ABAC NEWS

May - June 2018

The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut

Aluminum Corrosion: Do Your Resarch!

Aluminum Association study of corrosion near hood hem offers lessons for OEMs, shops

ABAC Meeting Features SCRS's Aaron Schulenburg & ABAC Election of Officers

Also In This Issue

ABAC AUTO BODY ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

President's Message

Bob Amendola

A Great Time to Move Forward

As I begin my presidency, I'd like to start by thanking Tony Ferraiolo for his dedication to our industry and for all of the hard work that he has put in to bring our association to where it is now. It would be impossible to quantify the number of hours he has put in for us, but his commitment and dedication are an inspiration to me and others.

He has been a tremendous leader.

I am looking forward to continue working with the ABAC and all of its members. The experience of participating on the Board of Directors has been very rewarding and I will recommend it to anyone willing to rise to the commitment.

The Board members selflessly dedicate countless hours of their time to better our industry for all of us. I feel especially grateful to work beside them.

I believe we are in a time of change and, if handled properly, we will propel our industry to a higher standard, where it should be. It will take hard work (which we are all accustomed to), dedication, and financial reinvestment. There are great rewards to be had when we become comfortable saying one simple word; **no.**

As we move forward, I will work to help educate and instill faith so we can be the respected and compensated industry that we deserve to be.

It is amazing to see other state associations looking to us for guidance and ideas. For the second time this year, the industry leadership council will be meeting (a first!), I am hopeful this will bring more unity and strength to all.

Continued on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

Although I have big shoes to fill, I look forward to getting to work for the Association. I hope to see you all at the September meeting. Have a great and safe summer.

Thank you,

Bob

Bob Amendola - Autoworks of Westville
President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut

Meet New ABAC President Bob Amendola

A true optimist and delight to speak to, it is no wonder this mechanical engineer graduate has been successful in the auto repair industry.

At a young age, Bob knew he wanted to own his own business. His once vision- became a reality for him in the mid 80's when he first opened up his shop. Bob initially started off in the mechanical end of the industry, but was attracted to the collision side, and states, ***"the insurance companies used to pay for most losses, and would pay to do things properly".*** Although times have changed since then, he is hopeful that the industry will pick up again.

Each day Bob attends work he is accompanied by his wife and Office Manager, Liz, who handles all of the front end operations of the business and his two kids, daughter Ashley a licensed appraiser and recently elected Vice President of the ABAC, who handles the interactions with customers and insurance companies and son Tyler who is according to Bob, "in training" for the family business. Ashley is a graduate of Albertus Magnus College and Tyler is in his junior year there also.

This family business is wonderful to see, and although it can be tough at times to work with the same people you see at home, this auto repair shop seems to have it covered. ***"We have been blessed to be able to do it,"*** says Bob. As for Ashley and Tyler, there is still time for them to decide if they plan on taking over their family business one day. ***"It's important that you like what you're doing,"*** Bob explains.

Autoworks of Westville, and the family understand the importance of educating their customers about the repair process, ***"If you gain the hearts and the minds of your customers they will come back to you".***

Submitted by Don Cushing

Aluminum Association study of corrosion near hood hem offers lessons for OEMs, shops

Aluminum Association research into a 2012 factory vehicle hood showing "extensive" filiform corrosion within four years shows the need for repairers and OEMs to be meticulous with the metal.

The report is a bit technical, but it's short — merely 16 pages of text and photos — and it might save a shop from comebacks, so painters, preppers and body technicians should check it out. With more OEMs using aluminum on vehicles — notably on hoods like that studied by the association — it's possible customers will see more of this filiform corrosion if an automaker or shop screws up.

Filiform corrosion, which is different than the galvanic corrosion steel-aluminum contact can produce, typically doesn't pose a "structural or safety concern," the Aluminum Association wrote in the October 2017 report. However, the corrosion can generate a "'paint blemish,'" according to the association — which doesn't seem like a great advertisement for the OEM or the auto body shop's product.

"(I)t is certainly understandable why the customer would object to such a blemish in a modern vehicle," the association wrote.

