Safety rating system assists to choose the right vehicle

Safety on our roads is an everyday challenge and should therefore be your top priority when you are shopping for a new car.

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Euro NCAP created a five-star safety rating system to help consumers compare vehicles' safety features more easily, and to help them choose the best vehicle for their needs. The rating is based on a combination of tests that the car is put through, as well as the suite of safety features it has on board that exceed the minimum requirements set out by the industry.

Imperial Auto dealerships across South Africa stock a range of vehicles that offer outstanding Euro NCAP safety ratings, with some of the newest and most innovative safety interventions available. They include the following:

• **Autonomous emergency braking (AEB)**: These systems improve safety by helping avoid rear-end accidents by identifying critical situations early and warning the driver that the distance to the vehicle or object ahead is critically low. Some also assist in reducing the severity of accidents which cannot be avoided by lowering the speed at collision, and, in some cases, by preparing the vehicle and restraints for impact.

• **Blind spot monitoring**: A vehicle's 'blind spot' is just behind and to one side of the vehicle it is overtaking, and many accidents are caused by a vehicle changing lanes when they don't see another vehicle in their blind spot. Several manufacturers have developed radar or camera based systems that monitor the sides to the rear of the vehicle, alerting the driver when there is something in close proximity that may not be seen in the vehicles mirrors.

- **Lane support systems**: Lane support systems alert the driver when they unintentionally leave their lane without indication, while lane keeping support helps drivers correct their course. This helps drivers avoid crossing into oncoming traffic by mistake, or veering off the side of the road onto gravel or into the verge, by simulating the feeling of the car running over a 'rumble strip'.

- **Attention assist**: This drowsiness detection sounds an alarm when it detects that a vehicle's driver may be drowsy, preventing them from falling asleep behind the wheel, and encouraging them to take a break before they cause an accident. In Europe, it is estimated that attention assist could prevent 1,875 injury accidents involving a passenger car, which cannot be ignored when our country lost 1,376 people in car accidents during the December festive season of 2014.

- **Pre-crash interventions**: It is estimated that nearly 5% of all casualties in accidents involving a passenger vehicle could be addressed by pre-crash technology. The best levels of protection are achieved when interaction between occupant and the car's restraint system is optimised. This could be controlling occupants' movement during a collision rather than restraining them, or responding to driver's panicked reactions to prepare for impact.