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SD transponder 14/slot 4 (dl11983V) bandwidth 6 MHz; symbol rate 3.9787 FEC ¾  
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**IIHS strengthens requirements for *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards**

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is strengthening the requirements for its *TOP SAFETY PICK* and *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards in 2023, demanding better side crash protection and improved pedestrian crash prevention systems and eliminating subpar headlights from the field of qualifying vehicles.

As a result of the tougher criteria, only 48 models qualify for 2023 awards. Of those, 28 earn *TOP SAFETY PICK+* and 20 earn *TOP SAFETY PICK*. [This time last year](#), before changes to the award requirements, there were 101 winners, including 65 earning the higher-tier *TOP SAFETY PICK+*.

“The number of winners is smaller this year because we’re challenging automakers to build on the safety gains they’ve already achieved,” said IIHS President David Harkey. “These models are true standouts in both crashworthiness and crash prevention.”

The biggest change to the criteria for both awards is the replacement of the original IIHS side crash test with the updated evaluation launched in 2021. The updated test involves 82 percent more energy than the original test. Vehicles must earn an acceptable or good rating to qualify for *TOP SAFETY PICK*, while a good rating is required for the “plus.”

The *TOP SAFETY PICK+* criteria include another new evaluation, the nighttime vehicle-to-pedestrian front crash prevention test. Advanced or superior performance is required in both the nighttime and daytime pedestrian tests for the higher award. For *TOP SAFETY PICK*, only a daytime rating of advanced or superior is required.

When it comes to headlights, requirements for the base award have gotten more stringent. Previously, a vehicle could qualify by offering at least one trim level with available acceptable or good headlights, while winners of the “plus” award needed to have them standard across all trims. For 2023, both awards require standard acceptable or good headlights.

As before, to earn either award, a vehicle must earn good ratings in the driver-side small overlap front, passenger-side small overlap front and original moderate overlap front tests.

The roof strength, head restraint and vehicle-to-vehicle front crash prevention evaluations are no longer part of the award criteria.

Toyota Motor Corp., which includes the Toyota and Lexus brands, has the most 2023 awards overall and the most awards in each category — nine *TOP SAFETY PICK+* and six *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards for a total of 15. Honda Motor Co., which includes the Acura and Honda brands, is next with six *TOP SAFETY PICK+* and two *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards. Mazda earns six *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards.

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By class, midsize luxury SUVs earn the most *TOP SAFETY PICK+* awards, with nine, and small SUVs earn the most awards in total, with four *TOP SAFETY PICK+* and eight *TOP SAFETY PICK* awards. However, vehicles of almost every size and class make the cut, including plug-in hybrids and all-electric vehicles.

“It’s exciting that these manufacturers have been so swift to implement the substantial design changes and technological advancements that these new requirements demand,” said Harkey. “We’re confident that the number of winners will continue to grow throughout the year.”

Updates to the award requirements are an essential part of the *TOP SAFETY PICK* program, which is designed to continually push manufacturers toward a higher level of safety. The updated side test is an example of how IIHS builds on past successes to encourage further progress.

When IIHS introduced the original side test in 2003, most of the vehicles tested earned a poor rating. By 2021, when the Institute launched the updated version that is now part of the award program, virtually every vehicle built for the U.S. market earned a good rating in the original test.

Manufacturers deserve congratulations for that progress, which has saved many lives. In the real world, a driver of a vehicle rated good in the original test is 70 percent less likely to die in a left-side crash, compared with a driver of a vehicle rated poor.

The updated test was born when IIHS researchers discovered that fatalities were still common in side crashes that occurred at higher speeds than the original evaluation. In addition to a higher speed, the updated test uses a new striking barrier that is closer to the weight of today’s SUVs than the old barrier and more closely mimics the damage they create.

Similar progress lies behind the stricter requirements for headlights and pedestrian front crash prevention systems.

Vehicles with good- and acceptable-rated headlights have 15-19 percent fewer nighttime single-vehicle crashes than vehicles with poor-rated headlights, and the *TOP SAFETY PICK* program has already pushed many inferior alternatives off the market. Since IIHS introduced the daytime vehicle-to-pedestrian front crash prevention evaluation in 2019, pedestrian crash avoidance has become at least an option on nearly every model, and around half the systems tested earn superior ratings. But there is still more to do.

