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64 vehicles earn 2020 IIHS awards, thanks to state-of-the-art safety

ARLINGTON, Va. — Sixty-four cars and SUVs qualify for an award from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety under new criteria that prioritize the protection of pedestrians in addition to vehicle occupants.

To qualify for a 2020 *TOP SAFETY PICK* or *TOP SAFETY PICK+* award, vehicles must have good ratings in each of the Institute’s six crashworthiness evaluations. They must also have good or acceptable headlights and available front crash prevention that earns advanced or superior ratings in both vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-pedestrian evaluations.

The “plus” is awarded to models that come exclusively with good or acceptable headlights, making it easier for consumers to find properly equipped vehicles. Of the 64 award winners, 23 qualify for *TOP SAFETY PICK+*.

No minivans or pickups qualify for either award so far this year. That could change if automakers make midyear production changes and nominate the vehicle for testing.

“The headlight ratings that have been part of our awards criteria in recent years have pushed automakers to pay more attention to this essential equipment,” says IIHS President David Harkey. “However, finding vehicles with the right headlights can be a challenge for consumers. We wanted to reward automakers that have removed this obstacle.”

Six of the “plus” winners — the Genesis G70, Honda Insight, Hyundai Nexo, Lexus NX, Subaru Crosstrek Hybrid and Tesla Model 3 — aren’t sold with anything other than good-rated headlights. A good rating means headlights provide the best balance of visibility and lack of excessive glare for drivers of oncoming vehicles.

Good visibility is key to avoiding crashes in the dark. In the time it takes a driver to react to an obstacle under ideal conditions — 1½ seconds — a car traveling 55 mph covers about 120 feet. Thus, headlights need to illuminate obstacles well before that. The difference between good-rated headlights and poor ones can be the difference between seeing an obstacle in time to stop and crashing into it.

Front crash prevention

Although consumers who buy a *TOP SAFETY PICK+* can be assured that any trim line they choose will be equipped with adequate headlights, they’ll still need to make sure their particular vehicle is equipped with front crash prevention. Vehicles can meet the front crash prevention requirements for either award with optional equipment.

However, 20 *TOP SAFETY PICK+* winners and 26 *TOP SAFETY PICK* winners come with standard systems, as automakers move to meet their voluntary commitment on automatic emergency braking (AEB). The commitment calls for front AEB to be standard on all but the heaviest passenger vehicles by 2022.



The voluntary commitment calls only for systems that avoid crashes with other vehicles, but many automakers are incorporating vehicle-to-pedestrian functionality.

IIHS launched pedestrian crash prevention ratings about a year ago and is incorporating them into the *TOP SAFETY PICK* and *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards for the first time.

Vehicles are evaluated in three scenarios: an adult pedestrian stepping into the street in the path of the oncoming vehicle with an unobstructed view, a child darting into the street from behind two parked cars, and an adult pedestrian near the side of the road in the travel lane, facing away from traffic. Each test is conducted at two different speeds.

Pedestrian detection technology is one solution that could help address rising pedestrian deaths. Annual pedestrian fatalities have increased 53 percent since reaching a low point in 2009, and more than 6,000 pedestrians were killed in crashes in 2018.

“Rewarding technology that protects people outside the vehicle is new territory for the *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards, but we believe vehicle manufacturers have an important role to play in protecting vulnerable road users,” Harkey says.

Good protection for passengers

This is the first year that a good passenger-side small overlap front rating is required for both awards. Last year, a good or acceptable rating was required for *TOP SAFETY PICK*, while a good rating was needed to achieve the “plus.”

The passenger-side small overlap evaluation is the newest of the IIHS crashworthiness tests. The Institute launched this test after it became clear that some manufacturers were ignoring the passenger side as they made changes to improve performance in the IIHS driver-side small overlap test.