Filiform corrosion derives its name from "fine filaments or worm-like tracks" that arise on an aluminum substrate under a coating like paint that otherwise would have blocked the oxygen, the report states. It and crevice corrosion — caused when something corrosive like salt water is between aluminum surfaces or aluminum and anther substrate — are particularly likely "in wet and salty environments typical of the east coast of Canada or the USA," according to the association.

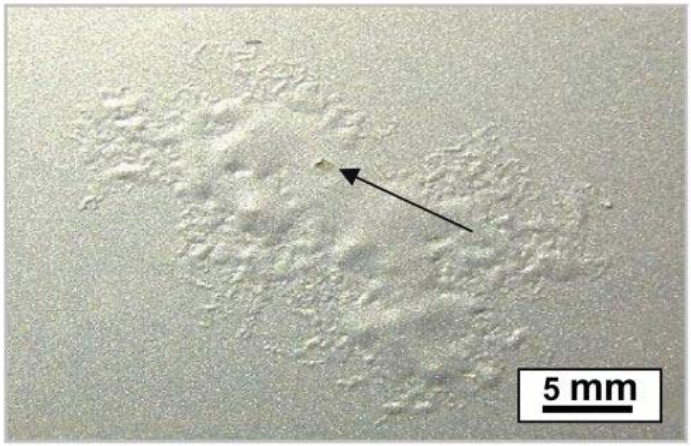


Figure 2. Filiform corrosion attack on Aluminum part from a vehicle in service. The arrow points to the paint defect where the corrosion initiated.

Figure 3. Ground surface after paint stripping.

"The (filiform) corrosion front is usually at the very surface of the aluminum sheet, under the pretreated surface," the association wrote. "Once the initial defect is generated, which may be from a stone chip or a paint defect such as a hole or crack in the paint, the corrosion defect begins to tunnel under the paint surface. This is driven by the difference in oxygen between the head of the filament and the starting initiation defect."

The association also notes that sanding can prompt filiform corrosion, which raises additional considerations for OEMs and aftermarket.

Continued on Page 5

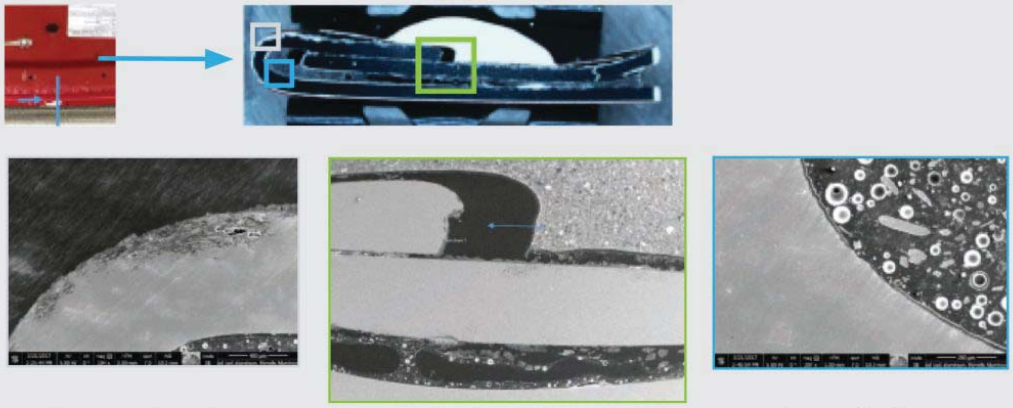
Continued from Page 4

"Sanding or abrading the aluminum surface prior to paint has the potential to make the surface more prone to filiform corrosion since the abrasion process effectively thickens the oxide surface which must be removed prior to the pretreatment," the report states. "If the etch conditions associated with the pretreatment are set up for the nominal un-sanded surface, the thicker regions of oxide associated with the sanded region may not be completely removed, and as a result, may have non-uniform (zinc)-phosphate crystal growth, or areas of sparse coverage. For after-market repair where parts have been abraded, particular care must be taken to prepare the surface for paint."

The trade group aftermarket comments might be referring to practices like immediately priming or treating the bare aluminum after sanding it, as PPG describes here.

FIG. 5: CROSS SECTIONS THROUGH HEM

Cross section depicting the hem sealant, hem adhesive and rope hem.



