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## Protecting Ourselves From Crash Deaths & Serious Injuries

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### **When Government and Industry Fail to Protect Us – What Can We Do?**

A year ago, Michael Hiltzik of the LA Times wrote an article on the NHTSA Revolving Door and Safety. He ended the article with an important question:

*“But when business gets its say on Capitol Hill and the White House too, what's the ordinary person to do?”* [1]

We ordinary persons have some powerful tools available to us. Powers of information developed by safety advocates, the power of the pen to boost political will to increase safety, and dollars for purchasing and donating.

The Car Book 2015, the 35<sup>th</sup> annual edition has just been published by the Center for Auto Safety (CAS) and Jack Gillis. Ditlow’s Foreword addresses both what we are up against and what we can do about our safety. [2]

### **Use the Power of Safety Information**

Americans are fortunate to have such extraordinary people who work very hard for decades to save the lives of motorists against great odds. Clarence Ditlow, head of the Center for Auto Safety (CAS), and Jack Gillis have done so for forty years.

In my opinion, based on nearly 40 years working to improve safety, the Car Book 2015 is the best new car buyer’s information source available. [3]

The Car Book empowers people to make wiser safety choices.

The information in this publication can save readers and their family time, money, aggravation, and possibly life, limbs, and livelihoods. Without this information readers would be less able to make wise choices.

New car purchases are the second largest expenditure families make. But car purchases are also the largest where their safety is most at stake.

Currently, too many Americans make life or death choices without the wisdom gained through 35 years of published research by the producers of the Car Book.

Some examples of what readers need to know and can learn:

**Safety:** Some new vehicles rated a 9 out of 10 (best) on safety while others rated a 1 (worst) on crash tests. Which one would you choose without knowing the rating? The Hyundai Sonata or the Nissan Maxima?

True story: About six months ago a 2013 model of one of these vehicles was in a crash. The driver was a woman (age 85). She was leaving her development to do some grocery shopping. When the traffic light turned green she proceeded into the intersection to make a left turn. A truck crashed into the driver side of her vehicle. She needed to be extricated. But she was protected by three airbags that deployed – pelvis, thorax, and head side curtain airbags. She was taken to a Level 1 Trauma Center a few miles away. She suffered several rib fractures and a knee injury. Rib fractures in a person this age can be fatal. She suffered several months of great pain from her injuries and is still undergoing rehabilitation in recovery – but still not able to drive because of her knee injury.

I learned later that the knee injury was a deep wound to her right knee, not her left knee as I thought. The knee is still troubling her in rehabilitation.

Aware of this case, I was pleasantly surprised to see in the new Car Book that the latest model of the vehicle she was driving now has an airbag knee bolster standard on the driver side.

So which 2015 vehicle was rated a Best Bet in the new Car Book and has an airbag knee bolster as standard equipment? The Nissan or the Hyundai?

### **Car Book 2015 Safety Information**

Safety information in the Car Book 2015 provides readers with a Safety Checklist on each new model. The Checklist contains crash test ratings, and availability of safety technologies (Standard, Optional, or None). The safety technologies availability information is provided on each of the following:

**Airbags:** Torso, Pelvis, Roll Sensing (for rollover protection), and Knee Bolster

**Crash Avoidance:** Collision Avoidance, Blind Spot Detection, Lane Keeping Assist, Backup Camera, and Pedestrian Crash Avoidance

**General:** Automatic Crash Notification (ACN) and Daytime Running Lights

**Safety Belt/Restraint:** Dynamic Head Restraints, and Adjustable Belts

### **Car Book 2015 Additional Reference Information**

Each 2015 model has information included in an excellent one-page profile of the vehicle. Also included in the model profile are external and internal pictures of the vehicle. Additional information is provided on where the vehicle was made, specifications such as engine size, fuel economy, transmission type, interior and cargo space, head & leg room, and retail price range.

The Car Book also contains valuable information that can save you money. Some examples:

**Depreciation:** Some vehicles retained 90% of their value over the years 2011 – 2014 while others lost 50% of their value.

**Fuel Economy:** Best and worst models along with mpg measurements and tips for saving money at the pump.

**Warranties:** Models rated Very Poor to Very Good.

**Repair Costs:** Models rated Very Poor to Very Good.

And much more valuable info on Insurance, Tires, Maintenance, and Complaints is at the reader's fingertips.

I have wondered for many years why more consumers have made new vehicle purchase decisions without using such valuable information. I think too many Americans do not know of the availability and importance of this information in their purchase decision-making.

Consumers ignore this information at the peril of their physical safety and financial security.

[1] Automakers stay cozy in the U.S. capital, <http://articles.latimes.com/2014/jan/26/business/la-fi-hiltzik-20140126>

[2] The Car Book 2015 Foreword by Clarence Ditlow is at [http://www.autosafety.org/sites/default/files/imce\\_staff\\_uploads/Foreword%202015.pdf](http://www.autosafety.org/sites/default/files/imce_staff_uploads/Foreword%202015.pdf)

[3] The Car Book 2015, is available online at <http://www.autosafety.org/books-reports>