

Are you ready to drive?



CHOOSING A SAFE VEHICLE

THE FACTS: CRASH PROTECTION

Some vehicle types are inherently more risky than others for their riders or occupants. For example, motorcyclists are nine times more likely to crash, and 17 times more likely to die in a crash, than car drivers¹. This is partly because motorcyclists lack the protection of a vehicle around them, as well as other factors that cause these crashes, such as drivers often not spotting motorcyclists at junctions.

Some vehicle types are inherently more risky for people around the vehicle. For example, larger, higher cars such as sports utility vehicles (SUVs, often referred to as 4x4s) cause much more damage if they hit someone. A pedestrian hit by a large SUV is twice as likely to be killed as a pedestrian hit by a normal sized car².

Newer vehicles are less likely to be involved in fatal crashes, due to continual improvements in crash protection features³. The risk of dying in a crash is 71% higher in a vehicle that is 18 years old or more compared to a vehicle three years old or less⁴.

Modern cars are also designed to offer more protection for pedestrians and cyclists. European legislation requires that new cars meet certain requirements for protecting pedestrians, which is included in Euro NCAP testing (see advice below). The design of the front of cars has been influenced by these regulations, with less rigid fronts and bonnets that crumple to absorb some of the force if a pedestrian or cyclist is struck⁵.

For more facts on safe vehicles see www.brake.org.uk/facts.

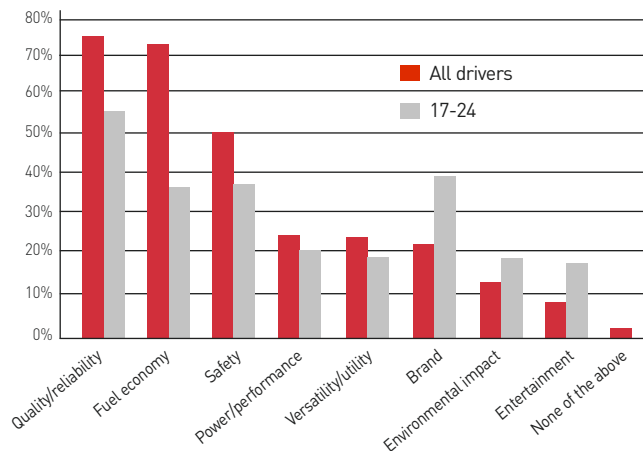
Q1: Which of the following do you consider most important when choosing a new vehicle, aside from its cost? (tick your top three)

Safety technologies ranked third on the list of most important considerations for drivers when choosing a new vehicle, although it was chosen by less than half (48%) of respondents, and the top choice of quality and reliability is related to safety. Safety technologies also ranked third among young drivers (age 17-24), but were chosen by fewer respondents in this group – less than two in five (37%). Worryingly, it was brand (39%) that pipped safety to second place among young drivers.

One in six young drivers (17%) also deemed entertainment and infotainment systems one of their most important features, even though these can be actively detrimental to safety.

- 75% said build quality and reliability (17-24: 55%)
- 73% said fuel economy (17-24: 36%)
- 48% said safety technologies (17-24: 37%)
- 24% said power and performance (17-24: 20%)
- 23% said versatility and utility (17-24: 18%)
- 21% said brand (17-24: 39%)
- 13% said environmental impact (17-24: 18%)
- 7% said entertainment/infotainment systems (17-24: 17%)
- 2% said none of the above (17-24: 0%)

Figure 1: Which of the following do you consider most important when choosing a new vehicle, aside from its cost?



