

Toyota Launches New Collaborative Safety Research Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan

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Industry-Wide Safety Projects to Focus on Children, Teens and Seniors in Collaboration with Leading U.S. Institutions

ANN ARBOR, Michigan – January 9, 2011 – Toyota announced today that it is launching a new, advanced safety research center that will collaborate with leading North American universities, hospitals, research institutions, federal agencies and other organizations on projects aimed at reducing the number of traffic fatalities and injuries on America’s roads.

Toyota’s new Collaborative Safety Research Center (CSRC) will be based at the Toyota Technical Center (TTC) in Ann Arbor, Michigan and will involve Toyota researchers and engineers from North America and Japan. The new initiative builds on Toyota’s ongoing commitment to safety and quality leadership. The company estimates that it will commit approximately \$50 million over the next five years to fund CSRC.

The collaborative research will pursue integrated ways to enhance safety, involving the vehicle, driver and traffic environment. Initial areas of focus will include reducing the risk of driver distraction – a growing cause of accidents – and helping to protect the most vulnerable traffic populations, including children, teens and seniors. These populations account for approximately 30% of U.S. traffic fatalities.

In addition, CSRC will conduct in-depth analyses of available accident and human behavior data to support stakeholders’ efforts to evaluate and speed deployment of active safety systems.

Announcing the new safety initiative, Toyota Motor Corporation President Akio Toyoda said, “Toyota’s new safety research center will work with leading North American universities and other partners on safety projects that benefit the entire industry. Our investment will support collaborative research aiming to reduce driver distraction and increase the safety of vehicles, drivers, passengers and pedestrians.”

Chuck Gulash, a Senior Executive Engineer at the Toyota Technical Center, will serve as Director of CSRC. He will report to Shigeki Terashi, who is a managing officer of Toyota Motor Corporation and the president of TTC.

“Toyota has always tried to take a comprehensive approach to creating a safe, sustainable automotive society through advanced vehicle safety technology, intelligent transport systems and traffic safety education,” Mr. Gulash said. “We have a long history of working closely with North American partners to achieve our safety objectives, and our new collaborative research initiative will build on this tradition. We intend to publish as much of the research as possible so that it is available to federal agencies, the industry and academia.”

Charter Partners: University of Michigan, Virginia Tech, The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

The University of Michigan, Virginia Tech and The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute will be charter partners in the new Collaborative Safety Research Center. Toyota will also reach out broadly to other universities, hospitals and research institutions in North America to invite proposals for research into advanced automotive safety.

Toyota is supporting the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) on a multidisciplinary project to assess the potential benefits of advanced safety systems in a systematic way, combining their expertise in driver behavior, crash data analysis and driver modeling.

“We at the U-M Transportation Research Institute share Toyota’s enthusiasm for maximizing the societal benefits from leading-edge safety research, and will leverage this generous support with the full range of our research laboratories and databases,” said UMTRI director Peter Sweatman. “This program will allow leading safety researchers to collaborate on complex issues affecting the most important elements in the automotive safety equation – the drivers and passengers who are also our family, friends and colleagues. With Toyota’s continuing support, we will be able to test and disseminate research findings more widely, and to seek a more rapid rate of improvement.”

Toyota’s collaboration with Virginia Tech involves research into the effectiveness of an electronic coaching and monitoring system for newly licensed teenage drivers to help reduce unsafe driving behaviors. Toyota will have an active role in guiding this “Driver Coach” project alongside partners including the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) of the National Institutes of Health.

“Given that newly licensed teen drivers are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than their adult counterparts, Toyota’s support of our Driver Coach project is of utmost importance,” said Dr. Tom Dings, Director of the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, developer of the Driver Coach system. “Based on our previous teen driving research, we can now determine, with actual video, the kinds of behaviors teens engage in while driving. The next step is to educate the teens and their parents with feedback about unsafe, and safe, driving behaviors with the ultimate goal of helping teens become better drivers.”

Toyota will join The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute in a pilot study to create America’s first publicly available national crash surveillance system focused on child vehicle occupants. Such a system will be used to monitor trends in child passenger safety, assess the performance of new safety technologies for children and serve as a national resource to assist researchers, industry and policy-makers to set the agenda for child passenger safety in the U.S.

“Toyota’s support is critical to allow us to further advance efforts to broadly and accurately measure the burden of motor vehicle crashes on children’s health and well-being on a national level,” said Dennis Durbin, MD, MSCE, Co-Scientific Director of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children’s Hospital.