

Minicars do poorly in head-on crash tests

by UPI

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Minicars don't do well in head-on collisions with midsized autos despite advanced safety features in the smaller vehicles, crash tests indicate.

In frontal crash tests involving the minicars Honda Fit, Smart Fortwo and Toyota Yaris, with midsized cars from the same manufacturers, each vehicle did poorly in protecting the minicar occupants, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety said Tuesday in a release.

"Some proponents of mini and small cars claim they're as safe as bigger, heavier cars. But the claims don't hold up," the IIHS said, citing the results of its tests as well as insurance industry statistics indicating that the 2007 death rate per million in 1- to 3-year-old minicars involved in single-vehicle crashes was 35, compared with 11 per million for very large cars.

The IIHS said a crash test between a Honda Fit and a Honda Accord indicated extensive injuries for the Fit's driver; a collision between the Smart Fortwo and a Mercedes C class showed "extensive intrusion into the space around the dummy from head to feet" in the Fortwo; and in a crash between a Toyota Yaris and a Camry, "there was far more intrusion into the occupant compartment of the Yaris than the Camry."

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