

MEDIA RELEASE

Attention: News editors/Transport writers

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New safety ratings put used cars in the spotlight

Used car buyers can check how well their vehicle is likely to perform in a crash with the release of the 2006 Used Car Safety Ratings (UCSR) today.

Motorists are urged to buy a car in the top-rating category in the class they require – be it small, family, light commercial or four-wheel drive.

The UCSR, the world's largest study of vehicle crashes, is conducted by the Monash University Accident Research Centre and supported by the RACV, the TAC, and VicRoads, as well as other state and federal road authorities and motoring clubs from Australia and New Zealand.

The informative guide contains easily understood information on what should be the most important variable when buying a used vehicle – safety. Motorists can check the rating of their current car, as well as the rating of any vehicles they are considering buying.

The 2006 results assessed the performance of 305 vehicle models in more than 1.7 million crashes in Australia and New Zealand from 1987 to 2004.

The two criteria used to rate vehicle models were crashworthiness (how much protection the vehicle provides the driver in a crash) and aggressivity (how badly the vehicle is likely to harm other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, in a crash).

The study showed significant differences in crash performance between vehicles within the same class.

And for first time in the study's 15-year history, a 'standout' car was identified, with the Subaru Forester (1997-2002) rating as a top performer in both dimensions, said project leader, Dr Stuart Newstead, from Monash University.

"This car is a standout performer – it shows you can have off-road capability with excellent occupant protection and low aggressivity," Dr Newstead said.

More .../

Driver protection (Crashworthiness)

Dr Newstead said the UCSR showed the average level of driver protection resulted in 3.8 serious injuries and fatalities per 100 crashes. He said that of the 305 vehicle models assessed, 87 provided an above average level of driver protection and 72 provided a below average level of driver protection in a crash.

“Of the 22 large cars rated, 14 scored above average and only two scored below average,” he said. “Luxury cars showed similarly good occupant protection performance.

“In contrast, no light cars had crashworthiness better than average and of 37 light cars more than half scored in the worst possible rating. Buyers need to think very carefully about a purchase in this class, especially young drivers who have a high crash risk and older drivers who are more susceptible to injury.”

All other classes showed a mixture from very good to very poor performance. Many of the vehicles that achieved better driver protection were later models, highlighting the benefits of applying modern technology to airbags, vehicle structure and seatbelts.

Harm to other road users (Aggressivity)

Of the 305 vehicle models included in the survey, 284 were also assessed for aggressivity. The average vehicle aggressivity rating resulted in 3.9 serious injuries to other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, per 100 crashes.

Of the vehicle models assessed, 74 rated above average, while 56 rated worse than average.

All but one of the medium, small or light vehicles that were rated had average aggressivity or better, while all but one of the large 4WD vehicles were rated in the worst possible aggressivity category.

The latter result in particular shows large 4WD vehicles, whilst boasting generally good crashworthiness, put other road users at disproportionately high risk. In contrast, many luxury cars provide similar or better occupant protection to a large 4WD but without being aggressive.

RACV Chief Engineer (Vehicles) Mr Michael Case said the study results sent a clear message to motorists looking to buy a used car.

“If everyone was driving vehicles in the category providing the highest level of driver protection in a crash, a dramatic reduction in the road toll is likely,” Mr Case said.

TAC General Manager Road Safety, David Healy reiterated the importance of vehicle safety. “While the best protection against injury is to drive safely and encourage other road users to drive safely - the safer your car, the better off you'll be when the unexpected happens,” he said.

“In fact, according to the European Transport Safety Council, if everyone drove the safest car in its class, the road toll could be halved overnight.

“We would certainly encourage people buying a used car to consider choosing one of the best-rated models,” said Mr Healy.

The UCSR study was first undertaken in Australia by the Monash University Accident Research Centre in 1990 and has grown to be the largest of its type in the world. Ratings incorporating New Zealand crash data were produced for the first time in 2004.

The technical report can be viewed at <http://www.monash.edu.au/muarc/reports/muarc248.pdf> and a brochure summarising the results is available from RACV branches and VicRoads.

