

THE CRUCIAL QUESTION AFTER TESTS ON ROVER 100 AND OTHER SUPER-MINIS

How safe are you when this car crashes?

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Motoring Correspondent

THIS is the dramatic result of a crash test on a Rover 100.

The vehicle, with dummies inside, was driven head-on into a metal barrier at 40mph. The wreck graphically illustrates the potentially lethal consequences of such a smash.

After the test — the first phase of the European New Car Assessment Programme — the Rover 100, formerly the Metro, was ranked worst for driver and passenger safety.

Out of eight super-minis tested and given a rating of up to four stars, none achieved top marks for either occupant or pedestrian safety.

The Rover 100 scored one star for occupant safety. The Vauxhall Corsa, Nissan Micra, Fiat Punto and Renault Clio fared slightly better, scoring two stars. The Ford Fiesta and Volkswagen Polo topped the table with three stars.

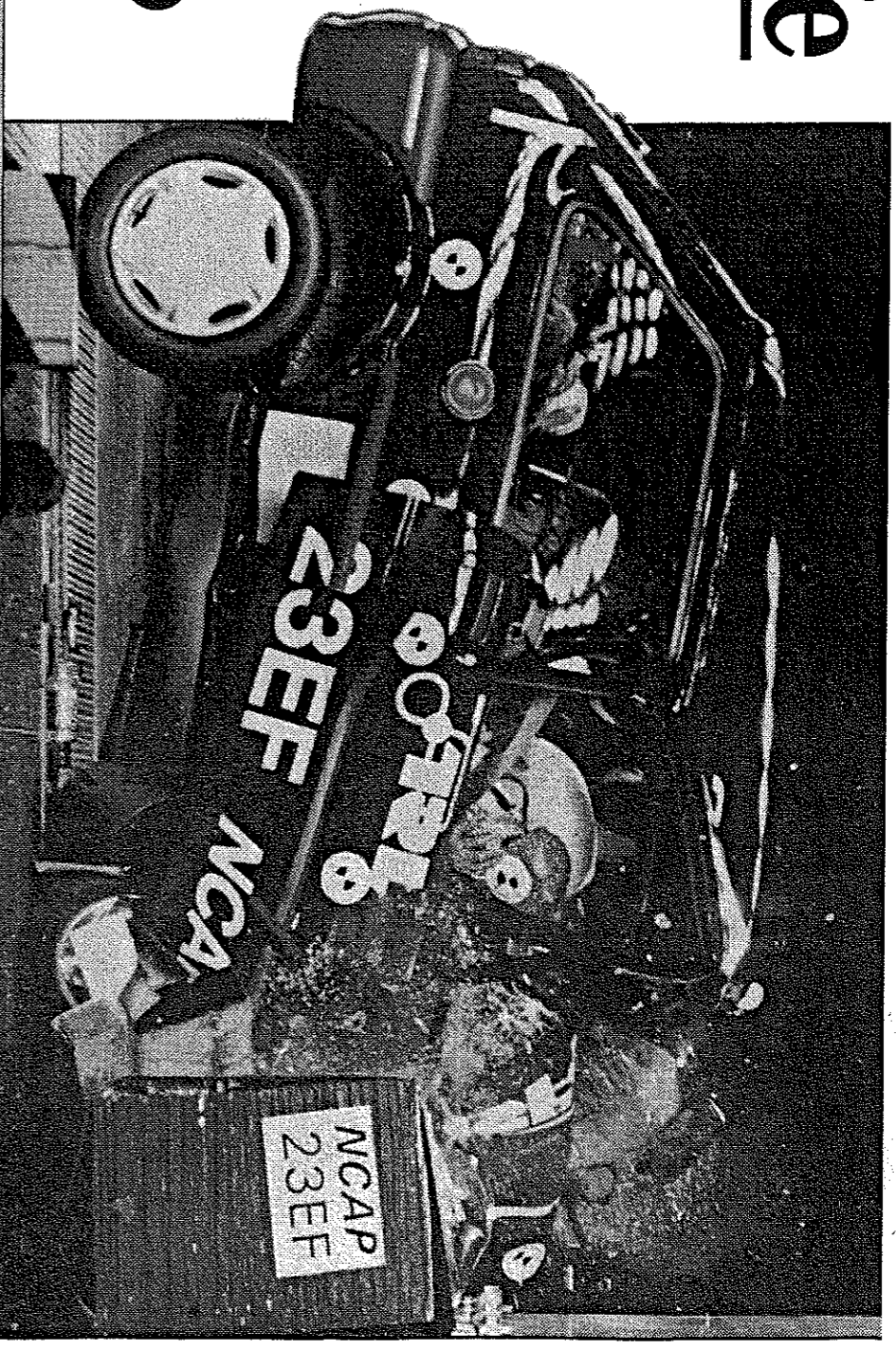
The Peugeot 106, which was tested too late for inclusion in the report, is understood to have been awarded two stars.

