

How to Find Vehicle Safety Ratings

Before you buy a car, do your research to make sure you're buying the safest options. Official vehicle safety rating sites test cars using different parameters to assess the 'crashworthiness' of different models. Compare safety ratings...

Method 1 of 3:

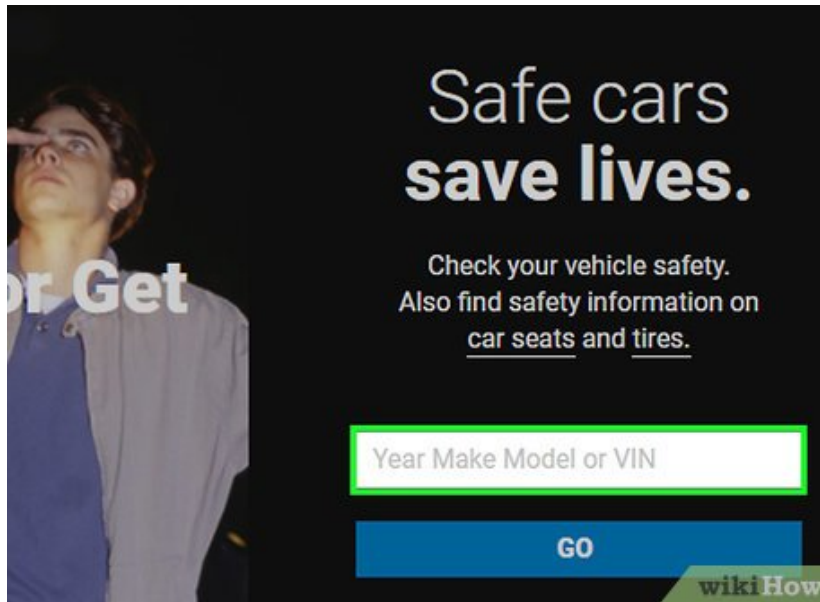
Checking the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



1.

Visit the NHTSA website. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was created by the U.S. Department of Transportation.^[1] Its goal is to prevent injuries and lower car crash rates by researching safety standards and providing car ratings. Their organization simulates tests on vehicles that measure their safety in frontal, side, rollover, and pole crashes.^[2]

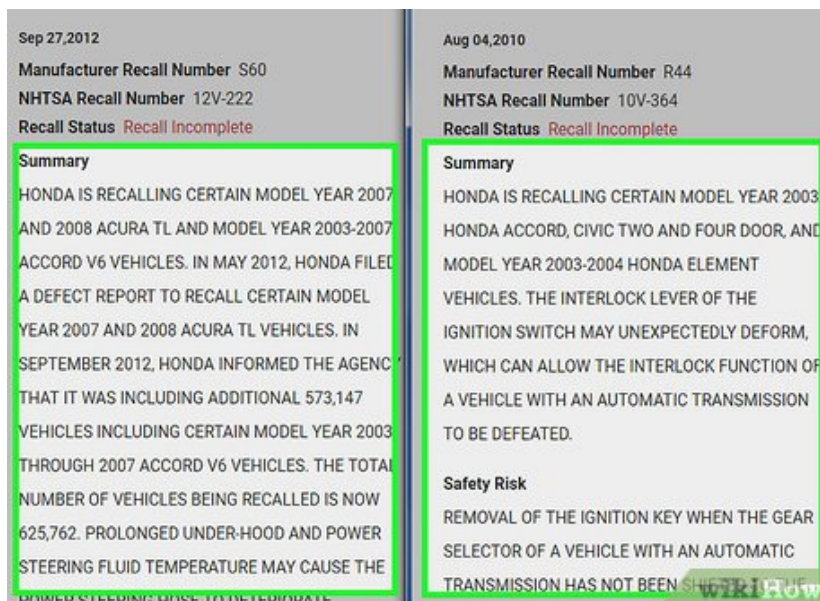
1. Ratings are assigned on a 5-star system, with more stars equating to better safety mechanisms.



2.

Search by year, make, or model. Input one of these three details into the rating search engine.^[3] If you're looking for a new, safe car but have not yet decided on a make, sort by year. Click on a specific vehicle to look at recall, investigation, and complaint details. You can also read specific details about any crash tests performed.^[4]

1. You can also check safety ratings by car manufacturer.



3.

