

DID YOU KNOW???

LARGE PICKUP TRUCKS – ARE THEY AS SAFE AS YOU THINK?

Since a large percentage of residents of Franklin County drive pickup trucks, have you ever questioned whether or not they are as safe in a crash test as you might think? Well, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) recently evaluated two body styles of each 2016 model-year pickup – crew cab and extended cab. Crew cabs have four full doors and two full rows of seating. Extended cabs have two full front doors, two smaller rear doors and compact second-row seats.

Trucks tested include the Ford F-150 SuperCab, Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Double Cab and Crew Cab, Toyota Tundra Double Cab and CrewMax, and the Ram 1500 Quad Cab and Crew Cab.

In the April 12, 2016 issue of “Status Report”, the IIHS published their findings, and the results just might surprise you. In the small overlap front crash test, which replicates what happens when a vehicle runs off the road and hits a tree or pole or clips another vehicle that has crossed the center line, the worst-performing pickups are the highly-advertised Ram (Guts Glory Ram!) 1500 Crew Cab and the Ram 1500 Quad Cab. Both earn a “marginal” rating overall and a “poor” rating for structure. The force of the crash pushed the door-hinge pillar, instrument panel and steering column back toward the driver dummy. In the Ram Crew Cab test, the dummy's head contacted the front airbag but rolled around the left side as the steering column moved to the right, allowing the head to approach the intruding windshield pillar.

"Ford is leading the way among large pickup manufacturers when it comes to protecting people in a range of crashes and offering technology to warn drivers of imminent frontal crashes," says Raul Arbelaez, vice president of the Institute's Vehicle Research Center. "We commend Ford for taking last year's test results to heart and upgrading protection for SuperCab occupants in small overlap crashes."

The Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Double Cab and the Toyota Tundra Double Cab both earn an “acceptable” rating for occupant protection in a small overlap crash. Survival space for the driver in both of these extended-cab pickups was maintained reasonably well overall, contributing to their acceptable ratings for structure.

The story was different for the larger crew cabs. The Silverado 1500 Crew Cab and the Tundra CrewMax earn a “marginal” rating in the small overlap front test. Both models had considerable intrusion into the occupant compartment that compromised survival space for the driver. Ratings for both of the Silverado pickups extend to their GMC Sierra 1500 twins.

All of the pickups except the F-150 had moderate to severe intrusion into the driver footwell area during the small overlap test. The footrest/left toe pan, brake pedal, parking brake and/or lower dashboard were shoved against the dummy's lower legs. In the worst cases (Ram Crew Cab and Ram Quad Cab), maximum intrusion reached 16-17 inches. Measures taken from the crash test dummy in all but the F-150 indicated a likelihood of serious lower leg, ankle and foot injuries.

Across the board, the large pickups earn “good” ratings in the moderate overlap front test, side test and head restraint evaluations. That wasn't the case for roof strength. Four pickups earn “good” ratings for occupant protection in a rollover crash: the F-150,

both Silverados and Tundra Double Cab. The Tundra CrewMax is rated “acceptable”, and both of the Ram 1500s are rated “marginal”. Stronger roofs crush less, reducing the risk that people will be injured by contact with the roof itself. Stronger roofs also can prevent occupants, especially those who aren't using safety belts, from being ejected through windows, windshields or doors that have broken or opened. Pickup truck occupants are the least likely to buckle up among all vehicle occupants.

For more information from the IIHS regarding the crashworthiness of vehicles, and many other safety features, go to www.iihs.org. You might be surprised how your vehicle rates.