



► [Back to Today's Headlines](#)

Fri, 29 Jan 2010

SCRS Issues Repairer Guidance on Questionable Safety Parts

©2010 by CollisionWeek. All rights reserved. 201010604 No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any means without permission in writing from the publisher.

The Society of Collision Repair Specialists is advising repairers to proceed with "exceptional caution" in the near term when sourcing any replacement parts that are part of the vehicle's crash management system, specifically bumper reinforcement beams, bumper brackets, energy absorbers, steel bumpers and radiator core supports- collectively referred to as safety parts.

In a prepared statement the Society said, "SCRS recommends that collision repair professionals use exceptional caution when performing repairs to consumers vehicles, and to only use parts that will perform with the same expectation of quality and safety, both upon installation, and for the life of the vehicle. SCRS also recommends that repair facilities understand the liability associated with utilization of inferior parts, and to avoid being unduly influenced to utilize any replacement part that has not undergone credible independent testing to ensure it meets quality and safety based standards.

The warning comes amid heightened industry awareness recently of the potential safety concerns surrounding certain aftermarket safety parts manufactured without testing and specified by some insurance carriers.

"This issue is concerning on so many levels," said SCRS Executive Director Aaron Schulenburg. "Obviously our members have to understand the liability implications they have when making critical repair decisions such as part selection. The problem with many of these parts, is that a visual inspection at the shop level often can't uncover significant differences, like material or alloy variances. We can't visually see the difference in weight, or that one part is .25mm thinner than another; especially when the two aren't side by side for comparison. It should also not be the responsibility of the shop to make a determination on which part is equivalent, or not. If it is not quality, if it is not safe, it shouldn't even make its way to the market; but they are. We have too many examples, even with current internal 'quality assurance programs' in place, that they are being manufactured, sold, and utilized, despite not meeting the most basic of requirements such as material composition."

The Society is not only urging repairers to use caution, but is also questioning the remedies available to consumers that may already have these parts installed on their vehicles.

"Most importantly, there has to be a way to address the individuals who already have parts that have now been deemed 'inferior' on their vehicle. It is not enough to accept that suppliers will deal with

the issue on a case by case bases if, or when, there is a problem. If the process and infrastructure are not in place to support the ability to notify consumers when a problem has been identified, then we need to significantly fix that infrastructure before more parts are sold. If there is a parts problem generated from the OEM, there is an elaborate recall process in place. Every consumer is notified and their vehicle is corrected. These critical safety parts should not be treated with any less urgency. This is an issue that requires a proactive solution, rather than reactive; the motoring public deserves more."

In November 2009 and January 2010, recognized industry expert Toby Chess, who is also an SCRS National Director, performed presentations outlining comparative studies he had conducted between randomly selected OEM and Aftermarket Structural Replacement parts. SCRS said that in every example tested, there were significant differences in both the construction methods and materials used in the aftermarket part that can significantly impact the roles that these parts serve in the transfer of energy during a collision.

Chess said, "The OEMs put a lot of money into research and development to ensure that the end product operates, reacts and sustains damage in very specific way. Any replacement part made available to the market should be required to have that same expectation of performance."

SCRS said these studies were performed after receipt of concerns from various member shops that there has been an increase in utilization of these aftermarket structural replacement parts in the claims settlement practices of certain insurance carriers.

SCRS has made the slide presentations prepared by Chess available on their Web site at www.scrs.com.

CW

Headlines for Mon, 01 Feb 2010

Keystone Halts Sale of Untested Aftermarket Bumper Parts

Another insurer drops bumper parts. Industry reaction and calls for change heat up over aftermarket bumper scare.

CAPA to Expand Certification Program to Aftermarket Bumpers

DEG Documents Condition of OEM Bumper Covers

Honda Expands Collision Impact Kit Offerings

Laws Banning Cellphone Use Fail to Reduce Crashes

More news and features -> [CollisionWeek home](#)

[CollisionWeek Terms of Use](#)

© Copyright 1999-2010 CollisionWeek