Significant IGC observed in region where paint has been removed due to corrosion.

- Hem sealant bead is observed to have pulled away from the Hem
- Voids in hem adhesive are indicative of excessive moisture in the adhesion
- Delamination of hem sealant bead as well as adhesive within the hem is observed.

Poor adhesion of Adhesive to Hem outer is observed.

The study also provides an overview of how corrosion protection works — or doesn't — in hemmed aluminum surfaces at the factory, which should provide a little perspective on what could happen when a collision repairer works on an aluminum hem flange in the shop.

"Special attention must be given to the hem joints, where the outer surface is hemmed over the inner panel, since this forms a natural collection crevice for salt or other debris," the trade group writes of hoods. "The hinge reinforcements are frequently bolted and can also develop crevices."

'Extensive paint blistering' in just four years

A hemmed surface was Ground Zero for the aluminum association's study of a 2012 model-year vehicle's hood "with extensive paint blistering near the hem" after about four years on the road "in the northeastern United States, with proximity to the ocean."

The alloy used at the time — it's since been replaced by a weaker but flat-hemmable aluminum alloys — yielded a rope-hemmed hood which the OEM coated in the typical fashion.

Nevertheless, issues at the microscopic level sparked corrosion and provide an example of how repairers and OEMs need to think beyond the naked eye when working with substrates and coatings.

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

The association said the paint blisters tied to filiform corrosion might have come from hem sealer pulling away from the substrate, inconsistent zinc phosphate and adhesive with "a high void content."

It wrote that the adhesive might have absorbed some moisture or had too much oil left on the formed part.

"As adhesives, even cured adhesives, are hydroscopic, which require special attention to see that the adhesives don't absorb moisture that can degrade the adhesive or the adhesive to metal interface," the association wrote regarding the factory assembly process.

Too many voids left in the cured adhesive speeds up how much moisture sneaks in while the car's on the road, according to the association.

"Eventually, this moisture migrates to the metal adhesive interface, which may initiate filiform corrosion. If the metal surface is well pretreated, filiform corrosion is mitigated," the association wrote.

The OEM also had applied hem sealer, but it couldn't fend off corrosion, according to the association:

Extensive corrosion has been observed under the sealer and as a result, some of the underlying layers are difficult to observe. The layers on top of the sealer suggest it was applied at the assembly stage. As previously shown, there are regions where the sealer pulled away from the metal surface, and filiform corrosion is observed at the edges of the sealer. It should be noted that once filiform corrosion has been initiated at the various defects, such as under the hem sealer, it may grow away from this initiation site and under the paint layers. The lack of ZnP or e-coat under the hem sealer, places all corrosion preventative measures to be provided by: the quality of the hem sealer, the cleanliness of the underlying metal, and the uniformity and integrity of the sealer application. This particular example appears to suggest the sealer was unable to provide the necessary level of protection to the underlying metal.

The moral here is that careful preparation and coating/sealer work is necessary to keep the vehicle from coming back to haunt a shop or OEM in just a few years, as in this case:

The source of the paint blisters, which are a manifestation of the filiform corrosion, likely started first at the hem sealant "edge" and then migrated into the hem. Once the filiform corrosion was initiated and allowed for the ingress of water/electrolyte additional filiform corrosion events likely began. It is certainly possible that many of these filiform corrosion events began almost simultaneously as the water ingress proceeded under the hem sealant. The porosity of the adhesive and the non-coherent ZnP layer adjacent to the hem probably contributed to the rapid "spread" of the filiform corrosion event(s). Corrosion, once initiated from a paint defect or hem sealant edge, can either be arrested by the pretreatment layers or, if the pretreatment and surface conditions are not robust, transition to filiform corrosion and migrate under the paint layers. Effective prevention usually requires that the corrosion initiation events are minimized or delayed; though in practical terms, it is very difficult to eliminate all initiation sites. The rate of filiform corrosion is mitigated with a strong paint to surface interface which causes the growth rate to become insignificant.

New research methods

The study also reported that work is underway to create tests designed specifically for aluminum filiform corrosion, for existing tests might have been too steel-centric.

