

Active Safety - Equipment to Help Avoid a Crash

ANCAP's crash test program provides comparative ratings on how different vehicle models protect their occupants in common types of crashes. Vehicle buyers should consult these ratings before making a purchase. However, it is obviously better if you can avoid a crash in the first place and there is now a range of equipment which can help you do that.

Electronic Stability Control (ESC)

ESC helps to prevent loss of control when the back of the car slides out, or when you turn the wheel but the car doesn't turn in response. The system constantly compares the direction of the front wheels, where the driver wants the vehicle to go, with the actual direction the vehicle is going. If the two are not the same, ESC applies the brakes to individual wheels to assist the driver in directing the vehicle where the driver wants to go.

ESC may also reduce engine power to help in maintaining control. ESC assists in control of a vehicle on unexpectedly tight corners, in violent avoidance manoeuvres, or on a slippery section of road, where the vehicle may otherwise slide out of control and leave the road. This system is particularly valuable on 4WDs, which are inherently less stable than conventional vehicles due to their higher centre of gravity. Research shows reductions in run-off-road crashes of up to 60% when ESC is fitted to 4WDs.

Manufacturers have many different names for ESC including Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Dynamic Stability Control (DSC), Active Stability Control (ASC) and Vehicle Stability Control (VSC). When buying a vehicle that is claimed to have ESC, check carefully that the system fitted operates as described above.

Facts sheets in this series -

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