

Introduced in the 1999 model year, the Saab 9-5 has side airbags designed to protect drivers' and front passengers' heads and chests. Front shoulder belts include crash tensioners to prevent slack from allowing excessive forward movement in a crash and devices to limit belt forces on occupants. The brake pedal arm is designed to break away under load in severe frontal crashes so the brake pedal doesn't intrude into the driver footwell. Front seats have "active" head restraints designed to move up and forward to cradle occupants' heads in low-speed rear impacts. Antilock brakes and daytime running lights are standard.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has evaluated the crashworthiness of the Saab 9-5, 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 minimal to moderate intrusion into the driver footwell area and minimal rearward movement of the instrument panel. The brake pedal arm broke away as it was designed to, and the pedal intruded only minimally rearward.

RESTRAINTS/DUMMY KINEMATICS: GOOD Dummy movement was well controlled. During rebound, the dummy's head contacted the B-pillar.

INJURY MEASURES: RIGHT LEG POOR Measures taken from the head, neck, and chest indicate low risk of injury to these body regions. Head acceleration from the B-pillar contact was low. However, forces on the right leg indicate the likelihood of injury to the lower leg and foot.

OVERALL EVALUATION: ACCEPTABLE The driver space was maintained reasonably well in the frontal offset crash test. However, forces on the dummy's right leg were high, indicating the likelihood of lower leg and foot injuries. Side airbags with head protection, belt crash tensioners, a breakaway brake pedal arm, active head restraints, and daytime running lights are pluses.