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Volvo celebrates 80 years of safety

Some principles never change. And after 80 years of safety advances from Volvo, the philosophy expressed by the company's founders is more appropriate than ever:

"Cars are driven by people. Therefore the guiding principle behind everything we make at Volvo is - and must remain - safety"

(Assar Gabrielsson and Gustaf Larson)

Volvo will celebrate its 80th anniversary on 14 April - just a month after the world premiere of the all-new Volvo V70 and XC70 in Geneva. As always, new Volvo models come with improved safety features, and the new arrivals are equipped with extended inflatable curtains which, in combination with adjustable child booster cushions, belt force limiters adapted for children and a strong side structure, help to provide children of different heights with effective protection in a side collision. Child safety has always been important to Volvo, which introduced the first rear-facing child seats on the market as early as in the 1960s.

The philosophy of the founding fathers has provided the basis for many other new safety features over the years. One example is the safety cage, which was introduced in the Volvo PV 444 in 1944, together with the laminated windscreen, and was among the first major safety features in the company's cars. The three-point safety belt - the most important of all Volvo's inventions - appeared in 1959. This is considered to be one of the technical inventions that has saved most lives in the history of mankind. Side-impact protection (SIPS) was introduced in 1991 and the WHIPS whiplash protection system in 1998. In today's models, the crumple zone introduced in 1966 has been refined with the use of four different grades of steel to optimise the absorption of collision forces.

For the last 37 years, Volvo's own accident research team has been studying and learning from accidents involving Volvo cars. The team provides Volvo's research and development function with vital knowledge on a continuous basis.

Volvo envisages a future in which the traffic environment will be completely safe. In this vision, cars will be equipped with intelligent systems that will not only help to improve driver alertness, but may even take control of the car if the driver does not react in sufficient time to avoid an impending emergency. This work is already in full progress. The latest Volvo cars incorporate several advanced safety systems that assist the driver in this respect. These include BLIS, which warns of vehicles in the blind spot and Collision Warning with Brake Support which, in addition to visual and audible warnings, 'primes' the brakes to help avoid a collision with the vehicle in front.

"The thrust of our new safety philosophy is to place human capability at the centre of our research work and future systems development. The objective is to help the driver to keep his or her hands on the wheels and eyes on the road," explains Ingrid Skogsmo, director of the Volvo Cars Safety Centre, who was named Woman of the Year 2006 by the influential trade magazine *Automotive News*.

City Safety, which was unveiled for the first time in the XC60 Concept at the Detroit Motor Show earlier this year, represents yet another step towards this vision. The system itself can, in some situations, apply the brakes to avoid a collision and Volvo Cars hopes that its use will prevent half of all rear-end collisions. City Safety is scheduled for commercial introduction within the next two

years.

Milestones in 80 years of Volvo safety

- 1944 Safety cage
- 1944 Laminated windscreen
- 1959 Three-point safety belts in front seats
- 1960 Padded dashboard
- 1964 Prototype of first rear-facing child seat
- 1966 Dual-circuit braking system
- 1966 Crumple zones
- 1967 Safety belts in rear seat
- 1968 Head restraints in front seats
- 1969 Three-point, inertia-reel safety belts in front seats
- 1972 Three-point, inertia-reel safety belts in rear seats
- 1972 Rear-facing child seat and childproof locks
- 1972 Volvo Experimental Safety Car (VESC)
- 1973 Collapsible steering column
- 1974 Energy-absorbent bumpers
- 1974 Crash-protected location of fuel tank
- 1978 Child booster cushion
- 1982 Anti-submarining protection
- 1982 Wide-angle door mirrors
- 1984 ABS (Anti-lock Braking System)
- 1986 High-level brake light
- 1986 Three-point safety belt in centre rear seat
- 1987 Safety belt pretensioners
- 1987 Driver airbag
- 1990 Integrated child booster cushion
- 1991 SIPS (Side Impact Protection System)
- 1991 Automatic height adjustment of front safety belts
- 1993 Three-point, inertia-reel safety belts standard in all seats
- 1994 SIPS bags (side-impact airbags)
- 1997 ROPS (Rollover Protection System) in C70 Convertible
- 1998 WHIPS (Whiplash Protection System)
- 1998 Inflatable side-impact curtain (IC)
- 2000 Inauguration of Volvo Cars Safety Centre in Göteborg
- 2000 ISOFIX attachment system for child seat
- 2000 Dual-stage inflation airbags
- 2000 Volvo On Call security and roadside assistance system
- 2001 Volvo Safety Concept Car (SCC)
- 2002 RSC (Roll Stability Control) active stability system in Volvo XC90
- 2002 Further-developed ROPS
- 2002 Lower front crossmember in Volvo XC90 to increase safety compatibility with lower cars
- 2002 Development of virtual, pregnant crash dummy
- 2003 IDIS (Intelligent Driver Information System)
- 2003 New, patented front-end structure for increased collision protection
- 2004 BLIS (Blind Spot Information System)
- 2004 DMIC (Door-mounted Inflatable Curtain) for convertibles
- 2004 ACC (Adaptive Cruise Control)
- 2005 Volvo CoDriver support system (concept)
- 2005 Volvo MultiLock (research project)
- 2005 Driver Alert warning system for fatigued drivers (concept)
- 2006 Personal Car Communicator with heartbeat sensor
- 2006 Active Bending lights with swivelling headlamps
- 2006 Collision Warning with Brake Support
- 2007 Volvo City Safety system for avoiding low-speed collisions (concept)
- 2007 Second generation of WHIPS whiplash protection system
- 2007 New, stronger side structure using different grades of high-strength steel
- 2007 Integrated two-stage child booster cushion with force limiter adapted for children
- 2007 Extended inflatable curtains for enhanced child safety

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