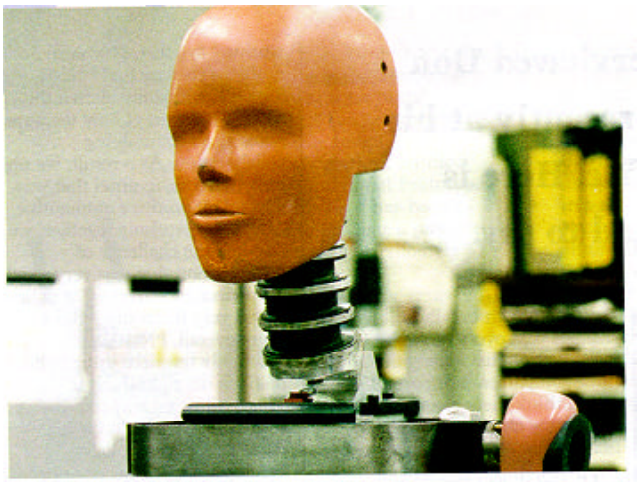
USCAR JUMP-STARTS EFFORT TO STANDARDIZE SIDE IMPACT DUMMIES WORLDWIDE

The world is getting a little smaller when it comes to the use of side impact crash test dummies. Currently, the Americans use a different dummy from the Europeans and Japanese, but thanks to a proposal by USCAR, an effort is being made by an International Organization of Standardization worldwide task group to globally standardize these side impact dummies.

"Since individuals around the world are basically the same, having different dummies in different markets is not logical," said Risa Scherer, the tri-chairperson representing North, Central and South America in the worldwide task group who also is a member of USCAR's Occupant Safety Research Partnership (OSRP). OSRP domestically studies crash test dummies and advanced restraint systems. "Tests were being duplicated which led to a need for additional resources, higher costs to consumers, limited consumer choices for vehicles and no corresponding safety benefits," Scherer continued.

The other two task group chairpeople, along with Scherer, are Takahiko Uchimura for the Asia/Pacific region and Dominique Cesari for the European region The task group contains four technical representatives per region and one governmental representative per country.



Thanks to a proposal by USCAR, the Americas (North, Cntral and South), Europe and the Asia/Pacific region are working together to develop a worldwide standardized side impact dummy. Shown above is a side impact dummy developed by USCAR

Each region will fund one-third of the total dummy design cost. The target completion date for a prototype dummy is January 3, 2000, and the project's goal is to create a dummy that would be used in a globally harmonized side impact crash test standard in worldwide regulations. This would mean that no matter where in the world a car is built and safety tested, it could be sold anywhere on the globe since every country would have identical safety standards.

The prototype WorldSID, as it's being called, will be jointly developed by the three regions, and will initially include a dummy the size of a typical adult male. The harmonized dummy is expected to have technical buy-in from both world dummy and regulatory experts. Currently, there are four different side impact dummies used around the world in crash tests, but there is room and a need to further improve side impact dummies.

"It's possible that the best parts of each of the four dummies could be adopted for use on the WorldSID," said Guy Nusholtz, chairman of USCAR's safety partnership. "Under the WorldSID project, we're evaluating current dummies and working together to design, develop, fabricate and test a dummy with a good-to-excellent biofidelity rating that will further improve side impact crash tests worldwide."

In an effort to ensure the success of this program, the task group selected Marc Beusenberg of Biokinetics in Ottawa, Ont., as the WorldSID program manager. "Biokinetics is very pleased to facilitate the development of the WorldSID in this unique, ambitious and exciting project," Beusenberg said. He is accountable to the WorldSID task group and executes the decisions and directions of the task group, prepares development plans and alternatives and handles day-today operations.

International Harmonized Research Activities (HIRA) also will participate by contributing to WorldSID dummy specifications and taking part in evaluating the dummy. HIRA is a group of governmental agencies worldwide that conducts joint research. It is hoped that the results of this research will lead to a harmonized side impact safety standard.

" A fully-harmonized side impact standard would include the same injury criteria requirements around the world, measured using the WorldSID dummy in a test procedure developed by HIRA," said Tom Terry, a member of USCAR's safety partnership management committee. "Once the dummy is fully developed, we will be in a position to formulate a harmonized side impact standard."

For more information on the WorldSID project, please visit www.worldsid.org or USCAR's Web site at www.uscar.org.