Compare the safety between car makes. While users can manually compare cars on other vehicle rating systems, the NHTSA offers a comparison tool to review pros and cons at a glance. Select up to three cars to receive test information, star ratings, and recall information.^[5]

1. The current comparison tool system only allows users to compare vehicles released in the same time frame. Cars built between 2011-present can be compared against each other, as can cars released between 1990-2010.

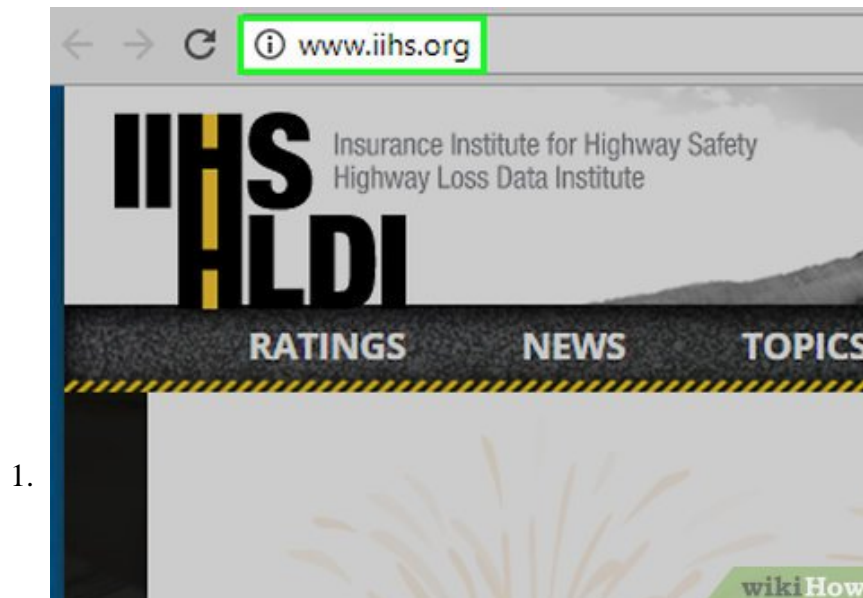


4.

Search the car recall database. The NHTSA also releases updates on high-profile car recalls. Car owners are usually notified in the mail about vehicle recalls, but you might not know recall information about a car if you're buying it used. Enter the car's vehicle identification number (VIN) into the search engine to receive its recall history.^[6]

Method 2 of 3:

Checking the International Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)



1.

Visit the IIHS website. The International Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is a nonprofit educational organization that releases safety ratings to reduce casualties from motor vehicle crashes.^[7] Safety ratings are sorted by good, acceptable, marginal, and poor.^[8]

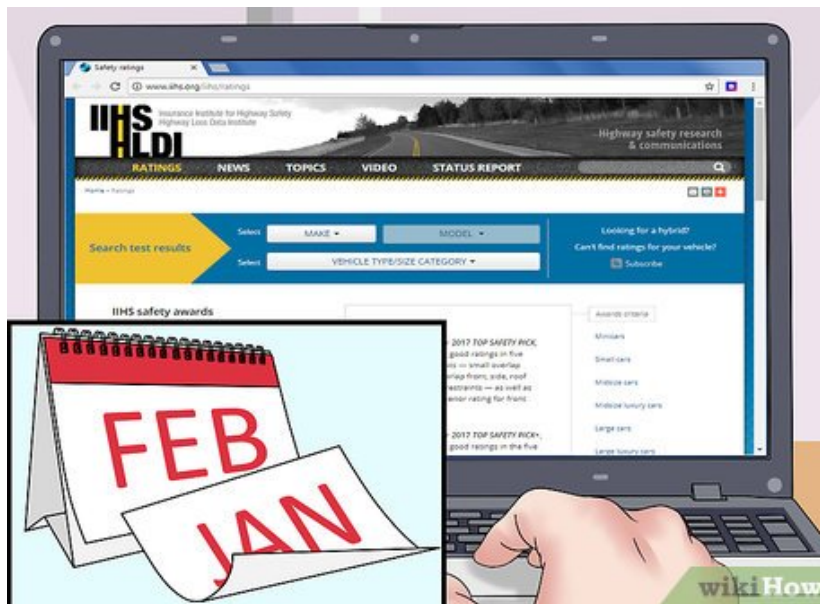
1. In addition to overall "crashworthiness," the IHHS offers ratings on specific vehicle parts (like roof structure, headlights, and child seat anchors).^[9]



2.

