

## Auto safety & You

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is changing its current 5-star Safety Rating System for the 2011 model year. In recent years, almost all vehicles received a 4 or 5 Star rating, essentially making the rating no longer useful. Along with new, stricter standards, the NHTSA has added a new [collision](#) rating and included a summary rating which will make comparing vehicles on safety easier.

The 2011 models are the first to be rated under the new system. Crash tests were run using both the traditional medium-sized male dummy and a small female dummy. Also, the added [collision](#) test shows results from a vehicle hit by a pole on the side near the driver. This test simulates hitting a narrow stationary object such as a tree. Thus, the ratings are now based on four collision tests; frontal, [roll-over](#), side-impact, and the new side pole collision. Results from the four tests will combine to form an overall safety rating for the vehicle.

Although the new testing has been done on fifty-five new 2011 models, the ratings are not yet on the vehicle window stickers. This has been delayed, in part because the EPA is revising the fuel economy portion of the sticker. Therefore, it looks like the 2012 models will be the first to show both the new safety ratings and the revised fuel ratings. In the meantime, you can see the safety ratings for 2011 vehicles online at [Safercar.gov](http://Safercar.gov) .