

# INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

## NEWS RELEASE

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### CADILLAC ESCALADE & NISSAN MAXIMA ARE TOP THEFT TARGETS; REPORT SHOWS VEHICLES MOST LIKELY TO HAVE THEFT CLAIMS

ARLINGTON, VA — The 2002-03 model Cadillac Escalade EXT, a luxury pickup, and the 2002-03 model Nissan Maxima, a midsize sedan, have the highest theft claim rates among newer passenger vehicles. The Escalade and Maxima have theft claim rates 7 to 8 times the average for all cars. These are the latest insur-

HIGHEST THEFT CLAIM FREQUENCIES, 2001-03 MODEL PASSENGER VEHICLES				
	SIZE/TYPE	Claim Freq.	Avg. loss payment per claim	Avg. payment per insured vehicle year
Cadillac Escalade EXT (2002-03)	Large luxury pickup	20.2	\$14,939	\$302
Nissan Maxima (2002-03)	Midsize 4-door car	17.0	\$4,126	\$70
Cadillac Escalade (2002-03)	Large luxury SUV	10.2	\$15,703	\$160
Dodge Stratus/Chrysler Sebring	Midsize 4-door car	8.3	\$5,483	\$54
Dodge Intrepid	Large 4-door car	7.9	\$5,394	\$43
	AVERAGE ALL CARS	2.5	\$5,928	\$15

Note: Claim frequencies are per 1,000 insured vehicle years.

LOWEST THEFT CLAIM FREQUENCIES, 2001-03 MODEL PASSENGER VEHICLES				
	SIZE/TYPE	Claim Freq.	Avg. loss payment per claim	Avg. payment per insured vehicle year
Buick LeSabre	Large 4-door car	0.5	\$3,201	\$1
Buick Park Avenue	Large 4-door car	0.5	\$5,098	\$3
Ford Taurus	Large station wagon	0.5	\$4,920	\$3
Buick Rendezvous 4WD (2002-03)	Midsize SUV	0.7	\$1,601	\$1
Saturn LW	Midsize station wagon	0.7	\$2,075	\$2
	AVERAGE ALL CARS	2.5	\$5,928	\$15

ance theft loss results for passenger vehicles 1 to 3 years old published by the Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI), an affiliate of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

"This is the second year in a row that an Escalade is among the vehicles most likely to have a theft

claim," says Kim Hazelbaker, HLDI senior vice president. "Both the Escalade pickup and SUV also top the list of vehicles with the most expensive theft claims, indicating they are top targets for thieves."

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The Escalade's theft losses are the highest even though this vehicle is equipped with a standard antitheft ignition immobilizer. An immobilizer is built into a vehicle's electronic ignition system and is supposed to prevent the vehicle from being started without the proper key.

**Thieves go after custom wheels:** "One reason the Escalade is a top target is that some are equipped with expensive accessories like custom wheels," Hazelbaker says. "Stolen Escalades are sometimes found resting on blocks without their wheels."

Some custom chrome wheel and tire packages can cost more than \$10,000.

The Escalade's antitheft immobilizer system is an early version that may not be as effective as the systems in other vehicles. The Insurance Bureau of Canada doesn't certify the Escalade's immobilizer as meeting the Bureau's antitheft standard because thieves may have found a way to defeat it. Such immobilizers also don't meet antitheft requirements in many other countries.

**Maxima headlights are stolen:** The Maxima's theft claim frequency increased dramatically after Nissan began equipping this car with expensive high-intensity discharge headlights as standard equipment in 2002. While the Maxima's theft claim rate was 8 times higher in 2003, compared with 2001, the average cost of each claim went down. This indicates that, in many cases, the stolen cars were recovered

<b>NISSAN MAXIMA'S THEFT CLAIM FREQUENCY, BY MODEL YEAR</b>			
	<b>Claim Freq.</b>	<b>Avg. loss payment per claim</b>	<b>Avg. payment per insured vehicle year</b>
2001 models without high-intensity discharge headlights	<b>2.5</b>	\$8,652	\$21
2002 models with std. high-intensity discharge headlights	<b>15.8</b>	\$4,293	\$68
2003 models with std. high-intensity discharge headlights	<b>20.4</b>	\$3,650	\$74

with damage or that items such as the headlights were stolen from parked cars.

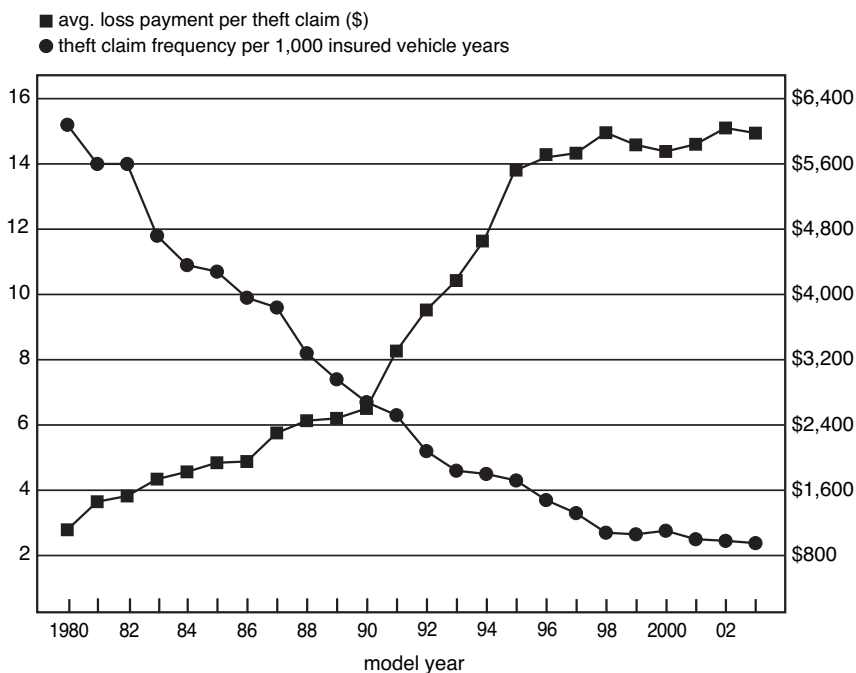
"Investigators tell us the high-

intensity discharge headlights are often stolen because they fit into earlier Maximas that were sold without such lights," Hazelbaker says. "This car was re-designed for 2004, and its new headlight assemblies don't fit previous generation models. It's too early to tell if the 2004s will still have a theft problem."

HLDI results are the only reported theft results based on the number of insured vehicles. Information on theft losses published by the National Insurance Crime Bureau and CCC Information Services doesn't take into account how many of each vehicle are insured, so the most popular vehicles on the road tend to top these organizations' lists of most-stolen vehicles. In contrast, HLDI identifies vehicles with the worst theft losses by counting the number of claims by make and model relative to the number of each make and model insured, indicating which vehicles are most likely to be targets.

**Long-term trends in insurance theft losses:** Overall theft losses (stated as average loss payments per insured vehicle year) reflect both how often theft claims are

**INSURANCE THEFT CLAIM FREQUENCIES & AVG. LOSS PAYMENTS PER CLAIM, 1980-2003 MODELS**



made for a particular vehicle and the cost of the claims.

Since 1980, overall theft claim frequencies have declined while average insurance payments per theft claim have increased. But these trends have leveled off in recent years.

End 3-page news release on insurance theft results  
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