

# INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **115 WINNERS OF 2012 *TOP SAFETY PICK* STRONGER ROOFS LEAD TO ANOTHER RECORD YEAR FOR AWARD**

ARLINGTON, VA — The list of winners of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's *TOP SAFETY PICK* award is longer than ever this year, with vehicles in nearly every size category the Institute evaluates earning accolades. From minicars to sedans to pickups, consumers have a record number of choices among 2012 models (see attached list).

In all, 69 cars, 38 SUVs, 5 minivans, and 3 pickups earn *TOP SAFETY PICK*. The award recognizes vehicles that do the best job of protecting people in front, side, rollover, and rear crashes based on ratings in Institute evaluations. The ratings, which cover all 4 of the most common kinds of crashes, help shoppers pick vehicles that offer the highest levels of crash protection. Because the federal government now requires all 2012 and later passenger vehicles to have electronic stability control to help drivers avoid loss-of-control crashes, ESC no longer is a requirement to win as it was in prior years.

The winners' circle includes 18 new recipients for 2012, while 97 models that previously qualified for the 2011 award carry over to 2012.

"For the second year running a record number of models qualify," says Institute president Adrian Lund. "It's tough to win, and we commend auto manufacturers for making safety a top priority."

That commitment to protecting people in crashes is evident in the fast pace of design improvements automakers have made during the past year. Initially 66 vehicles qualified for last year's award as less-than-perfect rollover ratings held back many contenders. Later the number climbed to 100 as manufacturers redesigned roofs to make them stronger or introduced new models to win. The Institute's rolling test schedule allows for recognition of additional winners

— MORE —

## 18 NEW WINNERS

### Minicars

Honda Fit  
Toyota Yaris

### Small cars

Honda CR-Z, Insight  
Scion xD  
Subaru Impreza

### Midsized cars

Buick Verano  
Honda Accord  
Toyota Camry, Prius v

### Midsized luxury cars

Acura TL  
Acura TSX

### Small SUV

Honda CR-V

### Midsized SUV

Honda Pilot

### Midsized luxury SUVs

Acura MDX  
BMW X3  
Mercedes M-Class

### Large pickup

Honda Ridgeline



throughout the year, so many 2012 models qualified for a 2011 *TOP SAFETY PICK*.

Again this year every major automaker has at least one winner. Subaru remains the only manufacturer with the distinction of earning awards for every model it builds. Subaru picks up 5 awards, including one for the redesigned Impreza, a small car.

Toyota/Lexus/Scion has 15 winners for 2012, more than any other auto manufacturer. General Motors is next in line with 14, followed by Volkswagen/Audi with 13, and Ford/Lincoln and Honda/Acura with 12 awards apiece.

**Honda improves:** Ten of the 18 new additions are Honda/Acura models, including the midsize Accord sedan, which hasn't earned *TOP SAFETY PICK* since the Institute toughened criteria to win the 2010 award by adding a test to assess roof strength in a rollover crash.

Vehicles rated good for rollover protection have roofs more than twice as strong as the current federal standard requires. The Institute estimates that such roofs reduce the risk of serious and fatal injury in single-vehicle rollovers by about 50 percent compared with roofs meeting the minimum requirement. A new federal standard for roof strength will phase in beginning with 2013 models.

Roofs on the 2009 Honda CR-V and 2010 Pilot scored marginal ratings in prior Institute tests, while earlier models of the Accord, CR-Z, Fit, and Insight rated acceptable. Now all of these 2012 models earn good ratings and *TOP SAFETY PICK*.

"Honda/Acura deserves credit for most-improved status," Lund says. "The automaker buckled down and upgraded roofs on 10 models that missed winning last year because of

rollover protection. Now, the automaker has winners in the minicar, small car, midsize car, small SUV, midsize SUV, minivan, and large pickup categories."

Another midsize sedan, the Toyota Camry, earns its first-ever *TOP SAFETY PICK*. Last year, the Camry missed the mark because of a marginal rating for seat/head restraints. The Toyota Yaris also earns its first *TOP SAFETY PICK* award. Toyota upgraded the roof and seat/head restraints of the 4-door hatchback model to win. Good ratings secure the Yaris a spot alongside 3 other minicars, the Fiat 500, Ford Fiesta, and Honda Fit, as 2012 winners.

"It's great to see the Accord and Camry, 2 of the top-selling midsize cars in the U.S. market, join the *TOP SAFETY PICK* ranks this year," Lund says. "The Accord previously won the 2009 award but has been missing from the list since then."

With fuel efficiency and reduced emissions on many buyers' wish lists, the winners' circle includes more green choices. Toyota's all-new Prius v is among them. Roomier than the original, the v hybrid brings to 15 the number of winners available as hybrids. The plug-in electric Chevrolet Volt and Nissan Leaf, winners in 2011, also earn this year's award.

For drivers who need to haul loads, the Ford F-150, Honda Ridgeline, and Toyota Tundra are good choices in the large pickup category. Small pickups continue to be shut out. None the Institute has evaluated qualify for the award.

"When we launched *TOP SAFETY PICK* in 2005, consumers had 11 models to pick from. Six years later, finding a winner that fits most budgets and lifestyles is easy," Lund says. "It's a testament to the commitment automakers have made to going above and beyond minimum safety standards."

**About the award:** The Institute awarded the first *TOP SAFETY PICK* to 2006 models and then raised the bar the next year by requiring good rear test results and ESC as either standard or optional equipment. In 2010, the Institute toughened criteria by adding a requirement that all qualifiers must earn a good rating for performance in a roof strength test to assess protection in a rollover crash.