"It should be noted that all modern vehicles are extensively tested for durability with accelerated proving ground tests, including paint and corrosion preventative measures," the trade group wrote. "No known examples of filiform corrosion have been observed from these tests. It is rationalized that many of the test conditions that were developed for steel bodied vehicles remain in place since the majority of the body structures contain significant amounts of steel, and because of this, these tests are simply not the conditions needed to promote this particular type of corrosion.

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6

Test conditions that are able to better promote, and better quantify effective preventative measures are under development. Care must be taken to promote accelerated conditions that are realistic predictors of service life and service life conditions. Filiform corrosion is particularly difficult to predict through accelerated conditions since the corrosion filament only grows within a narrow range of experimental conditions and at a finite rate. The conditions required to promote filiform corrosion are difficult to promote during typical proving ground tests."

Hopefully some of that research provides new lessons for the aftermarket as well.

Source: www.repairerdrivennews.com - Written By John Huetter

Update: Major types of automotive aluminum corrosion

As the aluminum F-150 generation enters its fourth year on the market and its two top truck competitors Silverado and 1500 join it with increased aluminum content, repairers should familiarize themselves with the types of corrosion which can occur on the metal if a repair's not up to snuff.

The Aluminum Association last year produced a handy guide to the three dominant corrosion phenomena found in in automotive applications: crevice corrosion, filiform corrosion and galvanic corrosion.

Fortunately, unlike rust on steel, aluminum corrosion tends to be "cosmetic in nature" rather than structural, according to the trade group — the corrosion produces an ugly paint job but leave your vehicle intact.

"Corrosion of aluminum is predominantly surface corrosion and does not penetrate through the thickness of the material and does not weaken the structural integrity of the part," the Aluminum Association wrote.

However, a collision repairer pointed out that naturally occurring aluminum oxide on a bare aluminum surface — a fourth type of corrosion worth noting — can cause weld porosity.

Your customer's also still likely to notice cosmetic issues produced by aluminum corrosion — which means you'd better get it right the first time. Here's what to look for and how to prevent it.

Crevice corrosion

Crevice corrosion happens when a corrosive liquid, such as salt water, makes its way through an opening to settle between aluminum and aluminum or aluminum and another substrate, such as steel or even plastic, according to the aluminum association.

"Higher temperatures, salt content and other factors can accelerate the corrosion," the association wrote.

The corrosion typically appears as shallow "pits or etching patterns" and will turn up in "under gasket fittings, welded lap joints, overlapping metal seams, folded or formed sheet hems," according to the association. The solution is to use whatever primers, sealers, coatings and seam sealers the OEM says, the Aluminum Association wrote.

Filiform corrosion

Filiform corrosion loves to screw up your paint job but generally isn't a structural issue, according to the association.

Source: www.repairerdrivennews.com - Written By John Huetter

ABAC Hosts Aaron Schulenburg of SCRS at Annual Event; Elects Officers for 2018

ABAC Meetings have always been a great draw due to meeting matter, guest speakers and educational information that is always presented. This evening would turn out to be a bit of a different challenge due to Mother Nature throwing heavy rain, hail, thunderstorms and even local tornadoes our way. Fortunately, we were able to seat over 100 guests who managed to brave the elements of inclement weather and the traffic that the weather produced.

ABAC President Tony Ferraiolo welcomed all to the 2018 Annual ABAC Meeting and covered our agenda for the evening.

Tony thanked our Premier Sponsor for the evening, The Hoffman Group, represented this evening by John Musco, Wholesale Sales Mgr. and his staff.

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Our co-sponsors for this event were:

- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Kent Automotive
- Paul Francis and Co.

Tony acknowledged all of our ABAC News Supporting Advertisers.

He then thanked a few other people. ***"To my Board of Directors. The Board has been incredible these past 6 years into my presidency. They are the hardest working group of individuals I've had to work with. They care about our members and this industry. Their dedication is not to be questioned. I'd also like to recognize and thank our Administrative Director, Heather Romaniello, who made my job easier with her organizational skills and communication. Thank you, Heather.***

Our first speaker for the night was **Jeff Shaw – GM Wholesale Specialist.** Jeff spoke of GM certification. ***"GM is absolutely committed to going to a certification process for auto body repairs. I think it's a great opportunity, right now, to start looking into this. You have to take a look at what's going on in your business; your business model because we're (GM) not the only manufacturer going in this direction."*** Shaw then went into detail on the specifics of the GM Program. Go to www.genuinegmparts.com for more up-to-date information.

