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RCAR

PRESS RELEASE

International RCAR* Conference 2026:

Affordable mobility is at risk! Global research centers call for greater focus on preventing and reducing vehicle crash damage

- With more than 1.4 billion passenger cars on the road worldwide, vehicle damage and rising repair costs are placing growing pressure on insurers and consumers alike
- RCAR calls for repairability to be built into vehicle design from the outset
- Automatic Emergency Braking systems for close-range maneuvering (Park AEB) could reduce collision damage worldwide by up to 15%
- Insurers' research institutes are stepping up dialogue with automotive manufacturers to help keep mobility affordable in the long term

Mexico City, September 28 – This week, the world's leading motor insurance research institutes meet in Mexico City for the annual international RCAR Conference. Representatives from 19 research institutes in 15 countries will discuss current developments in vehicle design, damage prevention, and crash risk. Their shared goal is clear: through closer cooperation between insurers and vehicle manufacturers (OEMs), both the frequency and cost of claims can be reduced sustainably, helping to keep mobility safe and affordable over the long term.

Rising claims costs are a global challenge

There are now more than 1.4 billion passenger cars on the road worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 1.19 million people lose their lives in road traffic each year, while another 20 to 50 million are injured. The economic cost is estimated at roughly 3% of global GDP. Beyond the human and economic impact of serious road crashes, frequent low-speed collisions also generate substantial vehicle damage and repair costs. Alongside supply chain disruptions and rising energy prices, these costs are driven to a considerable extent by vehicle design and increasingly complex vehicle technologies. The result is mounting pressure on insurers and, ultimately, on consumers due to rising claims costs and, as a consequence, rising insurance premiums.

Three key areas for action

A central focus of the conference is how closer cooperation between insurers and vehicle manufacturers (OEMs) can help reduce both the frequency and cost of claims in a sustainable way. The insurers' research findings highlight clear opportunities to achieve lasting reductions in claims costs.

1. **Vehicle design: Building in repairability from the outset**

   Modern vehicles have become significantly more complex as a result of connectivity, driver assistance systems and new propulsion technologies – especially electric vehicles. When damage occurs, that complexity often leads to more extensive repairs and higher costs. RCAR's research institutes are therefore calling for crash performance to be optimized and repairability to be systematically considered at an early stage of vehicle development. RCAR low-speed crash tests are now an established global standard for reducing damage in typical parking and rear-end collisions. For electric vehicles, RCAR institutes have also developed dedicated test procedures to analyze and prevent underbody damage to high-voltage batteries. As part of this year's conference program, delegates will visit CESVI México's battery laboratory. This underscores the institutes' strong expertise in addressing new technologies.

2. **Driver assistance systems: Major potential to reduce parking damage**

   Parking and maneuvering damage continues to account for a substantial share of total claims. Automatic emergency braking systems for close-range maneuvering ("Parking AEB") offer significant potential here: broad deployment of such systems could reduce collision d amage claims worldwide by up to 15%. Individual RCAR institutes have already demonstrated the impact of driver assistance systems using real-world claims data. Last year, Allianz Center for Technology found that 66% of all reversing crashes during parking and maneuvering could be prevented by corresponding emergency braking systems. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) research found that 78% of these crashes were prevented when parking AEB was combined with rearview cameras and parking sensors. IIHS also found that claim rates for damage to the insured vehicle fell 9% and claims for damage to other vehicles dropped 29%.

3. **Repair methods: Repair rather than replace**

   As vehicle complexity increases, so do the requirements for repairs that are both technically sound and economically efficient. This calls for transparent repair information, standardized procedures, and highly qualified workshops. The insurers' research institutes also stress the importance of repair-friendly vehicle design. Wherever technically feasible, repair should take precedence over replacing parts. In addition, the use of recycled spare parts and quality-assured aftermarket components can help contain claims costs in a sustainable way.

Call to action: Intensify dialogue with the automotive industry

"The conference highlights the central role of motor insurance research in reducing and preventing vehicle damage. However, this can only be achieved through constructive dialogue with automotive manufacturers," says Augusto Bagase, CEO of CESVI México and host of this year's conference.

