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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 A.M. ET, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

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**IIHS challenges automakers with tougher *TOP SAFETY PICK* award criteria**

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is making it harder to earn its *TOP SAFETY PICK* and *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards in 2024, challenging manufacturers to offer better protection for back seat passengers and improve their pedestrian crash avoidance systems.

Despite the more stringent requirements, 71 models qualify for 2024 awards. Of those, 22 earn *TOP SAFETY PICK+*, and 49 earn *TOP SAFETY PICK*.

“We followed the tougher requirements we introduced last year with another major update to the award criteria in 2024,” said IIHS President David Harkey. “This year’s winners are true standouts, offering the highest level of protection for both vehicle occupants and other vulnerable road users.”

Last year’s biggest change was the replacement of the original side crash test with an updated version that uses a heavier barrier traveling at a higher speed. Initially, an acceptable or good rating was enough to garner the lower-tier *TOP SAFETY PICK* award. In 2024, a good rating is required for either *TOP SAFETY PICK* or *TOP SAFETY PICK+*.

In addition, vehicles now need an acceptable or good rating in a revised version of the pedestrian front crash prevention evaluation to qualify for either award. The new version replaces the earlier daytime and nighttime tests with a single evaluation that includes some test runs in daylight and some in the dark. Last year, vehicles could earn the lower-tier award regardless of whether they could detect and avoid pedestrians in the dark.

In an even bigger change, the updated moderate front overlap test has replaced the original evaluation in the 2024 *TOP SAFETY PICK+* requirements. Vehicles now need an acceptable or good rating in the updated evaluation, which adds a second dummy seated behind the driver and emphasizes back seat safety. A good rating in the original moderate overlap test is still needed for the base *TOP SAFETY PICK* award.

As before, to earn either award, a vehicle must offer good protection in a small overlap front crash, in which 25% of the vehicle’s width on either side collides with another vehicle or a stationary object. This year, the driver-side and passenger-side evaluations have been combined into a single rating. The test is performed on both the driver and passenger sides, and the rating is equivalent to the lower of the two results.

Award winners also must have good or acceptable headlights equipped on all trim levels.

Hyundai Motor Group, which includes the Genesis, Hyundai and Kia brands, has the most 2024 awards overall — six *TOP SAFETY PICK+* and 10 *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards for a total of 16. Toyota Motor Corp., which includes the Toyota

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and Lexus brands, has the next highest total with one *TOP SAFETY PICK+* and 12 *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards. Mazda earns the most *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards of any single brand, with five, as well as one *TOP SAFETY PICK*.

By class, small SUVs, midsize SUVs and midsize luxury SUVs are tied for the most *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards, with five each. Midsize luxury SUVs, which qualify for an additional 12 *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards, earn the most awards overall. Relatively few cars and pickups qualify for either award.

“The high number of SUVs that earn awards probably reflects the dominance of those vehicles in the U.S. market,” said Harkey. “But it’s disappointing that only four pickups and four midsize cars earn awards, considering the popularity of those classes.”

The changes to the 2024 award criteria are designed to push automakers to pursue higher levels of safety.

IIHS introduced the original moderate overlap front test in 1995. At the time, most vehicles earned ratings of poor or marginal. For the past decade, virtually every vehicle tested has earned a good rating thanks to stronger vehicle structures, the introduction of front and side-curtain airbags and a series of improvements in seat belt technology.

That represents a big win for safety. An analysis of 14 years’ worth of crash data involving IIHS-rated vehicles shows that a driver of a model rated good in the original moderate overlap test is 46% less likely to die in a head-on crash with a similar vehicle, compared with a driver of a model rated poor.

IIHS introduced the updated test to encourage similar advancements in the back seat. Once, second-row occupants were substantially safer than those seated in the front because of the greater distance between them and the impact in a frontal crash. In today’s vehicles, though, there is barely any deformation of the occupant compartment in the moderate overlap test. In addition, automakers have added airbags and advanced seat belts in the front seats but not often in the rear. As a result, in vehicles from model year 2007 onward, the risk of a fatal injury is higher for belted occupants in the rear seat than in the front.

To spur automakers to address that gap, the updated test includes an additional dummy positioned in the second row behind the driver and utilizes new metrics that focus on the injuries most frequently seen in rear-seat occupants. Many automakers have made substantial progress since the first group of ratings was released in December 2022. Making an acceptable or good rating a requirement for *TOP SAFETY PICK+* is the next step in accelerating those improvements.