About half of all fatal U.S. crashes happen in the dark, and three-quarters of fatal pedestrian crashes occur at night — when [research shows](#) that many pedestrian crash avoidance systems perform poorly. To address that continuing problem, IIHS added the nighttime vehicle-to-pedestrian evaluation to the award requirements and made it impossible for a vehicle to win either award if a consumer could buy it equipped with inferior headlights.

“U.S. traffic fatalities hit a 20-year high in the first half of 2022, in part due to a steady climb in pedestrian crashes,” Harkey said. “Safer vehicles can be an important part of the solution, even though reversing the trend will also take a concerted effort from policymakers and other stakeholders.”

The sunset of the roof strength, head restraint and vehicle-to-vehicle front crash prevention tests is also a result of industry progress, which has made these tests less relevant in their current form.

The federal government adopted roof strength standards similar to the IIHS requirements in 2009, and for some time now, virtually all vehicles tested have earned good ratings. Electronic stability control, which has been mandatory since 2012, has also dramatically reduced the rollover crashes that stronger roofs are intended to mitigate.

Almost all new vehicles earn good ratings in the head restraint evaluation too. IIHS researchers are exploring how that test might be updated to help eliminate more injuries from rear-impact crashes. Similarly, the vehicle-to-vehicle front crash prevention test has been suspended because virtually all new vehicles meet the current requirements as the result of a voluntary commitment by automakers that IIHS helped broker. Researchers are currently working on a more challenging test to address crashes that occur at higher speeds and involve vehicles other than passenger vehicles.

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Further changes to the award criteria are coming in 2024. A good, rather than good or acceptable, rating in the updated side evaluation will be required for *TOP SAFETY PICK* as well as the higher-tier award. In addition, a good or acceptable rating in the updated moderate overlap front test launched last year will be required for the higher-tier *TOP SAFETY PICK+* award, while a good rating in the original moderate overlap front test will continue to qualify vehicles for *TOP SAFETY PICK*. The updated test, which incorporates an additional dummy positioned in the second row, is designed to encourage automakers to extend the high level of protection now commonly provided for the driver and front seat passenger to rear seat occupants.

**See the following page for the full list of winners. For details on each vehicle, go to [iihs.org/ratings](https://www.iihs.org/ratings).**

**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.

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**2023 TOP SAFETY PICK+**

**G**

Good ratings in the driver- and passenger-side small overlap front test and original moderate overlap front test

**G**

Good rating in the updated side test

**A G**

Acceptable or good headlights standard



Advanced or superior rating for daytime vehicle-to-pedestrian front crash prevention



Advanced or superior rating for nighttime vehicle-to-pedestrian front crash prevention

**2023 TOP SAFETY PICK**

**G**

Good ratings in the driver- and passenger-side small overlap front test and original moderate overlap front test

**A G**

Acceptable or good rating in the updated side test

**A G**

Acceptable or good headlights standard



Advanced or superior rating for daytime vehicle-to-pedestrian front crash prevention

<b>Small cars</b>	Acura Integra
<b>Midsized cars</b>	Subaru Outback Toyota Camry built after January 2023
<b>Large luxury cars</b>	Genesis G90
<b>Small SUVs</b>	Honda CR-V Honda HR-V Lexus UX Subaru Solterra (electric) built after October 2022
<b>Midsized SUVs</b>	Hyundai Palisade Kia Telluride Nissan Pathfinder Subaru Ascent Toyota Highlander Volkswagen ID.4 (electric)
<b>Midsized luxury SUVs</b>	Acura MDX Acura RDX Infiniti QX60 Lexus NX Lexus NX Plug-in Hybrid Lexus RX Tesla Model Y (electric) Volvo XC90 Volvo XC90 Recharge (plug-in hybrid)
<b>Minivans</b>	Honda Odyssey Toyota Sienna
<b>Large pickups</b>	Rivian R1T crew cab (electric) Toyota Tundra crew cab Toyota Tundra extended cab
<b>Small cars</b>	Honda Civic hatchback except Type R performance variant Honda Civic sedan Mazda 3 hatchback Mazda 3 sedan Toyota Corolla hatchback Toyota Corolla sedan
<b>Midsized car</b>	Hyundai Sonata built after December 2022 Subaru Legacy
<b>Midsized luxury cars</b>	Lexus ES 350
<b>Small SUVs</b>	Mazda CX-30 Mazda CX-5 Mazda CX-50 Nissan Rogue Subaru Forester Toyota RAV4 Toyota RAV4 Prime (plug-in hybrid) Toyota Venza
<b>Midsized SUVs</b>	Ford Explorer Mazda CX-9
<b>Midsized luxury SUVs</b>	Lincoln Nautilus