



the BVRLA guide to driving at work

Annex A - vehicle selection check list

Below is a helpful checklist for you to use to assess which type of vehicle is best suited for your needs.

How will you mainly use the vehicle; for short, start/stop trips, long journeys on trunk roads and motorways, for carrying children, adult passengers or lots of luggage or equipment? The answers to this question may point you towards a particular type of car or specific safety features.

EURO NCAP

What is the EURO NCAP rating of the vehicle? _____ stars

The European New Car Assessment Programme (EURO NCAP) conducts crash tests with specific models of new cars and grades their performance according to how well they protect the occupants and the severity of injuries to a pedestrian struck by the vehicle. Initial research has shown that each EURO NCAP star reduces the risk of fatal or serious injury for occupants by 12%. EURO NCAP reports details of how the vehicle performed in each test the results of which are published widely and can also be viewed at: www.euroncap.com.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS)

If the front wheels lock during severe braking the driver is likely to lose control of the vehicle. Anti-lock braking systems prevent the wheels locking, and in adverse driving conditions can minimise stopping distances while still allowing the driver to steer around obstacles.

To be fully effective, ABS needs to be used correctly and many drivers would benefit from specific training.

ABS fitted? Yes No

Training required? Yes No

Brake lights

Separate brake and rear lights have proven more effective than those which are integrated and a third, central brake light mounted fairly high up and away from the other lights provides extra warning to following drivers, especially in heavy traffic.

Separate brake and rear lights? Yes No

High level brake lights? Yes No

Head restraints

Properly adjusted head restraints help to reduce or prevent whiplash injuries which can occur even in minor impacts. They are common for front seats but less so on rear seats. Adjustable head restraints can be raised or lowered although they may need regular re-adjustment. Fixed head restraints cannot be adjusted but check that they are the right height for the occupants - the top of the head restraint should be at eye level. Rear head restraints may reduce visibility to the rear.

Head restraints on front seats? Yes, fixed Yes, adjustable No

Head restraints on rear seats? Yes, fixed Yes, adjustable No

Seat belts

Modern cars have inertia-reel seat belts on the four outer seats which automatically lock the belt during hard braking or cornering. Many models have seat belt pretensioners and/or webbing grabbers. Pre-tensioners tighten the belt during the first milliseconds of crash and webbing grabbers clamp the belt just outside the reel.

Some cars equipped with air bags may have load limiters on the front seat belts which allow some forward movement and limit the forces on the chest during an impact.

Seat belts on all seats? Yes No

Central three-point seat belt in rear? Yes No

Inertia-reel seat belts on outer seats? Yes No

Seat belt pre-tensioners? Yes No

Seat belt webbing grabbers? Yes No

Seat belt load limiters? Yes No





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Airbag information

There is a risk of injury if an airbag hits a driver or passenger while it is inflating, although this can only happen if the occupant is sitting too close to the airbag.

Check that you do not have to sit too close to the steering wheel in order to properly manage the controls. Advice in the USA is that the distance between the centre of the steering wheel and the driver's breastbone should be at least 10 inches. However, airbags differ from car to car, so always follow the manufacturer's advice. If you are sitting too close, check whether the manufacturer can adjust the foot pedals so you can sit further away (avoid fitting pedal extensions). Otherwise, consider looking for an alternative vehicle.

Some cars have a switch which enables the airbag to be turned off. However, this means that the protection offered by the airbag is lost, and there are concerns that such devices may not work properly.

Airbag fitment

Driver Airbag	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Passenger Airbag	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Side Airbags	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rearward-facing child seats should never be fitted in the front seat if there is a passenger airbag.

Load Restraint.

Loads and luggage in the rear of cars need to be properly restrained to prevent them from moving and injuring the occupants in a crash or under emergency braking. Heavy loads may affect the vehicle's handling, and the tyre pressures may need to be adjusted - check the vehicle handbook. Folding rear seats, especially split seats, may be weaker than fixed seats. Some may be unable to restrain heavy loads in severe frontal collisions. Many cars have anchor-points and/or straps in the boot for restraining heavy objects.

Seats

Folding seats	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Split rear seats	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anchor-points/straps	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

