

**CELEBRATING**



**FOR SAFER CARS**

## **HOW THE EURO NCAP STAR RATING SYSTEM WORKS - AND HOW YOU SHOULD USE IT TO CHOOSE YOUR NEW CAR**

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All cars subjected to Euro NCAP tests are now scored out of five stars, rising from a maximum of four in 2001.

The number of stars reflects how well the car performs in the tests, but it is also influenced by what safety equipment the vehicle manufacturer offers in each market. A high number of stars shows not only that the test result was good, but also that safety equipment on the tested model is readily available to all consumers in Europe.

Euro NCAP's star rating is an independent assessment that goes beyond the legal safety test requirements. A car does not have to be rated by Euro NCAP in order to be put on sale in Europe. However, some 35 new car models are tested every year, including all big sellers, and some 90 percent of all new cars sold in Europe are covered by a Euro NCAP rating. Cars found to meet only the minimum legal European demands for safety would not be eligible for any stars. Cars that receive low ratings are not necessarily unsafe, but they are not as safe as competitors that receive higher ratings.

The five-star safety rating system continuously evolves as older technology matures and new innovations become available. This means that tests are updated regularly, with new tests added to the system and the performance levels of the star levels adjusted. For this reason, it's important that consumers check the year of test for a correct interpretation of the car result.

Each year, Euro NCAP experts recalibrate the requirements for each star rating, making it ever tougher to achieve a high score, thereby ensuring that vehicle safety continually moves forward. Recently, the inclusion of emerging crash avoidance technology has significantly altered the meaning of the stars.

Since 2016, some cars have had two star ratings instead of one. One of them is based on a car fitted only with safety equipment which is standard on every variant in the model range throughout Europe (EU28). This rating offers consumers increased transparency on the car

they are considering, and reflects the minimum level of safety they can expect from this model sold anywhere in the European Union. All cars assessed by Euro NCAP have this base safety rating.

The second rating is based on a car with an additional 'safety pack' that may be offered as an add-on option to consumers. The additional safety equipment - such as AEB (Autonomous Emergency Braking), for example - in a safety pack will naturally boost the car's safety rating. The second star rating demonstrates the safety level that the car can achieve only if this additional equipment is included. Not every car has this second star rating, but when available, it helps consumers to understand the benefits of additional equipment.

### **What do the different stars really mean?**

5 stars: Overall good performance in crash protection. Well equipped with robust crash avoidance technology

4 stars: Overall good performance in crash protection; additional crash avoidance technology may be present

3 stars: Average to good occupant protection but lacking crash avoidance technology

2 stars: Nominal crash protection but lacking crash avoidance technology

1 star: Marginal crash protection

So many new cars are launched each year that it is not possible for Euro NCAP to test every one, and it certainly isn't able to test all variants offered by each manufacturer. So each year, Euro NCAP experts make a selection of the most popular and interesting models, usually as they are entering the market. In some cases, car manufacturers can even sponsor tests on their own products, and the usual process is followed, and the results are published as usual.

### **How does Euro NCAP obtain its test cars?**

At least four cars are normally needed for the Euro NCAP assessments. If a car model is already on sale, Euro NCAP will generally buy it from a dealer, just like a member of the public. To ensure that the tests are completely representative, cars are bought anonymously, either from a single dealer or from several dealers.

Once the cars are at the test laboratory, the manufacturer is informed of the vehicle identification numbers (VINs) and asked to confirm the precise specification. If a production change has been made since the cars were produced, for example to an item of safety equipment, the manufacturer may ask for the current part to be fitted to ensure the results are representative of current production cars.

As it's important to give consumers as much early warning as possible on the safety levels of a new car, Euro NCAP representatives will sometimes visit a car manufacturer's factory before the car is actually on sale, to pick - entirely at random - a car off the production line.

Under strict Euro NCAP rules, checks are made to ensure that any car chosen for tests is fully type approved - and that it is legally 'sellable' to the public.

### **What's the new dual rating?**

From 2016, Euro NCAP allows two star ratings for a car: a 'base' rating which indicates the safety of the car fitted only with safety equipment which is standard on the model range throughout EU28 and - if the manufacturer wishes - a second, 'dual' rating for the car fitted with a 'safety pack' which may be offered as optional. The dual rating allows consumers to see the improvements in safety which are open to them if they opt for additional crash avoidance equipment.

What's the difference between a belt load limiter and a belt pretensioner? Or attention assist and ESP? Safety in the world of the motor industry is moving forward at a pace never seen before - which means there are confusing terms and acronyms out there. Discover what they all mean here: <http://www.euroncap.com/en/vehicle-safety/glossary/#>

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