

The more stars the safer the car: "Safer Cars Save Lives"

Frequently asked Questions and Answers

What is the *Safer Cars Save Lives* program about?

The RAC and the Office of Road Safety have partnered together to promote safer vehicles in Western Australia through their joint program called, "Safer Cars Saves Lives". The goal is to raise public awareness about cars which have a 4 and 5 star ANCAP safety ratings and encourage consumers to purchase these cars. This has also been expanded to include cars that have safety systems that are designed to prevent crashes happening in the first place.

The program also works with car dealers to help assist them promote those cars that have been awarded 4 and 5 star ratings by Australia's independent crash testing body ANCAP (Australasian New Car Assessment Program).

The RAC and the Office of Road Safety are also working with the national motoring bodies to encourage and influence more manufacturers to make more of their cars 4 and 5 star safety rated.

What do the Stars on Cars represent?

Star ratings represent the vehicle's occupant safety performance when they are involved in a crash. Vehicles that have been tested are assigned a star rating reflecting the car's overall safety performance. Cars are rated with 0 to 5 stars, with 5 stars earning the highest rating.

Australia's independent crash testing body, ANCAP, crashes the cars in controlled conditions and awards the car between 1 and 5 stars depending on the results. The RAC and the Office of Road Safety recommend that consumers only buy 4 and 5 star rated cars.

Cars tested after 1 January 2008 will only be awarded five stars if they have Electronic Stability Control (ESC). ESC has been proven to decrease the chance of a crash, particularly single vehicle accidents.

How are cars tested?

ANCAP purchases new vehicles and tests their safety performance in controlled conditions. The results of the crash test are then used to rate the vehicles crash test performance.

The following tests are carried out to determine a vehicle's star rating:

- Offset Crash Test – runs the vehicle into a special barrier at 64km/h. This test simulates a head on collision with another vehicle.
- Side Impact Test – runs a 950kg trolley into the side of the vehicle at 50km/h. This test simulates another vehicle running into the side of the test vehicle.
- Pedestrian Impact Test – fires simulated head and leg models into the front of the vehicle at 40km/h. This test simulates the injuries that may be sustained by a pedestrian struck by a vehicle.
- Pole Test (optional) – propels the vehicle into a pole at 29km/h to simulate a crash into a tree or pole. This test is only carried out if:
 - 1) the vehicle has performed well in other tests
 - 2) has side curtain airbags
 - 3) is requested by the manufacturer

Cars tested after 1 January 2008 will only be awarded five stars if they are fitted with ESC.

What cars have been tested?

To find out which cars have been tested [click here](#).

How are star ratings allocated to a car?

The car make and model is individually crash tested using a rigorous, yet objective safety system process through the ANCAP group. The crash testing results of the car determines how a star rating is allocated.

Who tests the cars?

ANCAP use a number of independent crash labs to carry out the crash tests. Some models may be tested by EuroNCAP, followed by a check by ANCAP that the test results apply to the models sold in Australia and New Zealand. The results are then published.

Why should I purchase a 4 or 5 star rated car?

With all things being equal, cars that have a 4 or 5 star rating are those that we have identified as providing the driver and their passengers with the best protection if faced with an accident or near collision.

Are 4 and 5 star rated cars more expensive?

No. This is a fallacy. Many small and other cars that are affordable have been tested and been awarded 4 or 5 star ratings.. To find out more information, click onto the attached link for a list of these cars.

Does a 4 or 5 star rated car reduce the chances of injury and death?

There effect of a serious crash on the driver may be less severe if they are travelling in a 4 or 5 star rated vehicle if compared to that of a lower safety rated vehicle. However, ANCAP tests cannot be used to predict the outcome of a particular crash.

Will a 4 or 5 star rated car better protect me and my passengers?

A 4 or 5 star rated car provides a lower risk of serious injury than a vehicle with a lower star rating. ANCAP test results do not claim to predict the result of all crashes; however it does test the types of crashes that cause the most injuries.

What is a "Passive Safety" feature?

A Passive Safety feature is one that will help to decrease the chance of injury in the event of a crash. This is determined by the structural and interior design of the car, such as air bags, seatbelts, and seating that minimises injuries in the event of a crash.

To increase your passive safety you should chose 4 or 5 star rated vehicles.

What is an "Active Safety" feature?

An Active Safety feature relates to the features that prevent you from having a crash. For example, Electronic Stability Control will help control the car from swerving if it senses a loss of control. This is proven to be particularly beneficial in reducing the chances of single vehicle accidents .

What is Electronic Stability (ESC)?

Electronic Stability Control (ESC) is an active safety system that reduces the risk of a driver losing control of a vehicle. ESC builds upon features such as anti-lock braking (ABS) and traction control to stabilise the vehicle when it deviates from the driver's steered direction.

Are there other names for Electronic Stability Control?

For marketing purposes, some manufacturers use different name for ESC, however here are some of the names that are currently being used:

Electronic Stability Program (ESP)

Electronic Stabilisation Program (ESP)

Vehicle Dynamic Control (VDC)

Vehicle Stability Control (VSC)

Dynamic Stability Control (DSC)

Active Stability Control (ASC)

How do I know if a car has ESC?

For a list of cars that have ESC, [click here](#)

Are bigger cars safer?

No. Occupants of larger vehicles will usually have a lower risk of injury than those in smaller vehicles if faced in a two or more vehicle accident. However, in many single vehicle crashes, weight and size does not offer any advantage. Many small and medium sized cars have a 4 or 5 star rating.

Where can I get more information on the ANCAP star ratings?

<http://www.rac.com.au>

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