

Product Information

i-close: An Innovation with many Advantages for the Customer

i-close satisfies several vehicle requirements that are important for the motorist: noise reduction, increased driver comfort and safety.

Noise reduction

Increasingly noise is regarded as a social nuisance by communities and politicians alike. Most town councils now have noise reduction strategies to remedy environmental noise.

In Germany alone more than 1 million car doors are slammed every day. i-close makes an important contribution to significantly reduce noise levels. Vehicles with fitted soft closing doors and optimised door sealing produce up to 23 decibels less noise compared to conventional doors. To the human ear, a reduction in noise of 10 decibels is perceived as a reduction in noise volume of 50 per cent. With i-close the closing of the door is almost inaudible.

In addition, passengers benefit from considerably reduced noise levels, not just when closing the doors, but also during the journey. This, because of optimised door sealing in combination with the i-close reducing exterior noise transmission.

Comfort

i-close makes day-to-day use of the car easier. There are many situations in everyday life where one is unable to close a door properly because one is carrying something, is in a hurry or there is restricted space to slam the door. With i-close the door will always be closed automatically saving the motorist several trips and the uncertainty whether the door is closed.

i-close reduces physical exertion for the driver. No longer does the driver need to check that the passenger and rear doors are securely shut by leaning across or behind. If a passenger leaves the car without securely shutting the door, the i-close will do it for the driver. Taxi drivers especially will appreciate this.

Safety

Car safety is ensured in three areas: Firstly, securely fastened doors optimise the stiffness and rigidity of the car. Secondly, the driver need not leave the car to check the passenger doors are closed which can often be hazardous on busy roads. Thirdly, with some models the doors are not always securely locked if the latch is only in primary position. The car with i-close is harder to steal because it guarantees the car is securely and completely locked.

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A Luxurious Experience

Customers increasingly seek to purchase a bespoke car to their personal specification. When choosing a car, the availability of a specific option can be a crucial factor in the decision-making process. i-close offers the ability to choose a luxury option in a compact car. The customer is able to stand out from the crowd and to purchase a luxury which would otherwise not be available.

Quiet closing doors have always been a prestige feature offered on ultra-luxury cars. The noise a car makes when closing the door affects the perceived value of the brand. The soft closing feature makes the customer re-assess the quality of the car that is being purchased.

Kiekert is responsible for the acoustic design of several renowned brands due to its comprehensive and long-standing experience in production of central locking. With the i-close Kiekert is taking the next step and offering this premium experience to the middle and compact classes. The i-close makes the customer feel his whole car has been upgraded.

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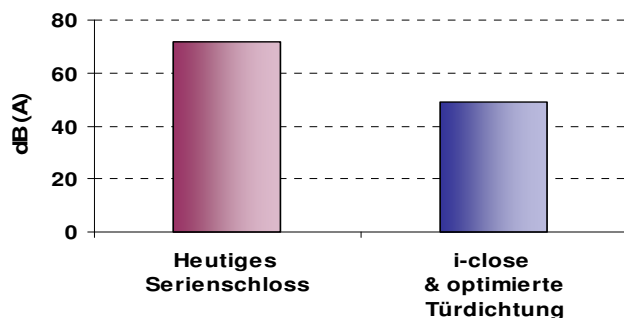
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Technical Information

The i-close was specifically developed to meet the requirements of the middle and compact classes. It is lighter, more cost effective and quieter than the soft closing options available at present on premium class cars. With the i-close latch the transmission of external noise to the interior of the car is reduced by 20 per cent. The noise transmission from inside to the outside of the car is also reduced 20 percent.

i-close Considerably Reduces Door Closing Noise

The door sealing specialist Metzeler in cooperation with Kiekert has developed a door sealing system for the i-close to optimise door opening acoustics. Vehicles with the i-close soft closing option and custom door sealing system have a reduction of 23 decibels in door closing noise compared to conventional doors.



conventional latch

i-close + optimised door sealing

i-close offers more luxury at no additional weight or additional fuel consumption.

The half kilogram greater weight of the i-close latch is compensated for by the optimised i-close door sealing system. The result is that there is no net increase in weight of the new latch system. This has the advantage that there is no fuel consumption penalty. Further, the new i-close latch system is 0.7 kilograms lighter than the soft closing systems currently fitted to premium cars.

Technical information of the i-close's performance (compared to current premium power cinching systems)

Acoustics* (exterior)	42.6 dB(A)	-20%
Acoustics* (interior)	50.5 dB(A)	-20%
Net Weight	1 kg	-50%
Door Sealing Pressure	800 N	
Door Closing Time	0.8 Sec	+/- 0%

*Running noise of the soft closing actuator

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Operating Mode of the i-close

With the i-close the door no longer needs to be slammed. The door is simply leaned onto the primary latch position. Then the integrated latch sensor gives a signal to the latch electronics to start the actuator which then shuts the door securely. The actuator is compact and light, and operates the pawl by using a power regulated low friction gear mechanism to close the door silently and completely. The catch is no longer operated manually. Once the door is closed a sensor registers the successful closing of the door to the latch electronics.

Safety has first priority. The electric closing process can be interrupted at any time by using the inner or outer door handle even if the door is locked or childproofed. The conventional manual slamming of the door will also be possible even with the i-close fitted.

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Implications for the Car Maker

Huge Rewards from Little Effort

With i-close the manufacturer may offer the customer of middle and compact class cars a completely new soft closing option comparable in luxury, noise reduction and safety to the soft closing options available in the premium class. Customers in the volume segment now have available a luxury experience hitherto unavailable.

The organisational and technical effort required to introduce the i-close into the manufacturer's options list is extremely low. The i-close has the same connectors and mounting points as the conventional latches of the middle and compact classes. The i-close has the same dimensions as a conventional latch meaning that no adjustment is needed to accommodate it. Likewise the width of the frame plate and the footprint are not affected. The i-close features an integrated electronics system. It also features an integrated concept of latch and soft closing option in one product compared to a modular system where latch and soft closing option are separate components. This has great advantages: less packaging is needed, the assembly is quicker and there are no major changes in the car maker's logistics and production processes where conventional latches have been used so far. This has a positive impact upon costs.

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