

UNECE GRSP IWG Equitable Occupant Protection (EqOP) Task Force 4 – Frontal impact and restraint system requirements

Minutes of the first meeting.

On-line meeting, November 06, 2025.

28 participants.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Adopted.

2. Approval of the minutes from last meeting

N/A. First meeting.

3. Discussion on priorities and next step

The chair opened the discussion with a presentation on the strategic goals of the IWG EqOP Task Force focused on frontal impact and restraint systems. The objective is to enhance equitable protection across diverse body types and crash scenarios through inclusive, robust regulation. Priorities include addressing submarining and abdominal injury risks for all occupants. The work also aims to develop robust evaluation procedures to ensure restraint systems perform effectively across varied speeds and seat positions, not just under narrowly defined test conditions. See chair's presentation for more details.

Following the chair's presentation, the expert from the Netherlands opened the discussion by noting that submarining may result from seatbelt misuse. The German expert emphasized that all topics addressed by the Task Force must be justified by demonstrable safety benefits. The Spanish expert proposed starting with abdominal injuries and promoting seatbelt awareness. CLEPA noted that submarining is rare and difficult to link to current geometric requirements, suggesting performance-based criteria instead, provided the benefit is clear. CLEPA also called for a broader discussion on priorities and speculated that GRSP may ask whether Euro NCAP requirements should be adopted. In response to CLEPA's question on defining priorities, one view was that topics should reflect real-world harm, aligned with Vision Zero, which they already do.

OICA recommended revisiting the workshop summary as a starting point. It was noted that submarining and abdominal injuries could be addressed jointly, although submarining is not tracked in crash databases. The group briefly touched on crash speed variation but focused more on seat position variability. Spain supported allowing Technical Services to randomly select seat positions, provided procedures ensure consistency. Spain also suggested adding adult rear-row testing, which could be done at low cost. Sweden, Austria, and CLEPA will examine field data on rear-seat occupants.

On multi-scenario testing, CLEPA described it as a paradigm shift requiring reflection on current practices and future goals. While UN regulations currently limit test cases, the Netherlands expert argued that increased robustness need not raise the type-approval burden. Instead, procedures should ensure systems protect across diverse occupants, positions, and crash types. CLEPA cautioned that even with minimal official tests, overall testing demands will rise. OICA reiterated the need to prioritize topics before detailing

each one, while the Netherlands expert advocated for deeper understanding before prioritization. He drew a parallel to emissions testing, where single-point assessments have been replaced by broader evaluations. Ironically, advanced restraint systems are more prone to sub-optimization than simpler ones like basic seatbelts and airbags. OICA suggested that robustness could be addressed through type-approval documentation rather than additional crash tests, allowing Technical Services to verify manufacturer strategies via technical files.

4. Conclusions

The chair of the IWG suggested that we should prioritize finding a way to avoid suboptimization without increasing the number of official tests and without risking bias from different technical services. The discussion was postponed to the next meeting when prioritization among all topics has been performed.

5. Next step

- Further accident analysis regarding Abdominal Injuries
 - Austria, Germany, Sweden
 - JARI & JAMA (HBM simulations to understand injury mechanisms)
- Further accident analysis regarding Rear Row
 - CLEPA
 - Austria, Sweden
- Collect ideas for Robustness Evaluation
- Agree on priorities using table in chair's presentation
- Each participating organization prioritizes the topics using the table as defined in the chair's presentation before the next meeting
- Meeting time will generally be from 12 to 14 CET
- Next meeting will be on January 28, 2026, between 12.00 and 14.00 CET

6. AOB

N/A this time.