCruise subscription to cover data usage, regular map updates and feature improvements. To use BlueCruise you will need to activate your Mustang Mach-E using the FordPass App.

<sup>4</sup> Not available in Northern Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> Mustang Mach-E model year 2023 production from November 2022. Consult vehicle documentation or with Ford dealer for individual vehicle build date.

<sup>6</sup> BlueCruise capability comes as standard on model year 2023 Mustang Mach-E vehicles. Subscribers receive the first 90 days free to trial the feature, and can cancel at any time. FordPass Connect must be activated prior to BlueCruise being enabled.

<sup>7</sup> Don't drive while distracted or while using handheld devices. Use voice-operated systems when possible. Some features may be locked out while the vehicle is in gear. Not all features are compatible with all phones.

<sup>8</sup> FordPass Connect (optional on select vehicles), the FordPass App., and complimentary Connected Service are required for remote features (see FordPass Terms for details). Connected service and features depend on compatible network availability. Evolving technology/cellular networks/vehicle capability may limit functionality and prevent operation of connected features. Connected service excludes Wi-Fi hotspot.

<sup>9</sup> In accordance with the Worldwide Harmonized Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP). A range of up to 600 km (intended target value according to WLTP) can be achieved with a fully charged battery - depending on the existing series and battery configuration. The actual range may vary due to various factors (e.g. weather conditions, driving style, route profile, vehicle condition, age and condition of the lithium-ion battery).

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### **Ford in Belgium & Luxembourg**

*Ford Belgium distributes Ford vehicles and Ford original parts in Belgium & Luxembourg, since 1922. Ford Lommel Proving Ground is the lead test facility for validation of all Ford models in Europe, with approximately 370 employees. Ford Lommel Proving Ground offers high end Drive Training for external companies, associations and private individuals.*

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