



NEWS

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FORD SAFETY AND DAMAGEABILITY ANALYSIS RAISES RED FLAGS ABOUT AFTERMARKET COPY COLLISION PARTS

- Ford testing and analysis shows that aftermarket copy structural parts studied are not “like kind and quality” to genuine Ford original equipment structural parts
- Ford engineers are concerned that increased damage and different safety system performance may occur in subsequent accidents if aftermarket copies used for repairs
- Ford strongly recommends genuine Ford original equipment structural parts be used for collision repairs

CHICAGO, July 21, 2010 – Material composition and Computer Aided Engineering (CAE) testing and analysis by Ford Motor Company of a sample of aftermarket copy structural collision parts disclosed major differences between genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts and aftermarket copies. The aftermarket copy parts studied were not of equivalent “like kind and quality.” Based on Ford’s testing and analysis, these aftermarket copy parts will perform differently than genuine Ford original equipment collision parts in a subsequent crash event.

Aftermarket copy bumper beams, bumper isolators, bumper brackets and radiator supports were among the parts studied. Ford engineers concluded from their test simulations for the 2005-09 Mustang bumper beams and 2004-07 F-150 radiator support that more damage could occur in subsequent collisions if the aftermarket copy replacement parts tested were used for repairs.

Comparison testing of genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts and the aftermarket copies by Ford showed significant differences in material composition, material thickness and part weight. In one notable example, the Ford 2004-07 F-150 magnesium structural radiator support was copied using molded plastic with a sheet metal rib pop-riveted to it. Ford engineers consider this difference critical because one of the vehicle's air bag sensors is mounted to the hood latch support bracket which is mounted to the radiator support.

“This preliminary simulated testing raises a number of red flags regarding the use of these aftermarket copy structural collision parts when repairing collision damage,” said Paul Massie, Ford Motor Company Powertrain and Collision Product Marketing Manager. “In the absence of both high- and low-speed crash testing – equivalent to testing performed by vehicle manufacturers – there is no way to validate that any aftermarket copy structural replacement part will perform equivalently.”

However, Ford's CAE testing of the 2005-09 Mustang front bumper beam and the 2004-07 F-150 radiator support indicated that vehicles repaired with these aftermarket copy parts will perform differently than vehicles with genuine Ford original equipment replacement collision parts.

The issue of aftermarket copy collision parts was brought to light again last fall at a collision repair industry conference where a well respected industry trainer used a reciprocating saw to easily cut through an aftermarket copy bumper beam, but could not cut through the genuine OEM part.

“All components of the vehicle structure are designed and tested to work together in a real world crash including helping to ensure proper deployment of airbags,” Massie said. “Changes in materials, forming processes, dimensional inaccuracies and any number of other structural differences can dramatically alter the crush characteristics of a vehicle and affect activation of the airbag sensors.”

Auto insurers, who pay for the vast majority of collision repairs, have argued that the use of less expensive aftermarket copy replacement parts is crucial to hold down the cost of repairs. However, Ford's analysis suggests that subsequent damage could actually increase if these aftermarket copy parts are used.

Sales prices of the aftermarket copy parts used in Ford's testing and analysis were lower than the genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts. "However, Ford's analysis showed the original equipment parts were superior in quality and the higher cost of the genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts is justified," said Massie.

Aftermarket copy collision parts are not covered by Ford's new-vehicle service part or corrosion warranty, or any variety of the Ford Extended Service Plan. In addition, any damage to or failure of a Ford part caused by the installation or improper performance of an aftermarket copy part is not covered by Ford's new-vehicle service part or corrosion warranty, or any variety of the Ford Extended Service Plan.

Ford believes the interests of vehicle owners and collision repairers are best protected when genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts are used to repair collision damage. "We want to collaborate with the collision industry to ensure a high level of customer safety and vehicle integrity is maintained following a collision repair," said Frederiek Toney, Vice President Ford Customer Service Division.

Ford Motor Company parts used to produce the vehicle are thoroughly tested during the vehicle development process. Ford vehicles are subjected to a battery of stringent internal tests as well as Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) tests to help ensure all individual components work as a system during a crash sequence and meet or exceed the performance standards established by Ford Motor Company and the U.S. Government (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration).

Genuine Ford original equipment replacement collision parts are made on the same tools and dies as parts used in new-vehicle production. The same manufacturing processes and raw

materials are also used. For these reasons, Ford Motor Company strongly recommends the use of original equipment replacement parts for collision repair. Use of aftermarket copy parts (non-OEM) or salvaged OEM parts could result in diminished value of the vehicle, increased damage in a subsequent collision, and may increase the risk of injury to the occupants in the event of a crash.

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About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 176,000 employees and about 80 plants worldwide, the company's automotive brands include Ford, Lincoln and Mercury, production of which has been announced by the company to be ending in the fourth quarter of 2010, and, until its sale, Volvo. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford's products, please visit www.ford.com.