
INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

NEWS RELEASE

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ANOTHER LARGE LUXURY CAR EARNS TOP RATING IN DEMANDING SIDE IMPACT TEST

ARLINGTON, VA — The Lexus GS, equipped with standard side curtain airbags, earned the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's top rating of good in a crash test that simulates a side impact from an SUV or pickup truck. Ratings for the Lexus in the Institute's frontal offset and rear tests were released earlier. This car earned a good rating in the frontal test but is rated marginal for its seat/head restraint design for protection in rear impacts.

"The GS is one of three large luxury cars we've tested that earns the top rating for both front and side crash protection," says Institute president Adrian Lund. "But the GS isn't a 'Top Safety Pick' because of its marginal rating in the rear test. Only the Audi A6 earns that designation among the large luxury cars we've evaluated."

Low injury measures in side impact test: Beginning with 2006 GS models manufactured after August 2005, changes were made to the front seat-mounted torso airbags to ensure better protection of the abdomen in a side impact crash. In the Institute's test, injury measures recorded on crash test dummies in the driver seat and rear passenger seat were low in every category.

"The heads of both dummies were protected from being hit by any hard structures, including the intruding test barrier," Lund says. "Side airbags, especially those designed to protect the head, are key in reducing risks to people in side impacts. The Institute's test represents a crash in which the striking vehicle has a tall front end like a pickup or SUV, so head protection is critical."

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Toyota requested the side test of the GS earlier than the Institute's normal test schedule.

"More manufacturers are requesting tests when they have new designs they expect to perform well," Lund says. "We encourage this because it means the test results will be released earlier, as consumers are beginning to shop for new models. When we do conduct tests early, the automakers provide reimbursement for the cost of the vehicles."

Side impact tests of other large luxury car models are planned for later this year.

How the side impact test is conducted: A vehicle's overall side evaluation is based on performance in a crash test in which the side of the vehicle is struck by a moving barrier representing the front end of a pickup or SUV. Ratings reflect injury measures recorded on two instrumented SID-IIIs dummies, assessment of head protection countermeasures, and the vehicle's structural performance during the impact. Injury measures obtained from the two dummies, one in the driver seat and the other in the rear seat behind the driver, are used to determine the likelihood that a driver and/or passenger in a real-world crash would have sustained serious injury to various body regions. The movements and contacts of the dummies' heads during the crash also are evaluated. Structural performance is based on measurements indicating the amount of B-pillar intrusion into the occupant compartment.

End 2-page news release on crashworthiness ratings for the 2006 Lexus GS. For ratings of all cars and other passenger vehicles, go to www.iihs.org/ratings/default.aspx