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8

Next guest speaker was Tony Lombardozzi, President of the Coalition for Collision Repair Specialists (CCRE). Said Lombardozzi, ***"CCRE recently had 2 great tradeshow appearances in March and April. The first was the Northeast Trade Show in New Jersey and the second was in Biloxi, Mississippi at the Southern Automotive Repair Conference. From what we see, many of the shop owners are now very concerned about the fact of the high cost of doing business today with certification, training, equipment and in turn with that, less revenue, or not much more revenue and, if anything, being less profitable. We need to remove the control that other people have over our industry. If we don't do that we will spin our wheels forever. There's a 3rd party that interferes with us doing business. We MUST find a way to remove that 3rd party's influence. It can be done!"*** You can contact Mr. Lombardozzi at TLombardozzi@theccre.com

Up next, and a little tardy due to the horrible weather, (and we were ALL glad he made it!) was ABAC Lobbyist Andy Markowski from State House Associates. Andy has been the lobbyist for the ABAC for more than 10 years. Speaking to the attendees, he covered sessions going on at the Capital, the budget process and where it stands currently. Says Markowski, ***"As Tony Ferraiolo mentioned, a big part of what I do on behalf of the ABAC is serve as your eyes and ears. There are literally thousands of bills introduced each year and my job is to read them, screen through them and find out what may impact you or your customers. This will be the 8th and final year of Governor Malloy's term and that means not a lot was proposed this year. What that does mean is that next year, when there is inevitably a new Governor, there will be a new Commissioner at the DMV, at Consumer Protection, at the Department of Insurance and no matter who the governor is, Republican or Democrat, they're going to bring in their new people and it also means they'll use that first year as a fresh start with new proposals and we'll have to keep an eye on them. We have a real opportunity right now. Over the next six months, every single State Representative and State Senator in Connecticut is up for re-election and we have a big Governor's race. They're all going to be looking to you. They're all going to be campaigning. They're going to be knocking on your door. They're going to want your vote. They're going to want to talk to you. So, this is your OPPORTUNITY on behalf of the industry to educate them, to let them know what you're really up against, to let them know what problems we're facing and what things need to be changed in Hartford."***

At this point, returning to the podium, President Ferraiolo acknowledged his wife, Kim and their son Lucian. Tony then proceeded to thank everyone for all their support since Lucian's unfortunate accident last August of 2017. ***"A lot of you showed a great amount of support for my son and my family. I want you to know how much that support and your prayers meant to us, asking me every day how he's doing. He's doing well and thank you, all of you"*** said Tony.

Continued on Page 10

Continued from Page 9

After dinner we prepared for the 2018 ABAC Election of Officers.

Before the elections though, ABAC Legal Counsel John Parese abruptly took the microphone to give a few words to the outgoing President. Said Parese, ***"I've had the pleasure of representing this organization as its legal counsel for the past 12 years and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge how fortunate we have been to have Tony Ferraiolo's leadership. I was thinking back on the past six years of Tony's presidency. I was thinking back on all of the Executive Board Meetings, and there has not been one, not one, meeting when Tony hasn't prepared an agenda, an itinerary, he's done research, he has hand-outs, and information on all the latest happenings in the industry. The amount of work that he put into each and every one of those board meetings is unbelievable, and most of you would never know that. He put in the same effort for all of these quarterly meetings, for legislative endeavors, and for keeping the association current with technology and social media. And then there is the work he's done to advance the good name of this organization with outside groups like CCRE and SCRS. Tony has been an exceptional President and we are all so fortunate to have had him leading the ABAC these past six years. Tony, I congratulate you on six amazing years."***

President Tony Ferraiolo was presented with a plaque by his Vice-President Bob Amendola of Autoworks of Westville. This plaque was from the ABAC Board of Directors thanking Tony for his 6 years of service as President of the ABAC.