The tougher standards for pedestrian front crash prevention systems are grounded in similar progress. In 2019, when IIHS launched the daytime vehicle-to-pedestrian evaluation, only 21% of the vehicles tested earned the highest rating of superior, while 44% of new models didn’t even offer the technology. By 2023, 59% of vehicles earned superior ratings in the daytime test, and 40% also earned superior ratings in the nighttime evaluation, which was introduced a year earlier.

An advanced or superior rating in the daytime test was required for a 2023 *TOP SAFETY PICK* award, and an advanced or superior rating in the nighttime test was necessary to earn the “plus.” For 2024, IIHS has combined the two tests into a single evaluation, making nighttime performance essential for either award. The superior/advanced/basic/no credit scale has been replaced by the good/acceptable/marginal/poor scale used for other IIHS evaluations. This subtle change recognizes that technology that detects and brakes for pedestrians should be expected on all vehicles.

Pedestrians represent an increasingly large share of crash deaths, and pedestrian fatalities are currently at their highest level since the early 1980s. Most pedestrian crashes occur during the day, when there are more people on the roads, but three-quarters of fatal pedestrian crashes happen at night.

“There’s still progress to be made in the protection that vehicles provide for their occupants, as the introduction of the updated moderate overlap test shows,” Harkey said. “But many of the biggest gains of the future will come from automakers and policymakers, along with all of us as car buyers and drivers, taking steps to protect everyone on the road, not just our own families.”

**2024 TOP SAFETY PICK+**

**G**

Good ratings in the small overlap front test and updated side test

**A G**

Acceptable or good rating in the updated moderate overlap front test

**A G**

Acceptable or good headlights standard

**A G**

Acceptable or good rating in the pedestrian front crash prevention test

<b>Small cars</b>	Acura Integra Mazda 3 hatchback Mazda 3 sedan Toyota Prius
<b>Midsized cars</b>	Honda Accord Hyundai Ioniq 6
<b>Large luxury car</b>	Genesis Electrified G80
<b>Small SUVs</b>	Genesis GV60 Honda HR-V Hyundai Kona Mazda CX-30 Mazda CX-50 built after August 2023
<b>Midsized SUVs</b>	Ford Explorer Kia Telluride Mazda CX-90 Nissan Pathfinder built after November 2023 Subaru Ascent
<b>Midsized luxury SUVs</b>	Acura MDX BMW X3 Genesis GV80 built after August 2023 Mercedes-Benz GLE Class with optional front crash prevention Tesla Model Y

**2024 TOP SAFETY PICK**

**G**

Good ratings in the small overlap front test, original moderate overlap front test and updated side test

**A G**

Acceptable or good headlights standard

**A G**

Acceptable or good rating in the pedestrian front crash prevention test

<b>Small cars</b>	Hyundai Elantra Subaru Impreza Toyota Prius Prime
<b>Midsized cars</b>	Subaru Outback Toyota Camry
<b>Large car</b>	Toyota Crown
<b>Midsized luxury cars</b>	BMW 5 series Mercedes-Benz C-Class
<b>Large luxury cars</b>	Genesis G80 Genesis G90
<b>Small SUVs</b>	BMW X1 Honda CR-V Hyundai Ioniq 5 Hyundai Tucson Kia Sportage Lexus UX Lexus RZ Subaru Solterra
<b>Midsized SUVs</b>	Honda Pilot Hyundai Palisade Jeep Grand Cherokee Jeep Grand Cherokee L Mazda CX-90 PHEV Nissan Ariya Toyota Highlander Volkswagen Atlas Volkswagen Atlas Cross Sport

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**2024 TOP SAFETY PICK**

**G**

Good ratings in the small overlap front test, original moderate overlap front test and updated side test

**A G**

Acceptable or good headlights standard

**A G**

Acceptable or good rating in the pedestrian front crash prevention test

<b>Large SUVs</b>	Audi Q7 Audi Q8 e-tron Audi Q8 Sportback e-tron Rivian R1S
<b>Midsized luxury SUVs</b>	Acura RDX Audi Q4 e-tron Audi Q4 Sportback e-tron Genesis Electrified GV70 Genesis GV70 built after November 2023 Infiniti QX60 Lexus NX Lexus NX Plug-in Hybrid Lexus RX Mercedes-Benz GLC Volvo XC90 Volvo XC90 Recharge
<b>Minivans</b>	Honda Odyssey Toyota Sienna
<b>Small pickup</b>	Hyundai Santa Cruz
<b>Large pickups</b>	Rivian R1T crew cab Toyota Tundra crew cab Toyota Tundra extended cab

**For more information, go to [iihs.org](https://www.iihs.org)**

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries and property damage from motor vehicle crashes through research and evaluation and through education of consumers, policymakers and safety professionals. IIHS is wholly supported by auto insurers.