



The Land Rover Defender received a maximum five-star Euro NCAP rating

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New Euro NCAP test protocols identify vehicles that must offer improved protection for other vehicles

- *Land Rover Defender and Isuzu D-Max lose points in 'compatibility' test*
- *Honda e with dedicated EV design receives a four-star rating*
- *SEAT Leon emerges as one of 2020's top performers*
- *Lack of AEB performance contributes to Hyundai i10's three-star rating*

The latest Euro NCAP test results highlight the important challenge some manufacturers face when their vehicles are exposed to the most exacting protocols so far, with the new Land Rover Defender and Isuzu D-Max deemed too aggressive in the head-on collision test.

Impact testing methods were overhauled for 2020, with the head-on collision now consisting of two moving elements: the test vehicle itself and a Mobile Progressive Deformable Barrier (MPDB).

This test not only looks at intrusion on the test vehicle but also to the MPDB which represents the partner vehicle in a collision. To avoid being penalised within the latest test protocols, large vehicles must now offer more protection – and better compatibility – to smaller vehicles during a collision.

Although they both achieved a maximum five-star Euro NCAP rating, the Defender and D-Max lost points for their performance during the MPDB test and the threat they pose to partner vehicles in a collision.

The D-Max, which scored 11.2 out of 16 in the frontal impact test and 84% for overall adult occupant protection, caused some ‘localised areas of high deformation’ to the MPDB, while the Defender’s ‘high mass and front structure makes it an aggressive partner to a colliding vehicle’. It scored 11.7 out of 16 and 85% for adult occupant protection.

“The new-for-2020 tests are really driving a requirement for increased performance and more aggressive cars like the Defender and D-Max are being identified and marked down as a result,” Matthew Avery, Thatcham Research’s Director of Research, explained. “The latest test results show some manufacturers are finding compatibility a challenge.”

Not quite an electric dream

The brand-new Honda e also lost points in the frontal impact test, this time for the risk of injury to its own occupants in a collision.

Protection of the driver’s chest was rated as ‘marginal’ as was the protection offered to the driver and passenger’s knees and femurs. Protection for the driver’s lower right leg was also ‘poor’.

With an adult occupant score of 76%, a child occupant score of 82%, a vulnerable road user score of 62% and a safety assist score of 65%, the Honda e was awarded a four-star Euro NCAP rating.

Avery said: “Although it scored a solid four stars, there were definitely issues with the Honda in terms of driver protection and the lateral impact with the child dummy. The far side excursion result wasn’t great and this is a vehicle that doesn’t have a centre airbag function which is surprising.

“The Honda, and Mazda’s debut EV the MX-30, are in the same category as city electric cars, but the Mazda has outperformed its Japanese rival. With a five-star rating, the Mazda is the safer all-electric choice of the two.”



End-of-year highs – and a low

Two cars from the same VW Group family – the SEAT Leon and the Audi A3 Sportback – went head-to-head in the latest Euro NCAP tests. Although both cars emerged with a maximum five-star Euro NCAP rating, the SEAT outperformed its MQB platform twin by a combined total of 20% across all test categories.

“The SEAT is one of the best performers we’ve had all year. Although it’s closely related to the Audi, you can say the SEAT offers better value for money,” Avery said.



The final car to gain a five-star rating in the latest tests was the Kia Sorrento which features new safety updates, including KIA's first centre airbag and advanced e-Call system.

Hyundai's i10 only earned a three-star Euro NCAP rating. In four test categories, it scored lowest for occupant protection. The performance of its Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) system was disappointing. It could detect pedestrians – although its response was marginal – but it was unable to detect cyclists.

Euro NCAP also evaluated three new hybrid and electric variants of cars tested previously. The Renault CAPTUR's five-star rating from 2019 now also covers the CAPTUR E-TECH Plug-in Hybrid.

Peugeot's 3008 SUV Hybrid, the 508 Hybrid and the electrified 208 join the 2016, 2018 and 2019 ratings respectively.

ENDS

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As well as its world leading crash and track research, Thatcham Research develops repair methods amongst a number of other products and services within the collision repair industry for insurers, motor manufacturers, equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

In addition, Thatcham Research has administered the Association of British Insurer's (ABI) Group Rating system for the past 50 years. Group Rating is an advisory system intended to provide insurers with the relative risk of private cars and light commercial vehicles.

A founder member of the international Research Council for Automobile Repairs (RCAR), Thatcham Research has also been a member of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) since 2004.

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