

[Car crash tests]

Results for 15 new cars

The lives of 250 pedestrians would be saved every year in Britain if all car manufacturers made a few simple changes. Another 6,300 would avoid serious injury. The new crash test results for the Citroën C6 and Jeep Grand Cherokee show stark differences in attitudes to pedestrian safety.

Citroën's luxury C6, due in early 2006, is the first car to win the maximum four stars for pedestrian protection. Plenty of 'crushable space' between the hard parts of the car, such as the engine, and the bumpers and bonnet means that pedestrians hit the hard parts with less force. But the icing on the cake is its pop-up bonnet, which reduces the chance of pedestrians colliding with hard parts altogether.

What's more, Citroën hasn't compromised on other protection – the C6 scores the maximum five stars for protecting adult occupants in a crash.

By contrast, Jeep's Grand Cherokee gets no stars for pedestrian protection. As an off-roader, its height means that children are more likely to be hit on the head. But it is possible to design 4x4s with pedestrians in mind – for example, the Honda CR-V has three stars for pedestrian protection.

And, tellingly, the Jeep isn't a patch on the C6 even for occupant safety. It scrapes four stars for protecting adult occupants but this hides the fact

that injuries from head-on collisions are similar to those in the appalling new Chevrolet Matiz (see below). That's because the overall score takes account of side impacts as well as frontal.

CHEVROLET SHAME

The other shock is the appalling results for the new Chevrolet Matiz. Launched last June, it's the first supermini since 2000 to score fewer than three stars out of five for adult occupant protection – it scores a low two and a half stars.

If you are driving the new Matiz and it gets hit at speed by another car, you're at an unusually high risk of serious injury. We think this is an unacceptably poor design in a modern car.

YOUR OPINIONS

If you own any of the following cars, we'd like to hear from you.

● New BMW 3-Series (from Mar 05) ● BMW X3 ● Citroën C1 ● new Fiat Multipla (from Sep 04) ● Honda FR-V ● new Lexus GS (from May 05) ● new Mercedes A-class (from Feb 05) ● Mitsubishi Grandis ● Mazda 5 ● Peugeot 107 ● Peugeot 1007 ● Smart forfour ● new Suzuki Swift (from May 05) ● new Vauxhall Tigra (from Sep 04) ● new Vauxhall Zafira (from Aug 05) ● new VW Passat (from Jul 05) ● VW Golf Plus (from Jun 05). Write to Nikki Lewrey at the address on p74, with full contact details (including phone number), the exact model and age of the car and when you bought it. We'll interview selected owners by phone.

The scorecard

Which? is a founding member of EuroNCAP, the Europe-wide group of manufacturers and other organisations that crash-tests cars to see how safe they are in collisions. The tests give three scores: protection of adults inside the car (out of five); protection of children inside the car (out of five); and protection of pedestrians in a collision (out of four). Go to www.euroncap.com for more information.

SUPERMINIS



Chevrolet Matiz
Adult occupant ★★☆☆
Child occupant ★★☆☆
Pedestrian ★★



Toyota Yaris
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★



Daihatsu Sirion
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★



VW Fox
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★



Fiat Grande Punto
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★



Fiat Croma
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★



Kia Rio
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★



Mazda 6
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★



Mitsubishi Colt
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★



Peugeot 407 Coupé
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★

MEDIUM CARS



Seat Leon
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★

LUXURY CARS



Citroën C6
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★★★★

SMALL MPV



Citroën Berlingo
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★



Mazda 5
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian ★★

OFF-ROADERS



Jeep Grand Cherokee
Adult occupant ★★★★★
Child occupant ★★★★★
Pedestrian Zero stars