Search by make, model, or vehicle type. In addition to searching by make or model, the IHHS rating system allows users to sort by car type/size (like minivan, pickup truck, or SUV). If you know what kind of car you want but are unsure about a specific make, the IHHS search engine might best fit your needs.^[10]

1. The IHHS lists "Top Safety Picks" (and "Top Safety Picks+") every year, which ensures that a vehicle has positive ratings in all crash tests.^[11]



3.

Look periodically for updates if your car isn't listed. If you're looking for a recently or not-yet-released model, the IHHS may not have finished all crash tests. As the organization does not release testing schedules in advance, the best option is to check once or twice monthly. Although the IHHS covers as much of the vehicle marketplace as possible, they might not review a select number of models each year.^[12]

4.

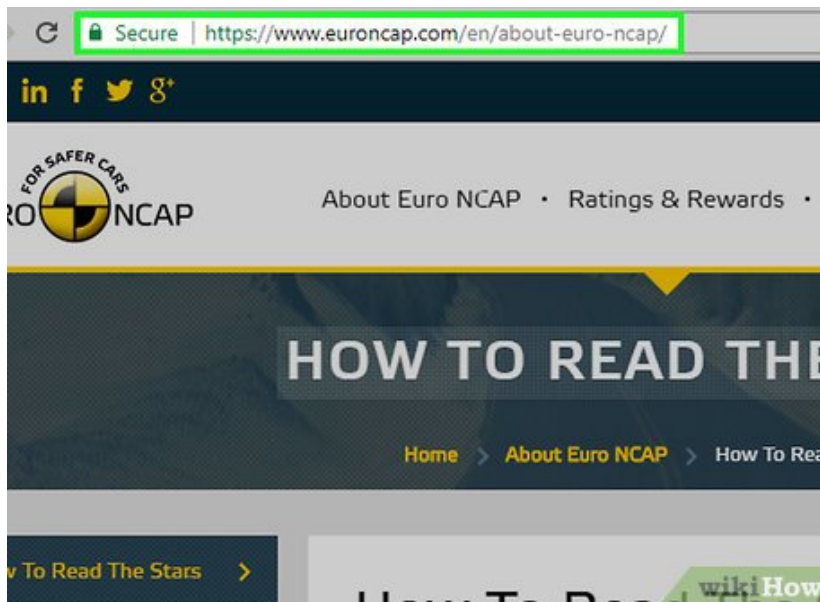


Keep tabs on IHHS news. The IHHS news releases updates on Top Safety Picks, comparative safety ratings, and recall information. Watch for updates monthly or semimonthly to look for news relating to your vehicle.^[13]

Method 3 of 3:

Checking International Assessment Programs

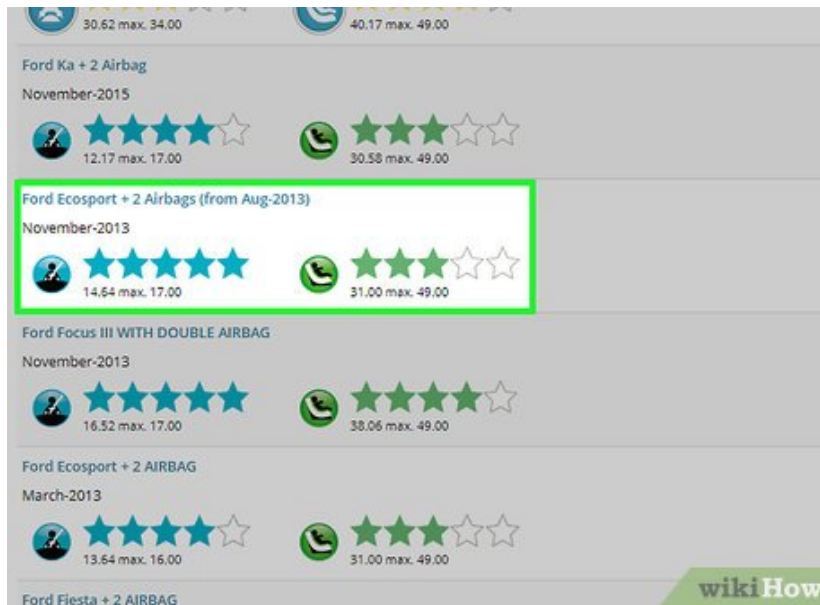
1.