Q2: Which of the following features would you want to have on your next car? (tick any that apply)

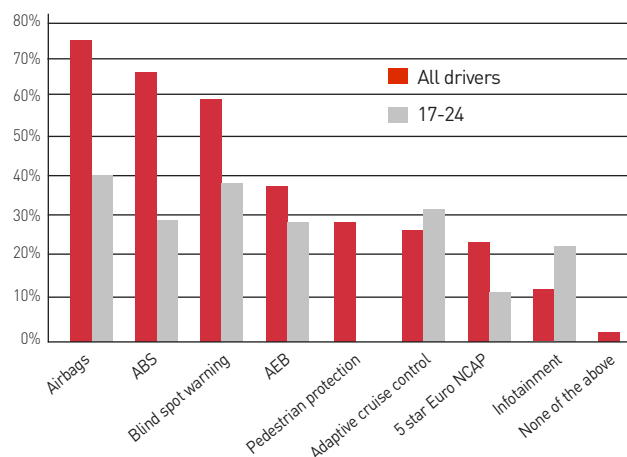
Encouragingly, a number of safety features were named by most drivers as being desirable on their next car, including airbags top on 74% and blind spot warning systems third on 59%. However, the majority of high ranking safety features are focused on protecting vehicle occupants, with pedestrian protection systems down at fifth on the list with only 29% of respondents.

The responses also show a lack of awareness of, and engagement with, the important industry standard Euro NCAP safety rating system, with less than a quarter of drivers (23%) wanting a five star rating, dropping to one in nine (11%) among young drivers (17-24).

Only one in eight drivers (12%) said they wanted an infotainment system in their vehicle. However, this rose to more than one in five (21%) among young drivers (17-24), despite the fact these features can be detrimental to safety by causing driver distraction.

- 74% said airbags (17-24: 40%)
- 67% said anti-lock brakes (ABS) (17-24: 29%)
- 59% said blind spot warning system (17-24: 38%)
- 37% said autonomous emergency braking (AEB) (17-24: 28%)
- 29% said pedestrian protection systems (17-24: 0%)
- 27% said adaptive cruise control (17-24: 31%)
- 23% said five star Euro NCAP rating (17-24: 11%)
- 12% said infotainment system, e.g. social media access (17-24: 21%)
- 2% said none of the above (17-24: 0%)

Figure 2: Which of the following features would you want to have on your next car?



Are you ready to drive?

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: VEHICLE SELECTION

Drivers should choose vehicles that not only protect the occupants, but also minimise the threat posed to other road users. Some vehicles are designed to minimise the damage to people on foot and bike in a collision. For example, cars with a short front-end and a wide windshield are less likely to kill pedestrians in a crash⁶.

The safety features of new European cars are rated in crash tests by Euro NCAP. They provide a star rating that take into account occupant safety, child occupant safety and pedestrian safety⁷. Brake strongly advises anyone buying a new car to consult these ratings at www.euroncap.com and buy the safest vehicle they can afford for their own and others' protection. From January 2016, vehicles will only be able to achieve a maximum five-star Euro NCAP rating if they are fitted with collision avoidance technologies such as pedestrian detection, lane departure warning and autonomous emergency braking (AEB). AEB uses sensors to detect hazards ahead, and apply the brakes automatically if a collision is predicted. It could reduce pedestrian casualties by 15%⁸, and prevent 60 deaths and 760 serious injuries in the UK within three years if installed in all new vehicles⁹.

Although there is an increasing range of features that either come as standard on new vehicles, or that people buying vehicles can opt for to help protect themselves, their families and other people around them, none of these features offer complete protection. Choosing the safest possible vehicle still needs to be combined with safe, legal and considerate driving.

For more advice for drivers see www.brake.org.uk/pledge.

End notes

1. *Reported road casualties Great Britain: annual report 2013*, Department for Transport, 2014
2. *The fatality and injury risk of light truck impacts with pedestrians in the United States*, Accident Analysis and Prevention, 2004
3. *Analyzing the relationship between car generation and severity of motor-vehicle crashes in Denmark*, University of Denmark's Department of Transport, 2013
4. *How Vehicle Age and Model Year Relate to Driver Injury Severity in Fatal Crashes*, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2013
5. *About Pedestrian Protection*, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 2012
6. *Effects of vehicle impact velocity, vehicle front-end shapes on pedestrian injury risk*, Xiamen University of Technology, 19/09/12
7. *Pedestrian protection*, Euro NCAP
8. *Vehicle safety*, DaCoTa, 2012
9. *Auto Braking Cars: Government Should Meet Motorists Halfway*, Thatcham, 2014

