

Saab 9-5

Featuring 2.0t Saloon and Estate



SCORECARD

Overtaking / pulling power

●●●○○

Fuel economy

●●○○○

Handling / steering

●●●○○

Comfort / ease of control

●●●○○

Interior space / practicality
(Estate)

●●●○○

Accident / injury avoidance

●●●○○

Costs in service

●●●○○

Depreciation prospects

●●●○○

The 9-5 EFFECTIVELY REPLACES THE 9000 Saloon. It's a vastly improved car with the smoothest ride and niftiest cornering we've encountered on a Saab – clever, because some of the suspension hardware is borrowed from Vauxhall's Vectra.

This engine is pure Saab, however – a turbocharged four-cylinder linked to a very long-legged top gear. Balancer shafts keep the two-litre smooth above 1300rpm, but there's more vibration from the 2.3 manual; we recommend the unobtrusive automatic with this engine. Overall, the way these motors manage is very acceptable – until you sample six-cylinder rivals that use no more fuel. We've yet to encounter the bigger V6.

Some interior features also reflect Saab's individualism – double sun visors, head restraints that articulate in a crash, clever “joystick” ventilator-aim controls, all work well. The basic accommodation is

considerate to occupants and the boot is deep, with seats folding, as well, if needed. There's a sill on this saloon, and you can't unlock the lid together with the doors.

It's an awkward car to reverse and the lower windscreen creates optical distortion. However, opt for the new estate version and reversing becomes much easier. Like the Volvo V70, this isn't a pantechicon, but it has no load sill and it's thoughtfully provided with a plastic-coated bumper, as well as a sturdy sliding load tray; this makes things easier on your back and is good for picnics and wellie removal. The solid load cover protects from prying eyes and the ideally weighted tailgate opens to reveal no wiring or gas-struts. Lashing eye sockets plus steel rear seat floor pans will avoid the risk of flying cargo. Best of all, the back seat offers just as much splendid comfort as the saloon's.

There's no practical reason for not preferring the estate to the saloon – after you've paid out the extra £1000 up front. If you buy either, your 9-5 will reward you with excellent safety

HOW THE SAAB 9-5 COMPARES	Engine cap/power (cyl/cc/bhp)	Revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes† best stop (m/kg)	Maximum legroom - front (cm)	Typical leg/kneeroom - rear (cm)	Steering(p) turns/ circle (m)	Overall length (cm)
SAAB 9-5 2.0t	4/1985/150	2350	9.5	30.7/16.3	31½	25½/32	110	103/79	2.9/11.0	482
BMW 520i SE	6/1991/150	3280	9.8	26.9/19.7	33	23½/18	116	103/76	3.0/11.0	478
Audi A6 2.4SE	V6/2393/165	3100	8.8	21.6/15.2	30½	23/19	109	100/74	2.8/11.2	480
Mercedes-Benz E240 (Auto)	V6/2398/170	2950	9.7	Auto	26½	26/16	120	112/79	3.2/10.6	479
Toyota Camry V6 (Auto)	V6/2995/188	2600	8.8	Auto	24½	26/18	107	109/79	3.1/11.6	476
						† all with ABS		(p) all power assisted		

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

mph	30	40	50	60	70
THROUGH THE GEARS		1.8	3.8	6.1	9.5
IN 5TH GEAR		9.4	17.3	24.3	30.7
IN 4TH GEAR		4.7	8.5	12.3	16.3

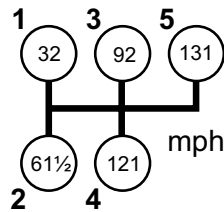
20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES		20.4/10.9		14.9/7.6	
			17.3/8.5		13.4/7.8

Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
		6000*		6000*	4800

* for best acceleration

Gearing gives 27.3mph per 1000rpm
in top gear = 2560rpm at 70mph



FUEL CONSUMPTION

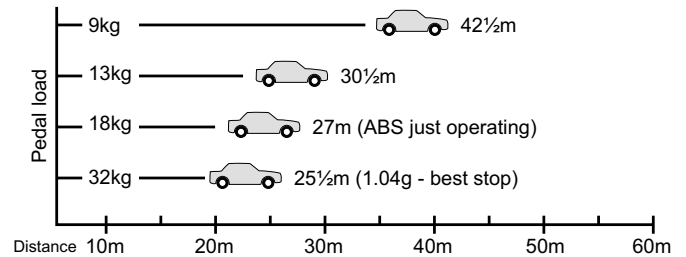
Type of use - with air conditioning off*	mpg
Urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	19
Suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	26
Motorway (70mph cruising)	35
Cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	31½
Rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	37
Typical mpg overall	31½
Realistic tank range (not nominal tank capacity)	68 litres/470miles

*with air conditioning switched on, consumption will increase by 2–4% in winter and 4–8% in summer

BRAKES

Pedal feel ●●●○○ Behaviour in an emergency ●●●○○ Handbrake ●●○○○

Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (with standard ABS)
(A good-to-average best stop with ABS is about 26m at 15-20kg pedal load)

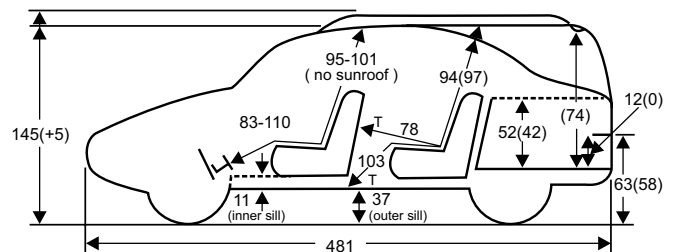


Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g) stop:
13kg at start of test, 15kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

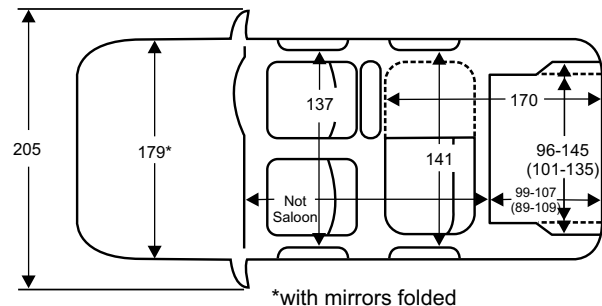
MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres

Four-door Saloon
(Estate in brackets where different)



T: typical back seat space behind medium-sized front occupants



*with mirrors folded

LIKES AND GRIPEs

Neat screen clip for parking tickets	:	poor AM radio reception
Relaxed long-legged gearing	...	but results in some lower speed tremors
Double sun visors pay off with low winter sun	...	but confusing to fold away at first
Air con offer side-to-side heat variation	...	but can be too cool at foot level for comfort
Rear head restraints fold out of the way	...	but rear load can't be made secure from interior
Sturdy slide-out load platform on estate	...	but only "space saver" spare wheel beneath