NEWS RELEASE

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

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Cargo vans and work pickups struggle in IIHS crash avoidance tests

ARLINGTON, Va. — Cargo vans and heavy-duty pickups lag behind passenger vehicles when it comes to front crash prevention, new ratings from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show.

Marginal and poor ratings are common among the first commercial vehicles put through the vehicle-to-vehicle and pedestrian crash avoidance tests. Still, in each test, there is at least one good performer, showing that meeting the challenge is not out of reach for manufacturers.

“These results are a wake-up call for commercial vehicle makers,” IIHS President David Harkey said. “Front crash prevention is especially important for these larger, heavier vans and trucks because of the danger they pose to other road users.”

The top performers in both tests are cargo vans. The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 2500 earns a good rating for vehicle-to-vehicle front crash prevention, and the Chevrolet BrightDrop 400 and Rivian RCV-Delivery 500 earn good ratings for pedestrian crash avoidance.

Commercial vehicle safety

IIHS launched its commercial vehicle assessment program in June with information about **driver protection**. That part of the assessment checks for essential features such as standard front and side airbags, advanced seat belt technology and effective seat belt reminders. Many government standards for passenger vehicles, including airbag requirements, don’t apply to delivery vans, box trucks, tractor-trailers and larger work pickups.

Unlike the driver protection evaluation, the **vehicle-to-vehicle front crash prevention** and **pedestrian front crash prevention** evaluations use the Institute’s scale of good, acceptable, marginal or poor. The test protocols and rating requirements are the same as those used for passenger vehicles.

In 2024, 6,215 people were killed in crashes involving heavy- or medium-duty vehicles or light vans, accounting for 16% of all roadway fatalities in the U.S. Reducing that toll is a key part of the Institute’s 30x30 vision of reducing fatalities 30% by 2030.

Just as IIHS ratings have helped move the needle on passenger vehicle safety, these new ratings can help commercial vehicle buyers choose safer vehicles and encourage manufacturers to improve their products.

The initial evaluations focus on cargo vans and Class 3 pickup trucks. Class 3 pickups have a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,001 to 14,000 pounds. The GVWR is the maximum weight a vehicle can carry safely, including passengers, cargo and the weight of the vehicle itself.

IIHS will continue to evaluate Class 3 vehicles this year and next, adding ratings for headlights and rear AEB. Testing of larger Class 4-6 trucks will be phased in later.

Vehicle-to-vehicle crash prevention

The Chevrolet Express 2500 and the GMC Savana 2500 cargo vans earn poor ratings in both the vehicle-to-vehicle and the pedestrian test because they lack automatic emergency braking (AEB). They are available with an optional forward collision warning system only.

Among the other vans and pickups, performance in the vehicle-to-vehicle test varied widely. The test evaluates both forward collision warning and AEB at different speeds with a passenger car target and a motorcycle target. It also evaluates forward collision warning with a semitrailer.

The Sprinter 2500 earns a good rating, the BrightDrop 400 is acceptable, and the others are marginal or poor. The motorcycle target was the biggest challenge. Several systems did not issue warnings or slow at all in most of the motorcycle trials. Others successfully slowed to avoid or mitigate collisions at most speeds with both targets but were downgraded because they didn’t provide timely warnings for the driver.

Pedestrian crash prevention

Overall, the vehicles perform better in the pedestrian evaluation than in the vehicle-to-vehicle test. The pedestrian test represents common daytime and nighttime crashes involving an adult or child crossing the road or an adult walking in the travel lane.

Among cargo vans, the BrightDrop 400 and RCV-Delivery 500 earn good ratings, and the Sprinter 2500 earns an acceptable rating. Among Class 3 pickups, the F-350 and Ram 3500 earn acceptable ratings.

Several vehicles, including the acceptable-rated F-350 and Ram 3500, had a harder time detecting and avoiding the child in daylight conditions than avoiding the adult at night. The problem may be related to the shorter height of the child dummy and the tall front ends of the vehicles. That’s because the sensors used for detection are positioned near the rearview mirror. In some instances, the child dummy was detected at a distance but then “disappeared” as the vehicle got closer.

The poor and marginal systems also failed to slow enough in most of the nighttime trials with the adult. These trials are performed using low beam headlights and then again with high beams, and some vehicles performed substantially worse with the low beams. Others did worse at the slowest test speed than in the faster tests.

Complete front crash prevention ratings are on the next page.

Front crash prevention ratings: cargo vans and Class 3 pickups

		Vehicle-to-vehicle	Pedestrian
Cargo vans	2025-26 Chevrolet BrightDrop 400	A	G
	2025-27 Chevrolet Express 2500	P	P
	2025 Ford Transit T250	P	M
	2025-27 GMC Savana 2500	P	P
	2025 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 2500	G	A
	2025-27 Ram ProMaster 2500	P	M
	2025 Rivian RCV-Delivery 500	M	G
Class 3 pickups	2025-26 Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD	P	M
	2025 Ford F-350	P	A
	2025-26 GMC Sierra 3500	P	M
	2025-27 Ram 3500	M	A

G Good A Acceptable M Marginal P Poor

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 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.