

# Quality Collision Repair Is No Accident

(NAPSA)—It's a simple fact—the more you drive, the more likely you are to be involved in an auto accident. Matter of fact, nearly one in five vehicles on the road right now will be involved in an accident within the next 12 months.

Ford Motor Company's Customer Service Division offers the following facts and guidelines that may help you simplify and speed up the collision repair process and assure that your vehicle is returned to you in pre-accident condition.

## **The Insurance Company**

Most collision repairs are paid by your insurance company or the insurance company of the person responsible for the accident. It is important to review the terms of your policy and to communicate with the insurer to fully understand the terms, conditions and any coverage limitations that may exist before the collision repair process begins.

Remember—most auto insurance policies contractually obligate insurers to return collision-damaged vehicles to “pre-accident” condition. You should expect no less.

## **The Collision Shop**

Like all auto repair facilities, the capabilities of collision repair shops vary. You have the final say where your vehicle will be repaired and may have a preference.

If you don't, check with your dealer. Many dealers have collision repair facilities with trained technicians who specialize in repairs to vehicles like yours. If your dealer does not have a collision shop, it is likely there will be a recommended list of reputable independent collision shops.

## **The Collision Estimate**

Collision repair estimates are difficult to understand. Review

your estimate with a collision shop or insurance representative to make sure all questions you have are answered to your satisfaction. Pay special attention to abbreviations and acronyms.

If your estimate is prepared at a drive-in claim center and you are immediately offered a check, you may want to review the estimate with a collision repair professional to make sure the amount covers all required repairs.

## **The Parts**

Replacement parts likely will be needed for proper repair of your vehicle. Exterior sheet metal and plastic parts—such as hoods, fenders, doors and bumpers—are known as “crash parts.” Not all crash parts are created equal.

There are three types of crash parts and any, or all, may be specified for repairs. Make sure you know the difference before signing the repair authorization. You have the right to choose the type of crash parts for repairs to your vehicle.

## **• Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) or Genuine Crash Parts.**

These are parts made by or for the manufacturer of your vehicle. They are equivalent in all basic quality categories—fit, finish, structural integrity, corrosion protection, dent resistance—to the original parts on your vehicle. In addition, OEM Crash Parts are the same as those used on your new vehicle, which is crash-tested to assure compliance with all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS).

## **• New Aftermarket or Imitation Crash Parts.**

These are unauthorized copies of OEM Crash Parts. While generally cheaper, there are ques-

tions about the quality of these parts. Also, Imitation Crash Parts are not crash-tested, so their performance in accidents is not known, and damage to adjoining parts caused by the failure of an Imitation Crash Part may not be covered by your vehicle's limited warranty.

## **• Salvage Crash Parts**

These are crash parts recovered from “totaled” vehicles. Because it is difficult to determine the source of Salvage Crash Parts, there are many concerns—improper removal, unsuitable storage, hidden damage—that may affect the quality of these parts.

## **Leased Vehicles**

If you lease your vehicle, be aware of specific collision repair requirements that may be included in your lease agreement.

Certain vehicle manufacturers, such as Ford, require that replacement of sheet metal parts must be made with OEM sheet metal parts, and all other repairs must be made with OEM parts or those of equal quality.

## **The Bottom Line**

The most important fact as you deal with your collision repair is that you should be totally satisfied before accepting your vehicle. Make sure to take a “walk around” with a collision shop representative. If damage was extensive, a test drive is in order.

Also keep in mind that it's your car or truck and you have the right to decide where it will be repaired and what parts will be used for repairs.

This advice comes from the experts at the Ford Motor Company's Customer Service Division who remind you, accidents will happen but quality collision repair is no accident.