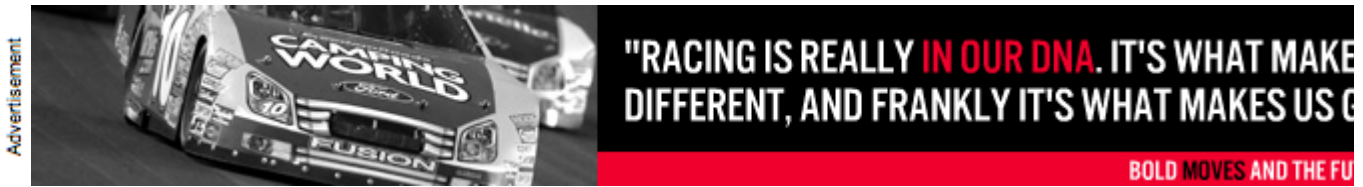


Search How do I find it? Most pop



Home News Travel Money Sports Life Tech Weather

Cars ▾

Shopping Buy a (

GET A QUOTE: GO DJIA 11,835.80 ▼ -14.81 NASDAQ 2,298.32 ▲ +7.37 as of 2:00 PM ET © BigChar

Study shows SUV air bags shielding heads, bodies reduce risk of death

Posted 10/5/2006 12:09 AM ET

E-mail | Save | Print | Reprints & Permissions | Subscribe to stories like this **RSS**

By Jayne O'Donnell, USA TODAY

Air bags that protect both the heads and bodies of SUV drivers and their passengers can cut the risk of death in side crashes by more than half, an insurance industry-funded study out Thursday shows.

These head-protecting side air bags proved to be far more effective at saving lives in cars and trucks than bags that protect just the torso. But the new research from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety shows torso-only side air bags still reduce the risk of death by more than 25%.

Under a voluntary auto industry agreement, all vehicles will have head-protecting side air bags as standard equipment by September 2009. About four of every five new car and SUV models now have head-protecting side air bags available, IIHS says.

The institute says that when all vehicles have head-protecting side air bags, the number of car crash fatalities could be reduced by 2,000 each year.

About a third of all deaths in cars and light trucks involve crashes in which vehicles are struck in the side. These side crashes are riskier because the side of a vehicle can't absorb crash forces like the front and rear can.

A federal rule that would mandate head-protecting bags and further improve side-impact protection is expected to be finalized this winter.

The institute found the risk of death to car drivers was reduced by 37% with head-protecting air bags and 26% with torso-only side air bags. Along with the 52% reduction of fatality risk for SUVs with head-protecting air bags, drivers of SUVs with torso-only bags have a 30% less risk of death.

IIHS says it couldn't gauge the effectiveness of side air bags in pickups and minivans because there weren't enough on the road that had the bags and had been involved in crashes.

The institute says side air bags help protect all adults. "We found lower fatality risks across the board — among older and younger drivers, male and female drivers, and drivers of both small cars and larger passenger vehicles," says Anne McCartt, IIHS' vice president for research and an author of the study.

Side air bags were first introduced in the mid-1990s.

In the late 1990s, some automakers said their tests showed side air bags could endanger small children, especially if they were unbelted or leaning into the bags.

Related Advert

Auto Loans for
5MinuteAutoLoan.c

Car Insurance:
www.bestcarinsura

Bad Credit Aut
http://www.fundingv

That prompted regulators to push automakers to develop voluntary standards to limit the bags' power.

The concerns about side air bag risks to children have largely been eliminated, because torso bags are only rarely offered in the back seat, where children under 13 are supposed to sit.

Side-curtain air bags, which protect only the head, are often in the back seat but don't deploy with the force of torso bags or reach down far enough to injure children.

Posted 10/5/2006 12:09 AM ET

E-mail | Save | Print | Reprints & Permissions | Subscribe to stories like this **RSS**

Related Advertising Links

What's this?

Auto Financing- Quick Online Quote
Must have a valid Social Security # & make \$1500/month. Bad credit ok!
www.DriverLoans.com

Discount Car Insurance
Quick comparison quotes from leading companies. Save up to \$600 today!
www.insure.com

Free iPod Nano+DLO Transpod
Complete sponsor offers and get a free iPod Nano+Transpod for your car
OnTheWeb-offer.com

Place your ad here

Advertisement



Newspaper Home Delivery - Subscribe Today

[Home](#) • [News](#) • [Travel](#) • [Money](#) • [Sports](#) • [Life](#) • [Tech](#) • [Weather](#)

About USA TODAY.com: [Site Map](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Jobs with Us](#)
[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Right](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Press Room](#)

News Your Way: [Mobile News](#) | [Email News](#) | [Add USA TODAY.com RSS feeds](#)

Partners: [USA Weekend](#) | [Sports Weekly](#) | [Education](#) | [Space.com](#)

Copyright 2006 USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co. Inc.

E-mail features

E-mail newsletter
Sign up to receive newsletter and day in your inbox

E-mail

Select one: **Breaking news E**
Get breaking news happens

Shopping

Find and compare thousands of products

Search by category

Category

Keyword

powered by