

Transport Safety Pack

BUYING A SAFER CAR GUIDE

Buying a safer car is a positive step towards reducing the likelihood of dying or being injured on our roads. Many of the thousands of deaths and serious injuries on Australian roads each year could have been prevented or reduced in severity had drivers chosen a vehicle with advanced safety features and a high rating for crash protection.

Importantly, a safe car may save you money. Safety features and high crash protection ratings can often boost your vehicle's resale value because buyers are increasingly recognising the importance of vehicle safety.

When buying a company car it is important that safety is a priority. Alarming, road crashes are the most common cause of work-related deaths in Australia. Research shows that road crashes account for about half of all work related deaths.

Why?

Safety should be your most important consideration when looking for a new or used motor vehicle. According to the European Transport Safety Council, if all car owners purchased the safest car in their class (small, medium, large) the road toll would be reduced by 40 to 50 per cent.

Research shows that the safest cars on the road can offer up to five times more protection to drivers and passengers in crashes than those that meet the minimum standards. It's in your interests to find out about safety ratings, crash tests and tips for choosing a new or used car.

The array of safety features offered by different makes and models is wide. Although on average, a modern vehicle will provide better protection in a crash than an older one. But not all modern vehicles are the same. Safety features such as airbags, advanced seat belt design and crush zones designed to minimise the forces on their occupants are critical.

Whether you are concerned about safety or saving money, knowing about the latest in safety technology and crash-test ratings enables you to compare vehicles so that you get the most value for your dollar.

Buying a safer car may save your life, so do your research by checking the following 10 things before you go to buy.

1. The Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) crash test results measure how well a new car protects its occupants. Read the booklets which are available from the VicRoads Bookshop Tel (03) 9854 2782 or visit: www.howsafeisyourcar.com.au

2. The Used Car Safety Ratings Program looks at over one million real life crashes and assesses the safety of each model based on the injuries suffered by the drivers in those crashes. The results are available from the VicRoads Bookshop Tel (03) 9854 2782 or visit: www.howsafeisyourcar.com.au
3. Front airbags can significantly reduce life threatening head injuries, when used in conjunction with the seat belt. Side airbags or side curtain airbags also prevent serious injuries in a side impact crash. Ask the salesperson what airbags are installed.
4. The size and weight of a car is an important factor in a crash. Smaller cars are less able to protect their occupants in a crash. So, if buying a smaller car, consider safety options such as airbags and especially check the car's crash performance on www.howsafeisyourcar.com.au
5. Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) may not always reduce the distance it takes to stop, but it will reduce the risk of losing control in emergency braking by preventing wheel lockup and skidding and allowing you to steer the car around an obstacle.
6. Electronic Stability Control (ESC) provides ABS and helps the driver remain in control of their vehicle when they skid, swerve suddenly or when road conditions suddenly change.
7. Daytime Running Lights (DRL) – research shows that having lights on during the day can reduce crashes. DRLs automatically activate whenever a vehicle's ignition is switched on.
8. Over-speed warning devices reduce the need to concentrate on staying within the speed limit. An over-speed warning device is useful in both urban and rural situations.
9. Ensure there is a lap sash seat belt for the centre rear seat position and the car has seat belt warning devices. Seat belts have been proven as the single most effective means of protecting vehicle occupants in a crash. Lap sash seat belts are by far the most effective – so check that a lap sash is provided in the middle of the back seat. Seat belt warning devices will also ensure that you do not forget to do up your seat belt before moving off.
10. Cargo barrier in a station wagon – in a crash, even light objects can become deadly missiles if they are not properly restrained.

Further Information

- ∞ Visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au and www.arrivealive.vic.gov.au
- ∞ Visit www.howsafeisyourcar.com.au

This safety guide has been produced by the Transport Industry Safety Group with the support of VicRoads to improve the safety of transport workers. It is one of 18 Safety Guides and other important information including the TISG's 'A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety Transport Industry' that can be downloaded from www.vta.com.au



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