For further information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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2006 USED CAR SAFETY RATINGS: Better than average crashworthiness and aggressivity

- Subaru Forester 97-02
- Holden Astra TS 98-04
- Toyota Corolla 98-01
- Ford Telstar/Mazda 626 92-97
- Nissan Bluebird 93-97
- Mercedes C Class 95-00
- Honda Accord 91-93

2006 USED CAR SAFETY RATINGS: Worse than average crashworthiness and aggressivity

- Daihatsu Rocky/Rugger 95-98
- Holden WB Series utility 82-85
- Toyota Hiace/Liteace 82-86 and 87-89
- Mitsubishi Cordia 83-87
- Mitsubishi Starwagon 83-86 and 87-93
- Toyota Supra 82-90

Vehicles offering well above average protection to their driver in a crash

CLASS	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR
4WD - Compact	Honda	CR-V	97-01
4WD - Compact	Subaru	Forester	97-02
4WD - Compact	Subaru	Forester	02-04
4WD – Large	Land Rover	Range Rover	82-94
4WD – Large	Nissan	Patrol / Safari	98-04
4WD – Large	Nissan / Ford	Patrol / Maverick / Safari	88-97
4WD – Large	Toyota	Landcruiser	90-97
4WD – Large	Toyota	Landcruiser	98-04
4WD – Medium	Mitsubishi	Pajero	92-99
Commercial - Ute	Ford	Falcon Ute AU	00-02
Commercial - Ute	Holden	Rodeo	03-04
Commercial - Van	Ford	Falcon Panel Van	96-99
Commercial - Van	Volkswagen	Caravelle / Transporter	95-04
Large	Ford	Falcon AU	98-02
Large	Ford	Falcon EF/EL	94-98
Large	Holden	Commodore VT/VX	97-02
Large	Holden	Commodore VY/VZ	02-04
Large	Holden / Toyota	Commodore VR/VS / Lexcen	93-97
Large	Toyota	Camry	98-02
Luxury	BMW	3 Series E46	99-04
Luxury	BMW	5 Series E39	96-03
Luxury	Holden	Statesman/Caprice WH	99-03
Luxury	Honda	Legend	86-95
Luxury	Peugeot	406	96-04
Luxury	Saab	9000	86-97
Luxury	Volkswagen	Passat	98-04
Luxury	Volvo	700/900 Series	84-92
Medium	Ford	Mondeo	95-01
Medium	Holden	Vectra	97-03
Medium	Subaru	Liberty / Legacy / Outback	99-03
People Mover	Kia	Carnival	99-04
Small	Peugeot	306	94-01
Small	Toyota	Corolla	98-01
Small	Volkswagen	Golf / Bora	99-04
Sports	Honda	Prelude	97-02

Vehicles offering well below average protection to their driver in a crash

CLASS	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR
4WD - Compact	Daihatsu	Rocky / Rugged	85-98
4WD - Compact	Holden / Suzuki	Drover / Sierra / Samurai / SJ410 / SJ413	82-99
Commercial - Ute	Subaru	Brumby	82-92
Commercial - Ute	Suzuki	Mighty Boy	85-88
Commercial - Van	Daihatsu	Handivan	82-90
Commercial - Van	Daihatsu	Hi-Jet	82-90
Commercial - Van	Holden	Shuttle / WFR Van	82-87
Commercial - Van	Holden / Suzuki	Scurry / Carry	82-00
Commercial - Van	Toyota	Hiace/Liteace	82-86
Light	Daihatsu	Charade	82-86
Light	Daihatsu	Charade	88-92
Light	Daihatsu	Charade	93-00
Light	Daihatsu	Mira	90-96
Light	Ford	Festiva WD/WH/WF	94-01
Light	Hyundai	Excel	86-90
Light	Hyundai	Excel	90-94
Light	Hyundai	Excel / Accent	95-00
Light	Hyundai	Getz	02-04
Light	Mitsubishi	Mirage / Colt	82-88
Light	Ford / Mazda	Festiva WA / 121	87-90
Light	Nissan	Micra	95-97
Light	Honda	City	83-86
Light	Subaru	Sherpa / Fiori / 700 / Rex	89-92
Light	Suzuki	Swift	82-85
Light	Holden / Suzuki	Barina / Swift / Cultus	86-88
Light	Holden / Suzuki	Barina / Swift / Cultus	89-99
Light	Suzuki	Hatch / Alto	82-84
Light	Suzuki	Alto	85-00
Medium	Holden	Camira	82-89
Medium	Nissan	Bluebird	82-86
People Mover	Mitsubishi	Starwagon / L300	83-86
People Mover	Toyota	Tarago	83-89
Small	Holden	Gemini	82-84
Small	Mitsubishi	Cordia	83-87
Small	Ford / Mazda	Laser / 323 / Familia	82-88
Small	Holden / Nissan	Astra / Pulsar / Langley	84-86
Small	Honda	Civic / Ballade / Shuttle	84-87
Small	Toyota	Corolla	82-84
Sports	Hyundai	Coupe	96-00
Sports	Mitsubishi	Starion	82-87
Sports	Nissan	Exa	83-86
Sports	Nissan	NX/NX-R	91-96
Sports	Honda	CRX	87-91
Sports	Toyota	MR2	87-90