The Institute groups winners according to vehicle type and size. Lund advises consumers to keep in mind that size and weight influence crashworthiness. Larger, heavier vehicles

generally afford better occupant protection in serious crashes than smaller, lighter ones. Even with a *TOP SAFETY PICK*, a small car isn't as crashworthy as a bigger one.

**How vehicles are evaluated:** The Institute's frontal crashworthiness evaluations are based on results of 40 mph frontal offset crash tests. Each vehicle's overall evaluation is based on measurements of intrusion into the occupant compartment, injury measures recorded on a 50th percentile male Hybrid III dummy in the driver seat, and analysis of slow-motion film to assess how well the restraint system controlled dummy movement during the test.

Side evaluations are based on performance in a crash test in which the side of a vehicle is struck by a barrier moving at 31 mph. The barrier represents the front end of a pickup or SUV. Ratings reflect injury measures recorded on 2 instrumented SID-IIIs dummies representing a 5th percentile woman, assessment of head protection countermeasures, and the vehicle's structural performance during the impact.

In the roof strength test, a metal plate is pushed against 1 side of a roof at a displacement rate of 0.2 inch per second. To earn a good rating for rollover protection, the roof must withstand a force of 4 times the vehicle's weight before reaching 5 inches of crush. This is called a strength-to-weight ratio.

Rear crash protection is rated according to a 2-step procedure. Starting points for the ratings are measurements of head restraint geometry — the height of a restraint and its horizontal distance behind the back of the head of an average-size man.

Seat/head restraints with good or acceptable geometry are tested dynamically using a dummy that measures forces on the neck. This test simulates a collision in which a stationary vehicle is struck in the rear at 20 mph. Seats without good or acceptable geometry are rated poor overall because they can't be positioned to protect many people.

**End 5-page news release on 2012 *TOP SAFETY PICK* award winners**

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**For more information go to [www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org)**

## 2012 TOP SAFETY PICK WINNERS

### Minicars

Fiat 500 built after July 2011  
 Ford Fiesta sedan & hatchback  
 Honda Fit  
 Toyota Yaris 4-dr hatchback

### Small cars

Chevrolet Cruze, Sonic, Volt  
 Ford Focus  
 Honda Civic 4-dr  
 Honda CR-Z, Insight  
 Hyundai Elantra  
 Kia Forte sedan  
 Kia Soul  
 Lexus CT 200h  
 Mazda 3 sedan & hatchback  
 Mini Cooper Countryman  
 Mitsubishi Lancer  
 except Ralliart & Evolution  
 Nissan Cube, Juke, Leaf  
 Scion tC, xB, xD  
 Subaru Impreza except WRX  
 Toyota Corolla, Prius  
 Volkswagen Golf 4-dr  
 Volkswagen GTI 4-dr

### Midsized moderately priced cars

Audi A3  
 Buick Verano  
 Chevrolet Malibu  
 Chrysler 200 4-dr  
 Dodge Avenger  
 Ford Fusion  
 Honda Accord  
 Hyundai Sonata  
 Kia Optima  
 Subaru Legacy, Outback  
 Toyota Camry, Prius v  
 Volkswagen Jetta sedan  
 Volkswagen Jetta SportWagen  
 Volkswagen Passat  
 Volvo C30

### Midsized luxury/near luxury cars

Acura TL built after Sept. 2011  
 Acura TSX sedan & wagon  
 Audi A4  
 Lincoln MKZ  
 Mercedes C-Class  
 Volkswagen CC except 4wd  
 Volvo S60

### Large family cars

Buick LaCrosse, Regal  
 Chrysler 300  
 Dodge Charger  
 Ford Taurus  
 Toyota Avalon

### Large luxury cars

Audi A6  
 BMW 5 series except 4wd & V8  
 Cadillac CTS sedan  
 Hyundai Equus, Genesis  
 Infiniti M except M56x 4wd  
 Lincoln MKS  
 Mercedes E-Class sedan  
 Mercedes E-Class coupe  
 Saab 9-5  
 Volvo S80

### Small SUVs

Honda CR-V  
 Hyundai Tucson  
 Jeep Patriot  
 with optional side torso airbags  
 Kia Sportage  
 Subaru Forester  
 Volkswagen Tiguan

### Midsized SUVs

Chevrolet Equinox  
 Dodge Durango, Journey  
 Ford Edge, Explorer, Flex  
 GMC Terrain  
 Honda Pilot  
 Hyundai Santa Fe  
 Jeep Grand Cherokee  
 Kia Sorento  
 Subaru Tribeca  
 Toyota Highlander, Venza

### Midsized luxury SUVs

Acura MDX  
 Audi Q5  
 BMW X3  
 Cadillac SRX  
 Infiniti EX35  
 Lexus RX  
 Lincoln MKT, MKX  
 Mercedes GLK, M-Class  
 Saab 9-4X  
 Volvo XC60, XC90

### Large SUVs

Buick Enclave  
 Chevrolet Traverse  
 GMC Acadia  
 Volkswagen Touareg

### Minivans

Chrysler Town & Country  
 Dodge Grand Caravan  
 Honda Odyssey  
 Toyota Sienna  
 Volkswagen Routan

### Large pickups

Ford F-150 crew cab models  
 Honda Ridgeline  
 Toyota Tundra crew cab models