

Dealer Guide to NHTSA's 5-Star Safety Rating Label



Five Stars Is The Highest Rating, One Is The Lowest. More Stars = Safer Cars.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) conducts tests to determine how well new vehicles protect drivers and passengers during crashes and how well they resist rollovers. NCAP also recommends crash avoidance technologies as a part of its Government 5-Star Safety Ratings program. Each year, NHTSA tests new models of passenger cars, pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles (SUVs), and vans and rates them using a 5-Star Safety Ratings System. It is impossible to determine how well vehicles protect drivers and passengers in all types of crashes, but star ratings are one way the relative safety of different vehicles may be compared. Most injuries are a result of either frontal or side crashes, but more than one-quarter of passenger vehicle crash deaths occur in rollovers.

1 Where are the 5-Star ratings found?

5-Star Safety Ratings are posted on the window stickers ("Monroney" labels) displayed on all new vehicles tested by NHTSA and can also be found by visiting www.SaferCar.gov. The following is an example of a 5-Star Safety Ratings label for a tested model:

GOVERNMENT 5-STAR SAFETY RATINGS		
Overall Vehicle Score		Not Rated[▲]
<small>Based on the combined ratings of frontal, side and rollover. Should ONLY be compared to other vehicles of similar size and weight.</small>		
<small>▲ Safety concern: Visit www.safercar.gov or call 1-888-327-4236 for more details.</small>		
Frontal Crash	Driver Passenger	★★★★★ ★★★★★
<small>Based on the risk of injury in a frontal impact. Should ONLY be compared to other vehicles of similar size and weight.</small>		
Side Crash	Front seat Rear seat	★★★ [▲] Not Rated
<small>Based on the risk of injury in a side impact.</small>		
Rollover		★★★★★
<small>Based on the risk of rollover in a single-vehicle crash.</small>		
<small>Star ratings range from 1 to 5 stars (★★★★★) with 5 being the highest</small>		
<small>Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) www.safercar.gov or 1-888-327-4236</small>		

2 How has the NCAP 5-Star Safety Ratings System changed?

Effective with model year (MY) 2011, ratings involve a new side pole test, new test dummies, crash avoidance technology information, and a new *Overall Vehicle Score*. The *Overall Vehicle Score* involves a weighting of the frontal, side and rollover test ratings. MY 2012 vehicles rated and manufactured after 1/31/2012 must have NCAP labels with information based on these changes.

3 Are all vehicles rated each year?

Not all vehicle models are rated each year. However, since NHTSA selects models to be rated based largely upon sales volume, a high percentage of the new light-duty vehicles sold each year have NCAP ratings. Throughout the year, tests are conducted after which model-specific ratings are sent to manufacturers to post on Monroney labels going forward. Thus, it is possible to have two vehicles of the same model on a lot where one label has NCAP ratings and the other does not. Though NHTSA does not rate all models each year, all vehicles sold in the U.S. must meet rigorous Federal motor vehicle safety standards. The following is a sample label for an unrated model:

GOVERNMENT 5-STAR SAFETY RATINGS
This vehicle has not been rated by the government for overall vehicle score, frontal crash, side crash, or rollover risk.
<small>Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) www.safercar.gov or 1-888-327-4236</small>



4 What information is available on vehicle crash avoidance technologies?

For vehicles rated by NCAP, NHTSA identifies whether they are equipped with advanced technology features such as Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Lane Departure Warning (LDW), and Forward Collision Warning (FCW). ESC applies braking to individual wheels during sudden turns to help drivers control their vehicles by maintaining travel in the intended direction. LDW monitors lane markings, alerting drivers who appear to inadvertently drift into adjoining lanes. Sensing if a vehicle gets too close to another vehicle, FCW alerts the driver to brake to avoid a collision.

5 How does NHTSA choose which vehicles to rate?

NHTSA rates a sample of the new models predicted to have high sales volumes and those that have not been rated by NHTSA, or have been structurally redesigned, or have improved safety equipment. Tested vehicles are purchased directly from dealerships across the country.

6 Has the new rating system had an impact on vehicles MY 2010 and prior ratings?

A vehicle previously achieving 4- or 5-star ratings in MY 2010 and prior, may now get lower ratings under the enhanced program, even if few or no changes have been made to the vehicle. This does not mean that the vehicle is less safe, only that the test protocols have become more stringent.

7 Has NHTSA revised the ratings for older vehicles?

The safety ratings for MY 2010 and prior models are not being revised. Consumers should be careful not to compare NCAP ratings for those models with MY 2011 and later ratings. New and old model ratings are separately available on www.SaferCar.gov.

8 How does NHTSA categorize vehicles?

NHTSA categorizes vehicles by class and “curb” weight. Curb weight includes a model’s standard equipment and the maximum capacity of fuel, oil, coolant, and air conditioning. Categories include:

- Passenger cars mini (1,500–1,999 lbs.)
- Passenger cars light (2,000–2,499 lbs.)
- Passenger cars compact (2,500–2,999 lbs.)
- Passenger cars medium (3,000–3,499 lbs.)
- Passenger cars heavy (3,500 lbs. and over)
- Sport utility vehicles (SUV)
- Pickup trucks (PU)
- Vans (VAN)

9 How Can consumers compare vehicles from different classes?

Side crash and rollover ratings can be compared across all classes, but frontal crash ratings must only be compared to *other vehicles in the same class whose weight is plus or minus 250 pounds of the vehicle being rated.*

10 What does it mean if this symbol appears on a vehicle’s ratings label?

This symbol indicates a safety issue that arose during a test, such as a structural failure or the unintended performance of a component, e.g., a fuel leakage or door opening. Consumers may visit www.SaferCar.gov for detail on any high-lighted safety issues.



11 Do other organizations rate vehicles?

Other organizations test and rate vehicles, but the NCAP is presently the only one that rates rollover resistance in addition to frontal and side crashworthiness.

For more information

Prospective purchasers with questions about the new NCAP labels may be directed to www.SaferCar.gov. In addition, dealership personnel with questions may contact NADA Regulatory Affairs at regulatoryaffairs@nada.org or 703-821-7040.