Questions & Answers

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Question: What is at issue?

Answer: Collision repairs are being made to Ford Motor Company vehicles with aftermarket copy structural parts that are not like-kind-and-quality to genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts.

Question: What type parts are in question?

Answer: Certain bumper beams, bumper isolators, bumper brackets and radiator supports are among the parts tested by Ford.

Question: What problems have been found with aftermarket copy structural parts?

Answer: Analysis has revealed varying differences that range from:

- Different weights
- Different thickness of materials used
- Different dimensions
- Different structural design

CAE testing of a sample of the aftermarket copy structural parts also has shown that the aftermarket copies tested will perform differently than genuine Ford original equipment replacement parts in a subsequent accident.

Question: How big an issue is this?

Answer: More than 12 million vehicles undergo collision repairs each year. Aftermarket copy structural parts are specified by auto insurers in many of these repairs.

Question: What are potential consequences of using aftermarket copy structural parts?

Answer: Two of the most serious potential problems are:

- The differences in aftermarket copy structural parts may result in increased damage to the vehicle in a subsequent accident.

- More importantly, the differences in aftermarket copy structural parts may alter performance of a vehicle's passive restraint safety systems, such as airbag deployment, in a subsequent accident.

Question: What is driving the use of aftermarket copy structural parts?

Answer: In most cases, auto insurers pay for collision repairs on behalf of their policyholders and are demanding that collision repairers use aftermarket copy structural parts.

Question: Aftermarket manufacturers, distributors, trade groups and others say they are developing strict testing requirements to assure aftermarket copy structural parts perform equivalently to replacement parts from vehicle manufacturers. Will this resolve the issue?

Answer: Components of a vehicle's structure are designed and tested to work together in real-world collisions, including to help ensure proper deployment of airbags. Changes in individual part materials, individual part forming processes, dimensional inaccuracies and any number of other structural differences can dramatically alter the crash characteristics of a vehicle.

In the absence of both high- and low-speed vehicle crash testing – equivalent to testing performed by the vehicle manufacturer – there is no way to validate that aftermarket copy structural part will perform equivalently.

Question: Collision repairs should return a vehicle to its pre-accident condition. Would use of the aftermarket copy structural parts tested return a vehicle to pre-accident condition?

Answer: The aftermarket copy structural parts tested do not meet Ford specifications. In the absence of high- and low-speed vehicle crash tests, it is impossible to determine if the aftermarket copies would return a vehicle to pre-accident condition.

Question: Is the issue limited to aftermarket copy structural parts?

Answer: No. Vehicle owners need to be aware of replacement parts options and agree to what parts are used to repair collision damage to their vehicles. Choices include:

- OEM replacement parts, which are made by the vehicle manufacturer or an authorized supplier for the vehicle manufacturer.

- New aftermarket copy replacement parts, which are unauthorized copies of questionable quality made by a manufacturer other than the OEM or the OEM's authorized supplier.

- Reconditioned replacement parts, which can be used OEM or aftermarket replacement parts that are refurbished and returned to the market.

- Salvage replacement parts, which are most frequently removed from "totaled" vehicles and returned to the market.

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