



Vehicle Headrests: They Literally Can Save Your Neck

Most people understand how to properly use automobile safety devices like safety belts, airbags and car seats, but statistics suggest the majority of drivers are clueless when it comes to the proper positioning of headrests.

"Headrests can go a long way toward reducing neck injuries in the event of a rear-end collision," stated Buzz Rodland, chairman of the American International Automobile Dealers Association in Alexandria, VA. "But they're only effective when positioned correctly relative to the driver's head."

Because rear-end collisions are more likely to occur in slippery road conditions, now is a good time to ensure that your headrest is properly positioned.

According to research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a correctly positioned headrest should meet two criteria:

- Headrests should ideally be positioned two inches or less from the rear of the driver's head, and never more than four inches.
- When adjusting for height, the bulk of the headrest should stand directly behind the driver's head, at ear level. In the event of whiplash, the headrest should contact your head first, not the neck.

"Automakers are doing a much better job of designing safe headrests, but it's still very important that motorists take the time to manually adjust them," Rodland said. "Far too many people are driving with headrests in the lowest possible position, and as a result, they aren't getting any of the safety benefits."

For more information on proper headrest adjustment, or to learn about your vehicle's headrest safety rating, visit www.aiada.org/headrestsafety.

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