

# NEWS RELEASE

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety



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Contact: Joe Young +1 434 985 9244 (office) or +1 504 641 0491 (cell)

## **Automakers quickly improve seat belt reminders in response to IIHS ratings**

ARLINGTON, Va. — Automakers have moved quickly to install louder, more persistent seat belt reminders since the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety began rating the features in 2022.

The first year, only 17% of the new models tested earned a good rating, while 65% were rated marginal or poor. But manufacturers have already flipped those numbers. Sixty-two percent of the 2024 models tested so far are rated good, while only 24% are rated marginal or poor.

“Automakers can boost a vehicle’s performance in this test with just some small software changes,” IIHS President David Harkey said. “These easy tweaks can have a big impact on safety.”

Eighteen vehicles with seat belt reminders that previously fell short recently earned good ratings from IIHS for their latest models. The improved vehicles are the Acura MDX, Ford Escape, Ford Expedition, Ford Maverick, Honda CR-V, Honda HR-V, Honda Odyssey, Honda Pilot, Hyundai Tucson, Mazda CX-5, Mercedes-Benz C-Class, Nissan Altima, Subaru Crosstrek, Toyota Corolla hatchback, Toyota Corolla sedan, Toyota RAV4, Toyota Tacoma and Volvo XC40.

Eight models were previously rated poor, which means they only included a brief reminder for the driver seat. Seven more were rated marginal due to reminders that weren’t long enough or loud enough. Three others were rated acceptable, which means they met the requirements for the front-row seating positions but not for the second row.

Failure to buckle up continues to play a large role in crash deaths. In 2022, about 92% of front-seat occupants and 82% of rear-seat occupants were belted in the government’s on-road observational survey of seat belt use. But a much smaller percentage of the vehicle occupants killed in crashes — half of those in the front seat and a quarter of those in back — were belted during the crashes that killed them.

Many future crash victims could be saved with better seat belt reminders, IIHS [research](#) has found. While a small number of people still adamantly refuse to buckle up, many part-time seat belt users neglect to use them on short trips or simply forget.

An IIHS study found that a persistent reminder was much more effective at getting part-time users to buckle up than a minimal reminder and just as effective as a speed-limiting interlock that kept the vehicle speed under 15 mph unless the driver was buckled in.

“The math is pretty simple,” said David Kidd, the IIHS senior research scientist who led that research as well as the development of the seat belt reminder rating program. “We found that an audible reminder that lasts at least 90 seconds increased belt use by around 30%. That means we could save almost 1,600 lives a year if every vehicle on the road was equipped with a good-rated system.”

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration proposed [tougher federal standards](#) in 2023, but the proposed rule lacked several important components, such as an adequate volume requirement, and has not moved forward.

For now, regulations specify only that seat belt reminders must include an audible signal that lasts for 4-8 seconds total and a visual alert that lasts at least 60 seconds whenever the driver’s seat belt is unbuckled. Such short reminders are easy to ignore.

In contrast, for a **good rating from IIHS**, vehicles have to have an audible reminder that lasts at least 90 seconds if any of the occupied front seats remains unbuckled, as well as meet volume standards and other conditions. A visual and persistent audible reminder lasting at least 30 seconds that alerts the driver when a belted rear occupant unbuckles is also required.

Some automakers have gone even further, equipping vehicles with audible alerts that don't stop until all the occupants are buckled in, no matter how long it takes, or adding reminders for third-row occupants.

"This rapid progress represents a big win," Harkey said. "Making sure everybody uses their seat belt on every trip is a simple way to save lives."

### Seat belt reminder ratings: assorted vehicles

Current model	Rating	Previous model	Rating
2025 Acura MDX	<b>G</b>	2023-24 model	<b>P</b>
2023-24 Ford Escape	<b>G</b>	2021-22 model	<b>P</b>
2024 Ford Expedition	<b>G</b>	2023 model	<b>A</b>
2023-24 Ford Maverick	<b>G</b>	2022 model	<b>P</b>
2023-24 Honda CR-V	<b>G</b>	2021-22 model	<b>P</b>
2023-24 Honda HR-V	<b>G</b>	2021-22 model	<b>P</b>
2025 Honda Odyssey	<b>G</b>	2023-24 model	<b>P</b>
2023-25 Honda Pilot	<b>G</b>	2022 model	<b>P</b>
2024 Hyundai Tucson	<b>G</b>	2022-23 model	<b>A</b>
2023-24 Mazda CX-5	<b>G</b>	2021-22 model	<b>M</b>
2023-24 Mercedes-Benz C-Class	<b>G</b>	2022 model	<b>M</b>
2023-24 Nissan Altima	<b>G</b>	2022 model	<b>A</b>
2024 Subaru Crosstrek	<b>G</b>	2022-23 model	<b>M</b>
2023-24 Toyota RAV4	<b>G</b>	2021-22 model	<b>M</b>
2023-24 Toyota Corolla hatchback	<b>G</b>	2022 model	<b>M</b>
2023-24 Toyota Corolla sedan	<b>G</b>	2022 model	<b>M</b>
2024 Toyota Tacoma	<b>G</b>	2022-23 model	<b>M</b>
2023-24 Volvo XC40	<b>G</b>	2021-22 model	<b>P</b>

**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.