Treasurer Mike Wilkowski then stepped up to nominate and place into effect, the new slate of ABAC Officers. The new Officers are:

- **President** **Bob Amendola** **Autoworks of Westville – New Haven**
- **Vice President** **Ashley Burzenski** **Autoworks of Westville – New Haven**
- **Treasurer** **Mike Wilkowski** **Stanley's Auto Body – Waterbury**
- **Secretary** **Mark Wilkowski** **Stanley's Auto Body – Waterbury**

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

It was time for our Special guest speaker of the evening, **Aaron Schulenburg, Executive Director of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS).**

Noting the weather conditions, Aaron began, ***"Thank you for the welcome. You guys know how to throw a party! Nothing like throwing a bunch of people on the road and saying, 'Let's have a tornado, right?'. Before we get started, it's really important for me to say, Tony, I appreciate you, I consider you a good friend and what you have brought to this association has been remarkable and noticeable by not just those of your peers in here, in the state, but those around the country."*** He continued, ***"The ABAC is absolutely well respected across this country for the work that they do, for the strength that they have and that's because of the folks here in this room who have stepped up and said, 'I'm going to be a leader' and have done it with grace and dignity and Tony, thank you for leading by example"***

Aaron then gave a brief history/bio of SCRS, what they do and the many accomplishments as well as challenges they face. Aaron spoke of:

- Electronic Technology
- Consumers facing Electronic Development
- Challenges of Innovation for Repairers
- OEM Repair Procedures to Diagnose Innovation
- OEM Position Statements (and where to find it!)
- Pre-& Post Scanning

"Many of you perform repairs on a daily basis where you are not scanning each and every single time and I have to tell you, if you really do believe that the OEM Repair Positions and the OEM Repair Procedures are the guidelines in our industry for proper repair, you've got to perform the scans every time," says Schulenburg.

Aaron gave us all plenty of examples of how even the wording is changing within the OEM Position Statements and OEM Procedures. The word "must" is becoming more prevalent than "should" or "maybe" when presenting procedures.

"The lack of an OEM Position Statement does not mean there's a lack of guidance from the OEM. Every OEM stresses that. Their actual vehicle specific direction to you on how to repair that vehicle is in their repair manual", stressed Schulenburg.

Continued on Page 12

Continued from Page 13

Aaron has provided ABAC Members with links concerning:

- SCRS Membership
- DEG
- OEM Repair Information

Articles on:

- Smart Cars
- Nissan Videos
- Hunter Calibration
- Chrysler ACC Safety System Calibration
- Nissan
- Ford
- Tracy $42M Verdict
- Hidden Dangers of Vehicle Technology
- .....and much more!

Please contact Heather at abacadmin.heather@gmail.com and she will send you an email with all of the links and information embedded in the email.

There was so much more provided by Mr. Schulenburg and we suggest that you DO NOT miss his next visit!

Please consider joining the Auto Body Association of Connecticut today, to help give you a better tomorrow!

Submitted by Don Cushing

Experian data shows R.I. OEM parts bill would better protect average lessee, owner with loan

As lawmakers consider bills extending the amount of time consumers are guaranteed OEM parts, or at least guaranteed a formal opportunity to decide which parts they want, we'd draw their attention and that of repairer and insurers to the average vehicle loan and lease periods reported quarterly by Experian.

For example, Rhode Island senators on May 15 voted in favor of an amended Senate Bill 2679, which changes the time barring an insurer from requiring "the use of aftermarket parts when negotiating repairs with any repairer unless the repairer has written consent from the vehicle owner to install aftermarket parts" from 30 months to 48 months from the date the car was made.

The bill also changes from 30 months to 48 months the time in which "the insurer and the auto body repairs shop must provide a written notice to the vehicle owner that: (i) he or she may require the insurer to pay for and the auto body shop to install 'original equipment manufacturer parts' or OEM parts' in the repair of a motor vehicle; or (ii) he or she may require the insurer to pay for and the auto body shop to install 'non-original equipment manufacturer parts' (non-'OEM parts') in the repair of a motor vehicle."

It also extends these protections to third-party claimants and subjects all parts, not just traditional body parts, to the law.

