



SHE DRIVES ACT: MANDATING REAL CRASH TESTING FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

If the government doesn't mandate the use of the most technologically available crash test dummies in fairer crash test standards, women will continue to die or be severely injured at disproportionate rates compared to men.

Every year, **over 1,300 women lose their lives unnecessarily** due to outdated crash test standards. Women are **17-18.5% more likely than men to die** in a vehicle crash and **73% more likely to sustain an injury** than men in a car crash, all due to outdated crash standards.



Preventable deaths and injuries to women due to unequal crash testing standards costs **over \$15 billion** in economic losses.

Q: Why do we need this legislation?

A: Women's and men's bodies respond differently in a crash due to differences in [physiology](#) (differing size, bone density, muscle structure, and abdomen and chest physiology) and [driver positioning](#) (because of shorter arms, females sit closer to the steering wheel than males). When these factors are unaccounted for in vehicle design these differences can be fatal yet, the government's tests do not require that cars are crash-tested for women. Several studies have proven women are far more prone to injury and death than men in a crash. A [2019 University of Virginia study](#) found that women are 73% more likely to be injured in a frontal crash than men and, as cited in [DOT's 2022 National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), female drivers are 17% more likely than their male counterparts to be killed in a comparable crash. Following [multiple](#) other [studies](#) with congruent numbers verifying that women die and are injured at much higher rates than men.

Q: What does this legislation do for women?

A: The [She DRIVES \(Develops Regulations in Vehicle Equality and Safety\) Act](#) improves the government's 5-star safety ratings crash test program by requiring wholistic test procedures and the most updated testing devices for men and women. Senator Fischer's Bill: 1) requires the use of female crash test dummies that accurately represent female anatomy; and 2) Mandates the same number and nature of crash tests for females as males in the government's NCAP test. If passed, every year, the legislation will save the lives of over 1,300 women, prevent and mitigate tens of thousands of serious injuries, and save billions of dollars in economic impact from preventing and mitigating those injuries and deaths.

Q: What is 'NCAP'?

A: 'NCAP' stands for 'New Car Assessment Program', a voluntary government-lead program that gives cars '5 star' safety ratings. Most automakers choose to participate in the program to ensure safety credibility. The problem is that the government doesn't test for females at all seating positions (for frontal and side impact tests in the driver's seat, for example) and where it does test for females (in the passenger seat position, for instance) it uses old dummies that don't accurately represent women.

Q: Have female dummies ever been used in the driver's seat during NCAP crash tests?

A: No. Even the older scaled-down male dummies, which the government calls “female,” have never been used in the driver's seat for frontal and side impact tests in NCAP. Despite claims of using female dummies, such as the ‘Hybrid III 5th’, these older models are essentially just scaled-down males, that don't accurately represent women's physiology. The government's [description](#) of NCAP tests will show that any kind of female dummies are missing in the driver's seat position in frontal and side impact tests. While the government has been working on a new generation of dummies, called THORs, for years, but has not required their use in tests. The She DRIVES Act would require the female THORs be used in all of the same tests where males are now tested.

Q: What is Part 572, and why isn't it enough to simply add a female dummy to it?

A: ‘Part 572’ is the section in the federal regulations that lists dummies approved for use in crash tests, acting as a catalogue for specified testing equipment. If a piece of test equipment is placed in Part 572, a tester (such as an automaker) may use that piece of equipment in its testing. However, they don't have to do so. The She DRIVES act would mandate the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to do more than just list advanced female crash test dummies (like the THOR 5th) in Part 572. Instead, this legislation would order NHTSA to require these biofidelic female dummies be used in all crash tests where male dummies are currently tested, not just make them optional.

Q: What does the government's auditor say about NHTSA's failure to act?

A: The GAO issued a [report](#) over a year ago outlining deficiencies in the government's crash testing program, stating, “NHTSA identified greater risks faced by females and older individuals at least two decades ago, but has not completed actions to address them...NHTSA does not have a comprehensive plan to address existing risks and limitations in the information dummies provide.” NHTSA said it would issue a plan in 180 days to address the GAO's concerns from 2023, yet no plan has been issued.

Q: Why does Congress have to act?

A: The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has not acted. NHTSA has indicated in multiple places that it wants to make the new biofidelic female dummy ‘optional’ in crash testing. Here are a few instances where NHTSA missed opportunities to make real change:

- In the 2022 upgrade to the government's 5-star safety ratings, they didn't require female crash test dummies or equal crash tests (e.g., testing females in the driver's seat).
- The [2023 upgrade proposal](#), praised the biofidelic THOR dummies but still left their use optional, placing them in Part 572 – a catalog where testers can choose, but aren't required, to use them. Testers were still allowed to use the old Hybrid III 5th mini-males in place of more advanced biofidelic female dummies.
- In the 2023 Fall Regulatory [Agenda](#), NHTSA again delayed making the female dummy mandatory, indicating it would remain optional.