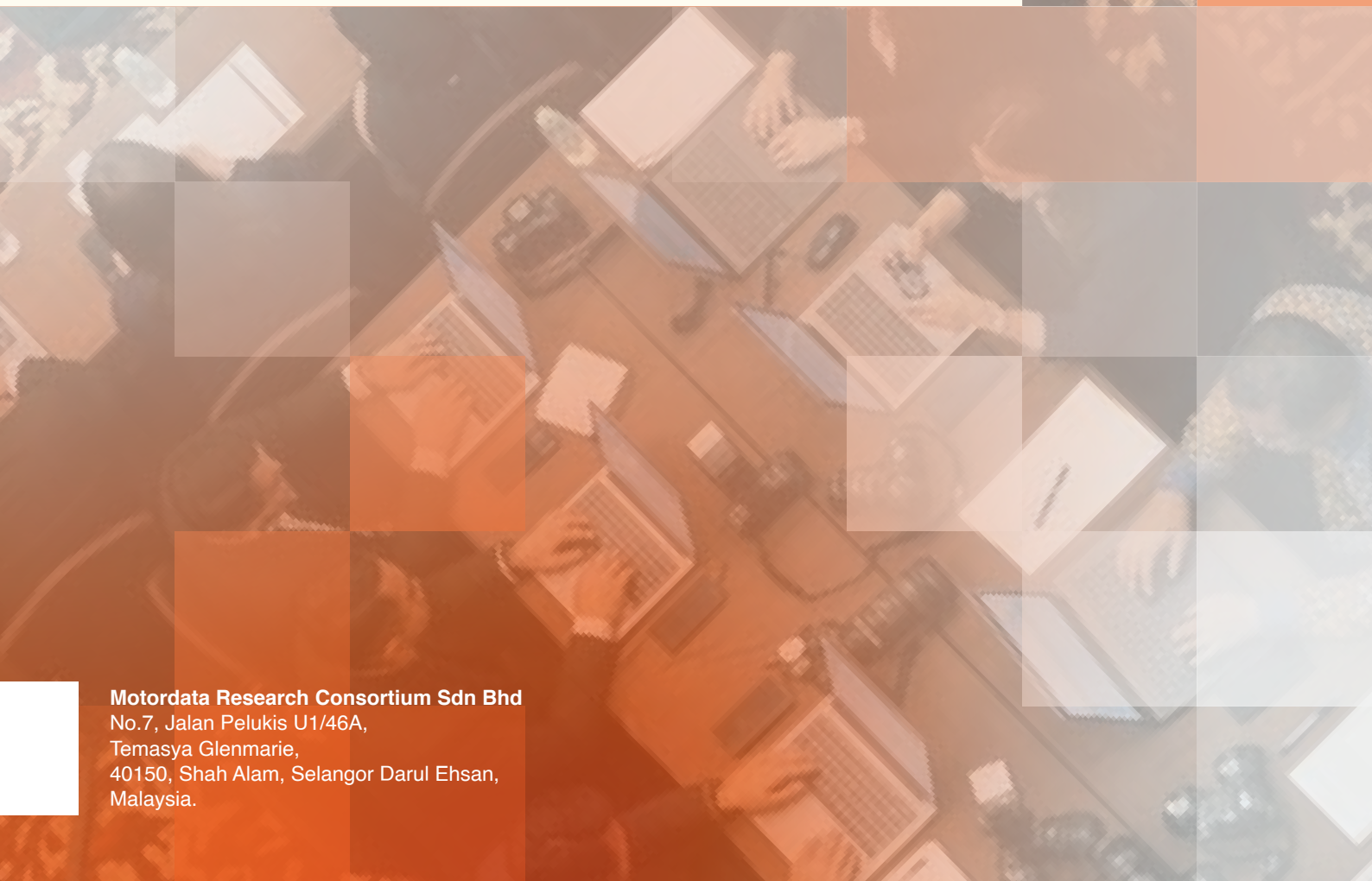
At the conference, RCAR members intend to reaffirm their commitment to intensifying dialogue with the automotive industry. “International collaboration and the exchange of relevant research findings are key success factors in this effort. By bringing together research organizations from around the world, RCAR helps ensure emerging challenges are understood in a global context rather than in isolation. Our institutes share a common goal: to reduce damage, improve repair efficiency and, in doing so, help keep mobility affordable for consumers over the long term”, says Christoph Lauterwasser, Secretary General of RCAR, summarizing the organization's vision.

***About RCAR**

RCAR (rcar.org) is the international association of 22 motor insurance research institutes. Its members conduct research on vehicle safety, repair technology and damage prevention with the aim of reducing accident-related damage and making repairs more cost-efficient.MRC Malaysia is proud to be a member of RCAR since 2004. MRC Malaysia is actively involved in various RCAR activities and programs. It creates opportunities in many areas including engineering aspects of accident repair, safety, security, trainings, networking and business opportunities.

Steve Miller, CEO of MRC Malaysia, has been elected as a member of the RCAR Steering Committee, representing the Asia Pacific region for a two-year term effective October 2025. MRC Malaysia is also actively participating in six working groups that focus on improving vehicle damage resistance, repairability, security, and safety in automotive repair.

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