For pedestrian safety in a collision, two stars were awarded to the Rover and the Micra. One-star grades were awarded to the rest.

The £500,000 programme, carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory in Berkshire, covered protection provided by vehicles in frontal and side-impact collision and to pedestrians hit by a car's front.

From next October the EU will demand that cars meet certain standards during a frontal impact with a barrier at 35mph.

The TRRL test is at 40mph, and a spokesman explained: "The evidence shows that standards need to be set this high if serious injuries and deaths are to



The Rover 100: The least safe car for occupants in crash tests

ROVER 100 / £7,436	Model: 1711 Occupant safety: ★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Head, feet, and upper leg protection poor. Chest adequate. FRONT PASSENGER: Protection generally good. CHILD RESTRAINT: Large forward movement of head.	Model: 55S Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★ DRIVER: Feet poor. Chest and left leg weak. Side impact weak for chest. FRONT PASSENGER: Generally good. Chest and right lower leg adequate. CHILD RESTRAINT: Head rebounded to hit rear seat backrest.	
FORD FIESTA / £9,945	Model: 1251X Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Feet at risk. Head protection adequate. Chest and legs marginal. FRONT PASSENGER: Protection of head and neck good. Chest adequate. CHILD RESTRAINT: Large forward movement. Side impact poor.	VAUXHALL CORSA / £9,100	Model: 121S Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Chest, feet marginal. Neck protection good. Right upper leg poor. FRONT PASSENGER: Poor protection for head, which hit fascia. CHILD RESTRAINT: Head rebounded to hit rear backrest.
NISSAN MICRA / £8,450	Model: 10L Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Head and neck protection good. Most of legs poor or weak. FRONT PASSENGER: Head, neck, legs and feet good. Chest adequate. CHILD RESTRAINT: Seat's forward movement poorly controlled.	FIAT PUNTO / £7,436	Model: 55S Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Feet poor. Chest marginal, right leg weak. head adequate. FRONT PASSENGER: Generally good protection, but adequate for chest. CHILD RESTRAINT: Insufficient restraint of upper body.
RENAULT CLIO / £8,375	Model: 12RL Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Dummy's head slid off	VW POLO / £8,845	Model: 14L Occupant safety: ★★ Year: 1996 Pedestrian safety: ★★ DRIVER: Feet poor. Chest marginal, right leg weak. head adequate. FRONT PASSENGER: Generally good protection, but adequate for chest. CHILD RESTRAINT: Insufficient restraint of upper body.

be significantly reduced. Announcing the results, Road Safety Minister John Bowis said: "I think they are a great step forward for potential purchasers of the cars. They are also going to be very helpful for manufacturers who have made giant strides in improving safety." Rover said last night it believed the tests imposed a retrospective standard on products designed before these tests were conceived.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders branded

Japan heads reliability rating

ROVER cars are the most unreliable, with almost a third breaking down in a year, according to a report.

The firm, owned by German giant BMW, came bottom of a league table of 21 manufacturers after a survey of more than 73,000 vehicles.

The top five makers were

Mitsubishi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Honda and Fiat.

Rovers are four times more likely to break down than BMWs, with 'old model 200s and 400s along with the ageing 800 responsible for the majority of call-outs. However the report by Lex Vehicle Leasing says later model Rovers performed well, notably the new shape 200s and

the findings 'crude and simplistic'. All the vehicles conform to safety tests in place when they were built. Manufacturers are angry that they were judged against standards which may never come into force in Europe.

SMMT spokesman Roger King said: "To engineer a super-minni to pass this test at such a speed we would be forced to build cars that were battering rams."

400s'. The figures for breakdowns per 100 cars were: Mitsubishi 4.23 per cent; BMW 7.11; Mercedes-Benz 7.61; Honda 7.89; Fiat 8.88; Nissan 9.16; Jaguar 9.25; Audi 9.32; Toyota 10.82; Mazda 11.78; Jeep 15.83; Volkswagen 16.79; Land Rover 17.03; Peugeot 17.41; Volvo 19.40; Renault 19.93; Ford 23.77; Saab 24.84; Citroen, 27.03; Vauxhall 27.08; Rover 28.33.

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