Visit the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) website. Much like the NHTSA, the Euro NCAP rates vehicles based on a five-star safety ranking.^[14] These ratings are assigned based on crash tests that could, in real life, result in casualties. Some cars have two ratings, depending on if cars offer safety equipment add-ons for a higher price.^[15]

1. As of 2017, over 1,800 car models have been crash tested by the Euro NCAP.^[16]

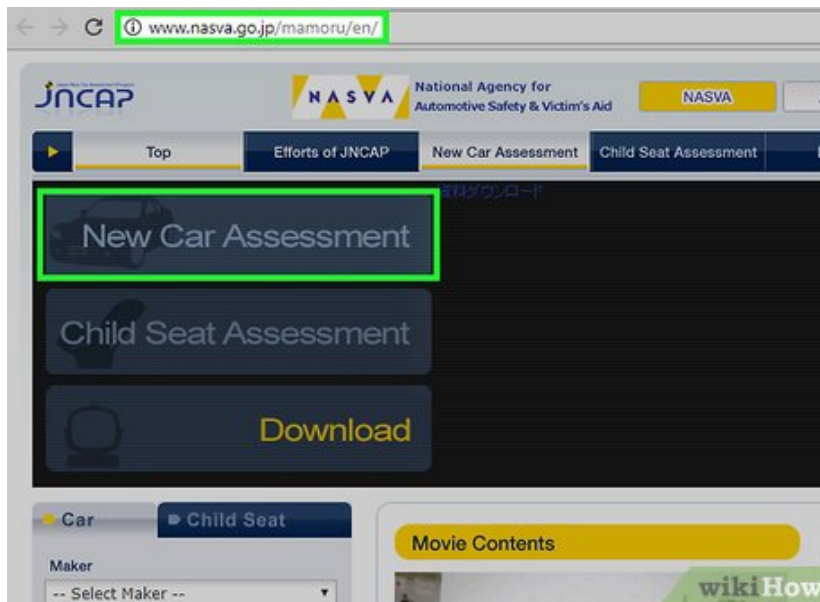
2. Because the star rating system can change over time, recent ratings are most reliable.



2.

Review Latin New Car Assessment Programme (Latin NCAP) ratings. Started in 2010, the Latin NCAP also awards vehicles with safety ratings between 0 and 5.^[17] This organization only tests the most basic safety version of a car model to provide a reliable ranking.^[18]

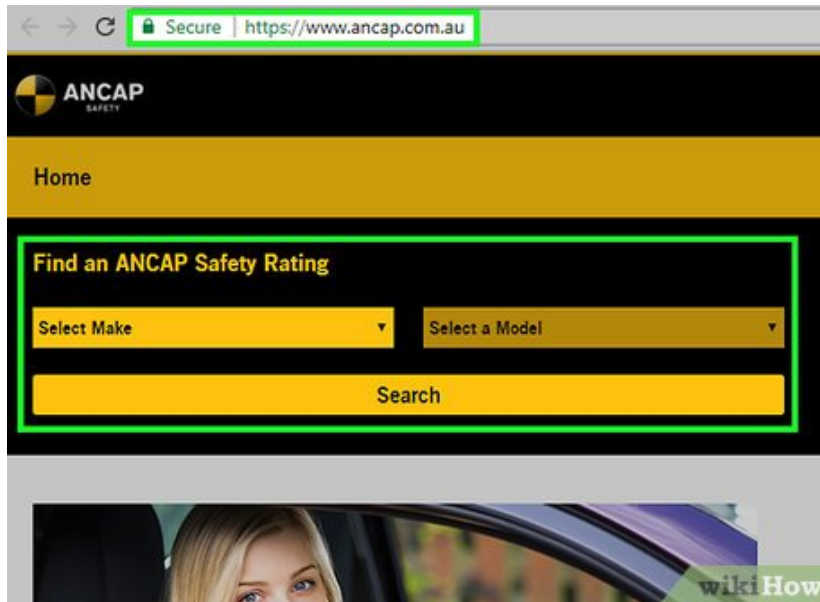
1. Because the Latin NCAP is newer than other organizations, it only lists safety rankings for vehicles built in 2010 and later.^[19]



3.

Look at New Car Assessment Japan (JNCAP) ratings. The JNCAP was organized by Japan's National Agency for Automotive Safety and Victim's Aid.^[20] This organizations also ranks car safety from one to five stars. All rankings are based off of extensive crash tests. Users can sort rankings by car type, maker, and specific test results.^[21]

1. The JNCAP also accounts for pedestrian protection safety in case of accidental collision.



4.

Try the Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP). Australia's leading vehicle safety rating system is the ANCAP, which publishes ratings specifically for cars released in Australia and New Zealand.^[22] Safety ratings are listed from one to five stars. Users can search by type, make, or model.^[23]

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