



THE

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DIFFERENCE

NAVIGATING THE O.E. VS GENERIC PARTS MAZE

Once upon a time, the decision over which crash parts to install used to reside between the shop estimator and the customer. In most cases, the repair facility went to their local dealer to order parts and installed O.E. factory parts, unless they were no longer available or cost prohibitive for the job.

Today, you can toss all that out the window. These days, insurance companies speak for the customers and frequently dictate that aftermarket (or generic) collision parts be used instead of O.E. factory parts. Their rationale is, if they're paying the tab, they choose the parts – and in cases of “cosmetic parts” – generics are the “most cost effective option.”

That often puts collision shops at odds with insurance adjusters. If they don't go along, they risk losing future referrals. If they install generics that fail to perform or have safety issues down the road, they risk losing a return customer – or much worse.

According to Michael Barry of the Insurance Information Institute, an organization representing property insurers, ‘generic’ aftermarket parts “cost on average, 27 percent less” than O.E. factory parts.

“Generic shouldn't be a knock on the quality or safety of the repair,” Barry said. “Insurers have a vested interest in having a well-repaired vehicle return to the roadway...and when there's disputes, insurance companies don't want to lose customers over items like this.”

27% ↓

OEM FACTS

93% of O.E. crash parts fit right the first time,
23% for Non-CAPA certified parts.

(Source: Body Shop Business industry profile,
2015. CAPA certified parts fit right 54% of the time.)

93%

SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE

On the other hand, collision shops and O.E.M.s also have a vested interest in making sure safe, well-repaired vehicles are returned to the customers and public roadways. That's according to Mopar® Collision Portfolio Manager Brian Wayne, who says that despite the desire for insurance companies to cut "loss adjustment expenses," the complexity of today's vehicle safety systems are such that even basic cosmetic parts can adversely affect safety and performance.

"Aside from the high-level benefits of fit and finish, O.E. parts are engineered as part of a larger system – systems that take into account safety and performance technologies," Wayne said.

“With so many (aftermarket) manufacturers out there, there’s just too many unknowns in materials, manufacturing processes, sourcing and packaging that can go wrong for shops.”

Wayne points to crash avoidance systems that need to accurately gauge distances between moving vehicles using fascia-mounted sonar sensors and video cameras mounted behind windshields. Even tiny discrepancies in these parts can adversely affect performance.



CRITICAL ANALYSIS: TOP 5 CRASH PARTS COMPARED

To better clarify the safety and performance differences between O.E. and generic, Brian Wayne, Mopar® Collision Portfolio Manager, surveyed the top-five high-volume crash parts to highlight the differences.

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More than windows on the world, glass is one of the most critical safety and performance parts on modern cars. Most customers probably do not realize that windshields provide nearly one-third of the roof strength on the average car, or that front passenger air bags rely on windshield integrity for proper deployment. Plus, modern collision avoidance cameras need to see clearly and accurately through windshields.

In terms of glass performance, HVAC systems depend on UV filtering for efficient climate control operation, plus many cars and trucks now feature sound deadening laminates to reduce wind and road noise.

Fascias

Many people think of fascias strictly as cosmetic parts, but there are critical safety and performance issues related to their design. With more collision avoidance sensors now mounted to them, or aiming through them, fascias need to fit precisely for the systems to work accurately. As for performance, materials and construction are critical to ensure fascias fit properly, do not warp or bind with body panels, causing them to rust or delaminate.

Glass



While most insurance companies consider sheet metal parts cosmetic, parts such as hoods and quarter panels can be integral to chassis structure and safety designs. Performance issues of corrosion protection, fit and appearance can also eat up extra labor hours to finish the job and from callbacks due to customer complaints.

Sheet Metal

Lighting

Of all the high-volume crash parts on a car today, few are more complex and critical to safety than today's headlamp assemblies. Exposed to the elements, they need to be robust and reliable so drivers can see and be seen at night. Alignment, NVH resistance and proper fit all affect safety, performance and customer satisfaction. Poor seals and leaky lamp assemblies are prone to condensation, corrosion and diminished output. Lens composites that yellow or fog also dramatically reduce light output.

Mirrors

Most customers probably take side-view mirrors for granted but today's mirrors are increasingly sophisticated. Aside from the convenience features of heaters, retractors and remote adjustment, self-dimming and multi-element reflective surfaces also affect safety and performance. For newer cars, crash avoidance and lane departure systems are also housed in the mirror assemblies and prone to failure due to inferior manufacture.

