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Keystone Halts Sale of Untested Aftermarket Bumper Parts

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More companies and associations throughout the industry are taking action and issuing calls for change as the possible ramifications of unchecked aftermarket part quality begin to be realized across the industry.

Keystone Automotive, a subsidiary of LKQ Corporation, today announced that it will sell only aftermarket bumper reinforcement bars that qualify under the company's quality assurance programs or are approved through third party testing. Also, Keystone said it will expand its testing programs to cover additional reinforcement bars and other parts to further its commitment to provide aftermarket parts with collision performance equivalent to OEM parts.

Keystone said in the statement, "The company is dedicated to the quality and safety of all the products it distributes.

The Certified Auto Parts Association (CAPA) announced on Monday that it would be expanding its part certification program to now cover bumper components. Until now, the company has never certified these kinds of parts leaving the industry with two choices, OEM or largely untested aftermarket parts. (see today's related story- [CAPA to Expand Certification Program to Aftermarket Bumpers](#))

Another Insurer Changes Policy

Late Friday afternoon, Esurance Insurance Services announced in a communication to its network shops that it would be changing its policy on aftermarket parts. The company, that sells auto in insurance in 30 states, announced simply, "As it has always been our policy to only include OEM Bumper Reinforcements and Core Supports on estimates written for our customers, we are now expanding our policy to also include Bumper Absorbers and Bumper Brackets. Quality and safety remain paramount for our customers so we will to implement this policy effective immediately."

Associations Call for Action

The Collision Repair Association of California (CRA) over the weekend announced campaign to inform key California lawmakers and regulators about the inherent risks associated with the use of certain aftermarket safety parts.

California resident Toby Chess, will make a presentation to Department of Insurance representatives and invited California state and federal representatives demonstrating the inherent risks associated with the use of certain aftermarket safety parts. The presentation will be similar to the one Chess presented to the Collision Industry Conference in January.

CRA president Lee Amaradio said, "The CRA has been bringing the message of safety first to lawmakers for the past three years. They've listened, they've nodded, but with a few key exceptions, they've voted not to change the status quo. Now it is time for action. With Toby's help we are going to demonstrate why inferior aftermarket parts are dangerous."

The Alliance of Automotive Service Providers (AASP), while commending recent action by the Auto Body Parts Association (ABPA) and the Taiwan Auto Body Parts Association (TABPA) to advise their members to stop selling and manufacturing non-certified structural parts, is calling for the establishment of a formal recall mechanism to protect consumers.

AASP said, "These actions are to be commended, but highlight the fact that under the present system, we must now wait to see if the related industry segments - the parts manufacturers, parts distributors, repairers and the insurers specifying these parts - voluntarily act responsibly in the interest of consumer safety.

"The collision repair industry has been fully consumed by cost containment market forces over the past several years. While this may be a necessary evil, we must all ensure that these pressures do not come at the expense of the end-product goal - a proper repair that returns the vehicle to pre-accident condition, not just in terms of appearance, but much more importantly, in terms of safety," AASP said.

Wreck Check Wants Recall

Wreck Check of Boston said it is alerting the public to the safety issues of aftermarket crash parts and is calling on the administration of Governor Deval Patrick, including the Attorney General, the Division of Insurance, and the Auto Damage Appraisers Licensing Board (ADALB) to take corrective action immediately.

Wreck Check, an post repair inspection firm, cited the findings of an ADALB hearing held ten years ago on the safety of aftermarket crash parts. The hearings recommended that in the absence of a

recall system for aftermarket parts, records should be maintained by the distributors recording the purchaser's name and address, and that a toll-free 800 number be established so that purchaser's can call and verify if a recall of a particular part has been implemented.

Wreck Check of Boston is now suggesting the Governor take immediate action to protect consumers and among the suggestions: issue an immediate recall on all vehicles repaired with aftermarket parts, hold insurers accountable for re-repair, demand refunds to consumers who paid an additional premium for the use of OEM parts or who paid any out of pocket expense for OEM parts.



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