

Press Release

Aug 11, 2010 | ID: 33742

40 years in the service of safety

For 40 years now the Volvo Car Corporation's Accident Research Team has documented and analysed traffic accidents involving Volvo cars. Many of the safety systems presented over the years build on know-how gained from the Accident Research Team's impressive database.

It was thanks to a revolutionary new invention that the Accident Research Team started its operations. The year was 1966, just a few years after Volvo engineer Nils Bohlin had invented the three-point safety belt and Volvo had introduced this feature as standard in the front seats of all its models.

In order to measure the effects of the safety belt in traffic accidents, all accidents involving Volvos were analysed for a period of year. The car safety belt showed a massive 50 percent injury-reduction effect.

Volvo's engineers realised the importance of understanding exactly what happens to the car's occupants and the car itself in the course of an accident in order to be able to develop better and safer products in the future. The first seed was sown and in 1970 Volvo Cars' own Accident Research Team was inaugurated.

Interpreting the sequence of events

The method that is used today has been refined over the years, but all the information is still obtained from actual road accidents.

"We have to assume that our customers don't always do what we expect them to do. They respond differently to various situations. That is why we need to understand the driver's behaviour and how it influences the sequence of events in a real-life accident," explains research unit member John Fredrik Grönvall.

Work in the Accident Research Team follows two main tracks. Firstly, in-depth studies of individual accidents that provide insight into how a car's protective systems behave and how the people involved are injured.

And secondly broad-based statistics that make it possible to chart the likelihood of a certain type of accident occurring. This knowledge leads to valuable prioritisation in the development of new car models.

The information that is collected is analysed by staff at the Volvo Cars Safety Centre, by specialists at the engineering departments and by medical experts.

All told, information from about 40,000 accidents involving Volvos has been gathered since the unit started operating, and 2100 in-depth analyses including comprehensive documentation have been conducted. This forms a valuable database that provides input for the development of new products.

Ten years with the crash-test laboratory

The Accident Research Team shares an anniversary with the Volvo Cars Safety Centre, which is celebrating ten years since of operation. On March 29, 2000, Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf inaugurated the centre, which is still one of the most advanced facilities of its kind in the world.

Since its establishment, every new Volvo model has undergone between 100 and 150 different crash tests in the laboratory to test a variety of accident scenarios, and even before the car exists as a physical object it will already have been tested thousands of times as a prototype using virtual simulators.

A total of about 3000 physical crash tests have been carried out in the laboratory since its inauguration in 2000. All this work aims at ensuring that the vehicle's various safety systems interact as intended and provide effective protection for all the car's occupants, irrespective of their size, at various speeds and in various accident scenarios. The tests supplement the accident research carried out in the field by the Accident Research Team.

Keywords:

Safety, Press Releases

Descriptions and facts in this press material relate to Volvo Cars' international car range. Described features might be optional. Vehicle specifications may vary from one country to another and may be altered without prior notification.

Media Contacts

Volvo Cars Media Relations

Phone: +46 (0)31-59 65 25
media@volvocars.com

Related Images



[More Images >](#)

Related Videos



[More Videos >](#)

[media.volvocars.com >](#)

[volvocars.com >](#)

Copyright © 2025 Volvo Car Corporation (or its affiliates or licensors).