Vehicles much less likely than average to seriously injure other road users in a crash

CLASS	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR
4WD - Compact	Subaru	Forester	97-02
Light	Daihatsu	Charade	88-92
Light	Daihatsu	Charade	93-00
Light	Daihatsu	Sirion / Storia	98-04
Light	Daewoo	Cielo	95-97
Light	Ford	Festiva WD/WH/WF	94-01
Light	Holden	Barina XC	01-04
Light	Ford / Mazda	Festiva WA / 121	87-90
Light	Mazda	121 / Autozam Review	94-96
Light	Mazda	121 Metro / Demio	97-02
Light	Holden / Suzuki	Barina / Swift / Cultus	86-88
Light	Holden / Suzuki	Barina / Swift / Cultus	89-99
Light	Toyota	Echo	99-04
Luxury	Honda	Accord	82-85
Luxury	Honda	Accord	91-93
Luxury	Saab	900 Series	82-92
Small	Alfa Romeo	33	83-92
Small	Hyundai	S Coupe	90-96
Small	Mitsubishi	Lancer / Mirage CC	93-95
Small	Ford / Mazda	Laser / 323 / Familia	82-88
Small	Mazda	323 / Familia / Lantis	90-93
Small	Mazda	323 / Familia / Lantis	95-98
Small	Honda	Civic	82-83
Small	Honda	Civic	96-00
Small	Suzuki	Baleno / Cultus Crescent	95-02
Small	Toyota	Corolla	82-84
Small	Toyota / Holden	Corolla / Nova	94-97
Sports	Renault	Feugo	82-87

Vehicles much more likely than average to seriously injure other road users in a crash

CLASS	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR
4WD - Large	Nissan	Patrol / Safari	82-87
4WD - Large	Nissan / Ford	Patrol / Maverick / Safari	88-97
4WD - Large	Nissan	Patrol / Safari	98-04
4WD - Large	Land Rover	Range Rover	82-94
4WD - Large	Toyota	Landcruiser	82-89
4WD - Large	Toyota	Landcruiser	90-97
4WD - Large	Toyota	Landcruiser	98-04
4WD - Medium	Holden / Isuzu	Jackaroo / Bighorn	82-91
4WD - Medium	Mitsubishi	Pajero	82-90
Commercial - Ute	Ford	Ford F-Series	82-92
Commercial - Ute	Holden / Isuzu	Rodeo / Pickup	89-95
Commercial - Ute	Holden	Commodore VY/VZ Ute	02-04
Commercial - Ute	Toyota	4Runner/Hilux	82-85
Commercial - Ute	Toyota	4Runner/Hilux	86-88
Commercial - Ute	Toyota	4Runner/Hilux	89-97
Commercial - Ute	Toyota	Hilux	98-02
Commercial - Van	Toyota	Hiace/Liteace	82-86
Commercial - Van	Toyota	Hiace/Liteace	87-89
Commercial - Van	Toyota	Hiace/Liteace	90-95
Commercial - Van	Toyota	Hiace/Liteace	96-04
Commercial - Van	Volkswagen	Caravelle / Transporter	95-04
Luxury	Jaguar	XJ6	82-86
People Mover	Mitsubishi	Starwagon / L300	83-86
People Mover	Mitsubishi	Starwagon / Delica Starwagon	87-93
Sports	Toyota	Supra	82-90