

INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

NEWS RELEASE

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CRASH TEST RESULTS ARE GOOD PREDICTORS OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OCCUPANTS OF VEHICLES IN ON-THE-ROAD CRASHES

ARLINGTON, VA — Drivers of vehicles that earn good ratings in the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's 40 mph frontal offset crash test are much less likely to die in serious frontal crashes out on the highways, compared with drivers of vehicles rated poor.

Since 1995 the Institute has been evaluating the crashworthiness of passenger vehicles based on performance in the frontal offset test. Tested vehicles are rated good, acceptable, marginal, or poor. For the new study relating vehicles' crash test ratings to real-world fatality risk, Institute researchers examined 12 years of records from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System, a federal database of all fatal crashes on U.S. roads, and identified the crash-involved vehicles that had been rated in the offset test.

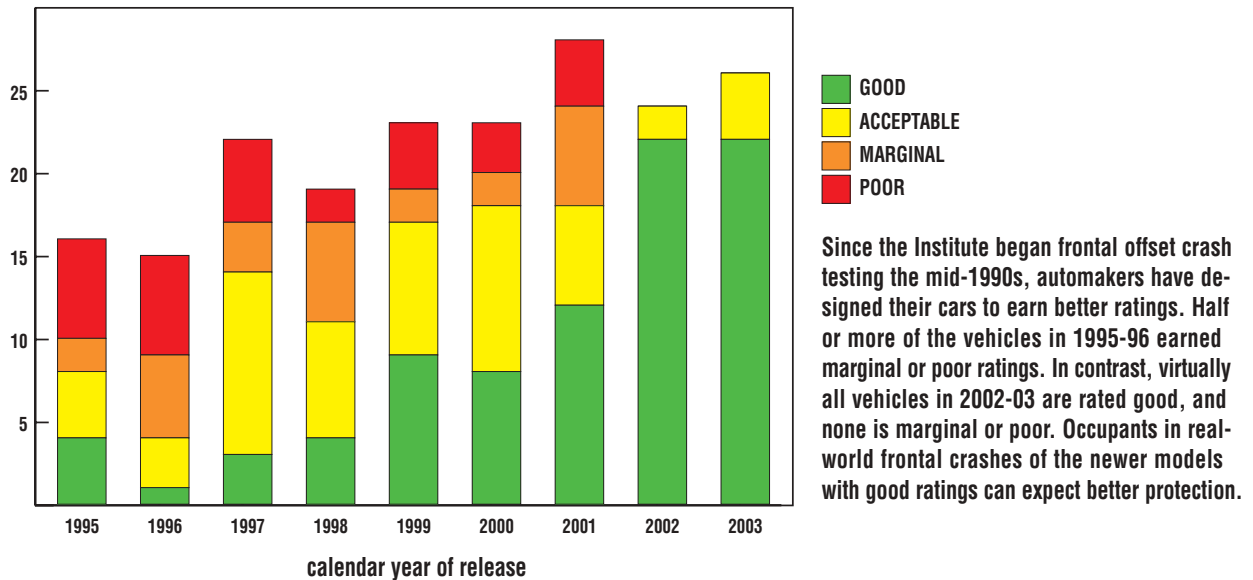
"We've been conducting the frontal offset tests for almost 10 years. It has taken this long to accumulate enough real-world crash fatality data to make the comparisons between crash test ratings and experience in real crashes," Institute chief operating officer Adrian Lund explains. "What we've found is that the tests are very good predictors of fatality risk. Drivers of vehicles rated poor are at significantly greater risk of dying in real-world frontal crashes, compared with drivers of vehicles with better crash test ratings."

In the most relevant comparison, researchers compared fatality risks in crashes in which two vehicles similar in type hit head on (car to car, pickup to pickup, etc.). After controlling for differences in vehicle weight, driver age and gender, and other factors, the researchers found that drivers of vehicles with good ratings were about 74 percent less likely to die than drivers of vehicles rated poor. The drivers of vehicles rated acceptable

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FRONTAL CRASHWORTHINESS RATINGS

Number of vehicles in offset crash tests, by yr. test results were released



or marginal were about 45 percent less likely to die than drivers of the poor-rated vehicles they crashed into.

"Consumers who factor crash test ratings into their purchasing decisions can get more crashworthy vehicles that will do a better job of protecting them if they get in a frontal crash," Lund says.

The results of the new study are consistent with previous research correlating crash test performance and real-world injury and survival rates. A study of cars rated by the European New Car Assessment Program, which uses a frontal offset crash test similar to the Institute's, found that drivers of cars with four-star ratings were about 30 percent less likely to be severely injured in real crashes than drivers of cars with only one star.

End 2-page release on crash tests & real-world crash experience
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