

Crown Vic Marginal in Crash Test

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The largest family car on the road, the 2007 Ford Crown Victoria earned only a marginal rating in a recent round of tests of vehicle equipped with side airbags conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Side airbags are optional equipment in the Crown Victoria.

The tests were conducted by IIHS at Ford's request to update earlier tests of the Crown Victoria without side airbags. The institute also tested three other 2007 vehicles including the Toyota FJ Cruiser, Ford Freestyle, and Ford Fusion.



The FJ Cruiser and Freestyle earned good ratings from IIHS for protection in side crashes. The Fusion was rated acceptable. The Fusion was upgraded to standard side airbags for the 2007 model year. The Freestyle will have standard side airbags in 2007s built after September.

"We commend Ford for making side airbags standard in the Fusion and Freestyle," says Institute president Adrian Lund. "A few years ago, it was rare to find these standard in moderately priced family vehicles, but they're quickly becoming the norm."

The FJ Cruiser with optional side airbags earned a good rating and "intrusion into the occupant compartment was minimal," according to IIHS.

The Freestyle's structure did not perform quite as well, according to the report but the vehicle was rated good overall. "The dummies' heads were protected from hitting any hard structures by side curtain-style airbags that deploy from above the windows," according to the IIHS test results.

Both the Fusion and Crown Victoria with side airbags improved compared with the poor ratings earned by 2006 models tested without side airbags.

"In the new test of the Fusion, head protection was good but measures recorded on the driver dummy indicated that a fracture of the pelvis would be possible in a crash of this severity," the institute reported following the test.

The Fusion with side airbags earned an overall rating of acceptable for side impact protection.

"In the Crown Victoria, head protection also improved, but this car is rated marginal because of high forces recorded on the driver dummy's pelvis and poor structural performance," according to the test report.