

SUBARU EARNS TOP RATINGS FOR NEW IIHS SEAT BELT REMINDER EVALUATION (Applies to US models)

Tokyo, April 6, 2022, Subaru Corporation announced the 2022 Ascent and Forester earned top ratings in a new program from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) encouraging manufacturers to improve their seat belt reminders.



2022 Subaru Forester (US model)

The new IIHS program rates seat belt reminders as “Good”, “Acceptable”, “Marginal”, or “Poor”, based primarily on the volume, duration and timing of the audible alert. To earn a “Good” rating, a seat belt reminder system must generate an audible signal and visual alert on the dashboard display, overhead panel, or center console when the vehicle is moving at least 6 mph and the system detects an unbelted occupant in one of the front-row seating positions or the unfastening of a second-row belt that was previously buckled.

Along with other specifications, the audible alert must be loud enough to be heard over the background noise in the vehicle cabin. If the seat belt of an occupied front-row seat remains unbuckled, the visual and audible reminders must last at least 90 seconds. If a previously fastened second-row belt is unbuckled, the reminders must last at least 30 seconds. A visual indicator that appears when the driver starts the vehicle is also required for the second row.

Of the 26 small and midsize SUVs tested, only the Ascent and Forester earned the highest possible rating of “Good”. Both models feature audible alerts that the human ear perceives as approximately four times louder than the ambient vehicle noise at test speeds. These alerts do not end until the offending belt is fastened, and they meet all the other requirements for both front and rear reminders.

Federal standards specify that seat belt reminders must include an audible signal that lasts for 4-8 seconds total and a visual alert that lasts at least 60 seconds whenever the driver’s seat belt is unbuckled. However, previous IIHS research has shown that more noticeable and persistent alerts could increase belt use among those who do

not routinely buckle up by as much as 34 percent, preventing an estimated 1,500 fatalities a year.

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