

DRIVE



A five-out-of-five crash rating from the world's leading safety testing organisation, Euro New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) is a good way to gauge

how protected you will be in your next executive express. Its findings are based on how well a car protects occupants, plus pedestrians, as well as the active safety

Look for five stars in your

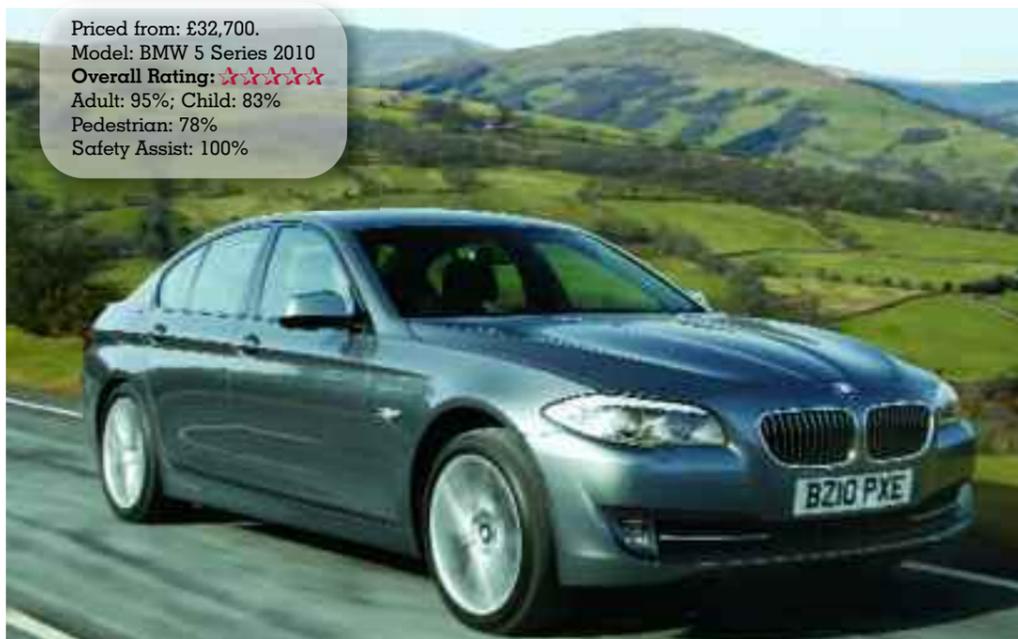
BMW 5-Series

The BMW 5-Series is still a popular choice for business buyers looking for a sporty high-status model, but it is more technologically sophisticated and desirable than ever before.

The cabin is excellently put together with high-quality materials and a wonderful finish throughout. But more than that, the new 5-Series has been hailed as one of the world's safest cars. The latest offering from the German motor manufacturer beat all-comers when average results across four assessment categories were calculated.

Scoring five stars with Euro NCAP, the car provides an extremely stable passenger cell which ensures extensive protection from injury for both driver and passengers, regardless of their size and seating position. Active safety systems include traction control, while drivers can also choose lane departure warning systems and head-up displays, which mean you don't have to take your eyes off the road to check speed, and satellite-navigation functions.

Priced from: £32,700.
Model: BMW 5 Series 2010
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Adult: 95%; Child: 83%
Pedestrian: 78%
Safety Assist: 100%



Infiniti FX37 GT

Priced from: £45,885
Model: Infiniti FX37 GT
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Adult: 86%; Child: 77%
Pedestrian: 44%
Safety Assist: 99%

Infiniti is the luxury arm of Nissan, similar to Lexus being the opulent arm of Toyota, but with a much more athletic disposition. The FX is a large executive SUV crossover, though Infiniti describes it as a 'sports car'.

As this implies, the emphasis is on sporty on-road driving rather than off-road mud-plugging. The FX is intended to vie with vehicles such as



the BMW X6, Porsche Cayenne and Range Rover Sport.

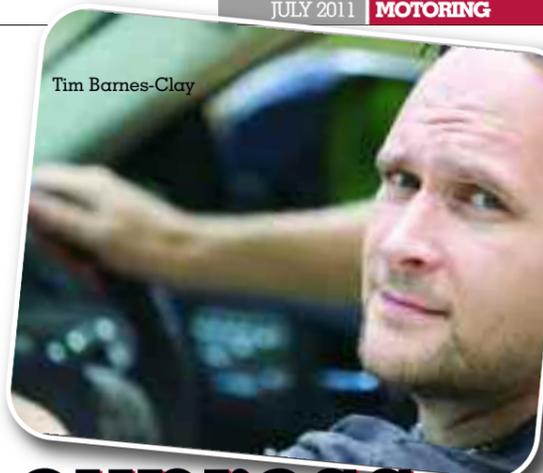
Despite being a big vehicle, the availability of an Around View Monitor (AVM) system means the Infiniti is not intimidating to drive or park.

At slow speeds AVM gives a 360-degree top-down view of the FX's surroundings and the car's position within them.

Of course, as would be expected with a luxury brand,

Infiniti boasts a lot more in its vital safety kit. The FX is equipped as standard with: electronic stability control, a driver-set speed limitation device and a seatbelt reminder system covering the driver, front passenger and all rear seat positions.

This has all helped the FX37 GT achieve a five-star Euro NCAP crash rating.



Tim Barnes-Clay

equipment the car has to prevent a collision in the first place. With that in mind, motoring correspondent TIM BARNES-CLAY checks out four premium cars offering great protection.

next executive express

Mercedes-Benz E-Class

The new Mercedes-Benz E-Class ranks high among the luxury large cars. The model has been totally redesigned with new style and many lavish features. The E-Class now has more athletic looks with better performance and is a must-try car for classy car lovers.

It has an improved interior with real sporty characteristics and it offers all the essential protection features as well as new safety tricks.

There is an Attention Assist System designed to help drivers stay alert and an intelligent sensor that automatically dims the high beam headlights to avoid blinding oncoming cars.

Mercedes-Benz's 'PRE SAFE' technology also detects when an accident is about to occur and primes the restraint and protection systems in readiness for the collision.

The E-Class is also equipped with Electronic Safety Control (ESC) as standard equipment on all variants.



Priced from: £28,915
Model: Mercedes-Benz E-Class 2010
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Adult: 86%; Child: 77%
Pedestrian: 59%
Safety Assist: 86%

Saab 9-5

Stylish, sophisticated and unmistakably Saab, the all-new 9-5 saloon signals the dawn of a new era for the Swedish brand. With progressive, confident styling and advanced safety technology, the Scandinavian motor manufacturer's distinctive flagship brings a fresh, alternative choice to the premium saloon segment.

Occupant protection in the 9-5 builds on Saab's successful real-life safety philosophy. Crash testing and computer simulations are based on what happens in real collisions on real roads, using the findings of a database covering more than 6,100 real-life accidents involving Saab cars on Swedish roads. In this way, the development of the new 9-5 has drawn on all Saab's experience with real-life safety accumulated over more than 50 years.

In Euro NCAP crash tests, the older Saab 9-5, as well as this new model, achieved a maximum five-star

rating. In addition to the full complement of occupant safety systems already installed in Saab cars, the new 9-5 adds third generation Saab Active Head Restraint (SAHR 3) as standard for the front seats and rear side airbags, together with pre-tensioning of the outer rear seatbelts, as an optional package.

Driving, or active safety – the ability to avoid becoming involved in an accident – is also improved by functions such as Bi-Xenon Smart Beam, head-up information display and adaptive cruise control.



Priced from: £26,995
Model: Saab 9-5 2009
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Adult: 94%; Child: 80%
Pedestrian: 44%
Safety Assist: 86%