The small overlap tests are designed to replicate what happens when just the front corner of the vehicle collides with another vehicle or an object like a tree or utility pole. These crashes present a challenge for some seat belt and airbag designs because occupants move both forward and to the side of the vehicle. In addition, crash forces can bypass the vehicle’s main crush-zone structures.

Mazda, Hyundai are standouts

Among automakers, Mazda has the most *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards with five — for the Mazda 3 sedan, Mazda 3 hatchback, Mazda 6, CX-3 and CX-5. The company earns an additional *TOP SAFETY PICK* for the CX-9.

Hyundai Motor Group — which includes the Genesis and Kia brands in addition to Hyundai — has the most winners overall, 14 earning a *TOP SAFETY PICK* award and three earning *TOP SAFETY PICK+*.

No vehicles from Fiat Chrysler or Mitsubishi earn either award this year. Ford/Lincoln, Volvo and BMW haven’t picked up any *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards, while General Motors and Nissan each earn only one *TOP SAFETY PICK* and one *TOP SAFETY PICK+* award.

See the following page for the full list of winners.

For more information, go to iihs.org

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing the losses — deaths, injuries and property damage — from motor vehicle crashes. IIHS is wholly supported by auto insurers.



2020 TOP SAFETY PICK+

These models have **standard** good or acceptable headlights.

| | |
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| Small cars | Honda Insight Mazda 3 hatchback Mazda 3 sedan Subaru Crosstrek Hybrid |
| Midsized cars | Mazda 6 Nissan Maxima Subaru Legacy Subaru Outback built after October 2019 Toyota Camry |
| Midsized luxury cars | Lexus ES Mercedes-Benz C-Class sedan; with optional front crash prevention Tesla Model 3 |
| Large luxury cars | Audi A6 Genesis G70 built after December 2019 Genesis G80 |
| Small SUVs | Mazda CX-3 Mazda CX-5 with optional front crash prevention Subaru Forester |
| Midsized luxury SUVs | Acura RDX Cadillac XT6 built after October 2019 Hyundai Nexo Lexus NX Mercedes-Benz GLE-Class built after July 2019; with optional front crash prevention |

All 2020 award winners have:

G Good ratings in the driver-side and passenger-side small overlap front, moderate overlap front, side, roof strength and head restraint tests

+ Advanced or superior rating for front crash prevention in both vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-pedestrian tests

For details on these and other vehicles go to [iihs.org/ratings](https://www.iihs.org/ratings).

2020 TOP SAFETY PICK

Good or acceptable headlights are **available** on these models, but not standard. The vehicles qualify for the award only when equipped with those headlights.

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| Small cars | Honda Civic coupe Honda Civic hatchback; does not apply to Type R variant Honda Civic sedan Hyundai Elantra with optional front crash prevention Hyundai Elantra GT with optional front crash prevention Hyundai Veloster with optional front crash prevention Kia Forte with optional front crash prevention Kia Soul with optional front crash prevention Subaru Crosstrek with optional front crash prevention Subaru Impreza sedan; with optional front crash prevention Subaru Impreza wagon; with optional front crash prevention Subaru WRX with optional front crash prevention Toyota Corolla hatchback Toyota Corolla sedan |
| Midsized cars | Honda Accord Hyundai Sonata Nissan Altima with optional front crash prevention |
| Midsized luxury cars | BMW 3 series Volvo S60 |
| Large car | Kia Stinger with optional front crash prevention |
| Large luxury car | Audi A7 |
| Small SUVs | Chevrolet Equinox Ford Escape Honda CR-V Hyundai Kona with optional front crash prevention Hyundai Tucson with optional front crash prevention Kia Sportage Lexus UX Lincoln Corsair Toyota RAV4 Volvo XC40 |
| Midsized SUVs | Ford Edge Hyundai Palisade Hyundai Santa Fe Kia Sorento with optional front crash prevention Kia Telluride Mazda CX-9 with optional front crash prevention Subaru Ascent Volkswagen Tiguan |
| Midsized luxury SUV | Lexus RX |
| Large SUV | Audi Q8 |

