

Redesigned for the 1998 model year, the Mazda 626 has front shoulder belts with devices to limit belt forces on occupants. Antilock brakes are optional.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has evaluated the crashworthiness of the 626, based primarily on performance in a 40 mph frontal offset crash test into a deformable barrier. Head restraint and bumper designs are evaluated separately:

STRUCTURE / SAFETY CAGE: ACCEPTABLE There was moderate intrusion into the driver footwell area and moderate rearward movement of the instrument panel.

RESTRAINTS / DUMMY KINEMATICS: GOOD Dummy movement was well controlled. During rebound, the dummy moved toward the driver door, and its head hit the B-pillar.

INJURY MEASURES: HEAD ACCEPTABLE Measures taken from the neck, chest, and legs indicate low risk of injury to these body regions. A high head acceleration occurred when the dummy's head hit the B-pillar, indicating the possibility of head injury. The dummy's left knee also contacted a metal brace through a crack in the knee bolster, which gashed the vinyl "skin" at the knee.

OVERALL EVALUATION: ACCEPTABLE The driver space was maintained reasonably well in the frontal offset crash test. However, measures indicate the possibility of head injury.