

February 20th, 2014

Safest Cars on the Market Right Now

Every year, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) selects the cars that it feels are the safest on the market. For 2014, the Institute went a step farther; some of the cars received an additional distinction. Where the previous best cars in terms of safety would get the accolade of “Top Safety Pick,” the IIHS, as of 2014, began designating some cars a “Top Safety Pick+.” As any [Delray Beach personal injury attorney](#) can explain, the safety of a car can make a difference not only in crash avoidance, but also in the outcome of a car accident. While insurance exists to pay for damages and medical bills, everyone benefits if the injuries and damage that occur as a result of a car accident are minimized. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing the losses from crashes on the nation’s roads. The Institute is supported by a number of auto insurance companies and insurance associations—and certainly those companies would benefit from reduced numbers of accidents and injuries.

IIHS president Adrian Lund said of the 2014 selections, “We’ve made it more difficult for manufacturers this year.” The IIHS is using new criteria for its awards; Top Safety Pick requires good performance in the Institute’s moderate overlap front, side, roof strength and head restraint tests—and for the first time, good or acceptable performance in the small overlap front test introduced in 2012. In order to receive the distinction of Top Safety Pick+, the car must also have a basic rating for front crash prevention. In total, twenty-two vehicles earned the IIHS accolade of Top Safety Pick+, with an additional 17 earning the slightly less prestigious Top Safety Pick distinction. If you were to ask a knowledgeable Delray Beach [car accident lawyer](#), he or she would likely recommend one of these vehicles from the lineup of available new cars for the year. With the inclusion of the small overlap test in the basic Top Safety Pick criteria, the IIHS is attempting to reward those manufacturers who provide the next level in safety. The IIHS began rating front crash prevention systems earlier in the year after research showed that such systems have been reducing crashes overall.

Among the cars to earn the highest distinction, the Honda Civic 4-door, Mazda 3 (built after October 2013) and the Toyota Prius (built after November 2013) are likely some of the most familiar faces—with Honda being such a popular car, and Toyota being not far behind it. Other winners of the highest honor include the Ford Fusion, Honda Accord (both 2 and 4-door), Subaru Legacy and Outback, Volvo S80, and S60, the Toyota Highlander, the Mercedes-Benz M-Class, the Lincoln MKZ, and the Honda Odyssey. The winners in the top category have varied systems for front crash prevention—ranging from basic warning systems to auto-brake failsafe mechanisms like the Subaru EyeSight warning and autobrake.

When those vehicles that made the Top Safety Pick+ are not equipped with the optional crash prevention, they still qualify as a Top Safety Pick, along with several other vehicles that don’t have the option at all, including the Chevrolet Spark and the Volkswagen Passat. As an experienced [Delray Beach personal injury attorney](#) would note, there is no price point for safety, but compromises can be made to a certain degree between the two highest levels of performance in a case like this. While preventing an accident is the best course all around, safer cars with features designed to minimize damage make sense as a secondary option.