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GM Builds On Battery Safety To Ensure Confidence in Chevrolet Volt

- **Customer safety, satisfaction remain highest priority**
- **Volt owners offered alternative GM vehicle loans for peace of mind**
- **Senior GM engineering team to work with NHTSA on possible changes**

DETROIT - General Motors announced Monday initiatives for customer satisfaction and battery safety research to ensure ongoing confidence in the Chevrolet Volt extended-range electric vehicle.

The initiatives follow six months of research and testing in the United States with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration designed to induce electric vehicle battery failure after severe crash situations.

The agency advised GM on Friday that it would open a preliminary evaluation of Volt battery assemblies after NHTSA test results caused electrical fires up to three weeks after an initial vehicle New Car Assessment Program side pole crash test.

Mark Reuss, GM North America President, said the company would take every precaution to assure the driving public of GM's commitment to the safety of the Volt being handled after a severe incident and the total satisfaction of everyone who owned one.

"The Volt is a five-star safety car. Even though no customer has experienced in the real world what was identified in this latest testing of post-crash situations, we're taking critical steps to ensure customer satisfaction and safety," Reuss said.

"Our customers' peace of mind is too important to us for there to be any concern or any worry. This technology should inspire confidence and pride, not raise any concern or doubt.

"The question is about how to deal with the battery days and weeks after a severe crash, making it a matter of interest not just for the Volt, but for our industry as we continue to advance the pursuit of electric vehicles."

Senior GM engineering investigation team

Mary Barra, senior vice president, Global Product Development, said GM had established a senior engineering team to develop changes to eliminate concern of potential post-crash

electrical fires and work with industry to ensure appropriate electric vehicle protocols were in place. Barra said such electrical fires had not occurred on public roads and NHTSA was not investigating any such potential imminent failure on the roads.

“GM and the agency's focus and research continues to be on the performance, handling, storage and disposal of batteries after a crash or other significant event,” she said.

“We're working with NHTSA so we all have an understanding about these risks and how they can be avoided in the future. This isn't just a Volt issue. We're already leading a joint electric vehicle activity with Society of Automotive Engineers and other automotive companies to address new issues such as this protocol of depowering batteries after a severe crash.”

Barra said the team would continue to work closely with NHTSA, suppliers, dealers and manufacturing teams to initiate any necessary changes as soon as possible.

Volt owner loan program

Reuss said GM would establish a Volt owner satisfaction program offering any Volt owner concerned about safety to contact their Volt adviser to arrange exchange for a free GM vehicle loan until resolution of the issue.

“A vehicle loan program of this nature is well beyond the norm for a preliminary investigation, and it underlines our commitment to the vehicle and its owners,” he said. “These steps are the right ones to take regardless of any immediate impact on our operations.”

Launched in late 2010, the Chevrolet Volt has won more than 30 awards in the United States and other markets. The Volt achieved a five-star NCAP overall vehicle score for safety by the NHTSA and is a Top Safety pick by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. GM carried out more than 1 million test miles in vehicle development.

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