The unamended companion bill, House Bill 8013, contains similar language. It has been held for further study (a common occurrence in Rhode Island) by the House Corporations Committee since April 24.

Ford connectivity and emerging services global director Mike Tinskey last week said in a TU-Automotive webinar his personal opinion was that consumers weren't "fully aware" which parts were being used in their repair.

"That, though, I do believe is changing rapidly," Tinskey said. Ford polled customers online; some were given the option of parts, while the ones not aware were "quite disappointed" to learn the "standard practice" was not to use OEM parts, he said.

The Rhode Island measure and others extending such durations would better protect some of the first- and third-party lessees who might have ended up unwittingly with a vehicle carrying aftermarket parts, thereby triggering a penalty upon vehicle return.

Randy Bottella, owner and operator of Reliable Collision, made this point in an April Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, stating that some policyholders have 36-month or longer leases, but the current law only applies to the first 30 months of a vehicle's life.

Experian on Thursday announced it found the average first-quarter 2018 new-car lease rose 0.32 months to 36.53 months.

The number of consumers leasing vehicles fell slightly to 29.83 percent of all new cars, down from 31.06 percent in the first quarter of 2017. About 4.01 percent of the lease market involved used cars, a 0.29 percentage-point increase from the prior year. With the exception of "Deep Subprime" lessees (credit scores of 300-500), lease lengths grew across all credit quality groups.

Continued on Page 14

Continued from Page 13

"Super Prime" (781-850) saw the longest time increase, 0.40 months, followed by "Subprime" (501-600) at 0.32 months. "Prime" (661-780) creditors grew leases by 0.28 months, and "Nonprime" (601-660) rose 0.24 months.

Bottella also said in April that as the law is keyed to production date, a customer might already have "a number of their months chewed up" between the time the vehicle is built and the time it's sold or leased to them by a dealership.

Bumping the time period to 48 months would seem to give Experian's average lessee a more than six-month cushion. Of course, if your lease is longer than the three-year average, you might be still out of luck.

The law still wouldn't protect typical new car owners — nor the company financing their loans — from getting parts they might not want during at least two of the years they still owe money on the car.

Experian found the average loan term in the first quarter of 2018 to have risen half a month to 69.03 months, more than five years. Interestingly, it said the growth stemmed from "Prime" (credit score of 661-780) and "Super Prime" (781-850) customers, whose loan terms rose 0.51 months and 0.95 months, respectively.

"Longer term loans continue to dominate the market," Experian stated in a slide.

While the proportion of 49- to 60-month and 85-96-month loans for new cars held steady at 17.6 percent and 1.3 percent of all loans, respectively, the proportion of 61-72-month loans rose nearly 3 percentage points to 41.3 percent. However, the percentage of 73-84-months fell 1.3 points to 33.6 percent.

Used loans grew longer, increasing 0.39 months to 64.23 months, but seemed relatively steady by comparison. The largest increase involved a 0.5-percentage-point gain in used car loans spanning 61-72 months to 40.7 percent of all financed used cars.

Some other fun facts from the latest Experian report:

Consumers financed 85.3 percent of new vehicles, down 0.2 percentage points, and 54 percent of used cars, up 0.7 points, sold in the first quarter of 2018.

The average loan payment for a new car rose $15 to $523, the average used car payment rose $9 to $372, and the average lease payment rose $26 to $436.

Experian said new and used loan amounts reached record highs in the first quarter of 2017, with the average new car amount $31,455 — up $921 — and average used loan $19,536, up $410.

As lawmakers consider bills extending the amount of time consumers are guaranteed OEM parts, or at least guaranteed a formal opportunity to decide which parts they want, we'd draw their attention and that of repairer and insurers to the average vehicle loan and lease periods reported quarterly by Experian. (JackF/iStock)

Source: www.repairerdrivennews.com

By John Huetter

5 Ways to Stand Apart from the Competition

Rick Sacha has never worked on a car in all 33 years his family has owned Automotive Excellence Inc. However, he had plenty of experience mopping and cleaning the floors.

Sacha spent his years growing up by helping out in the shop's paint department. He then attended college and gained a degree in business management. After school, he worked as an insurance adjuster before finally coming back to the shop and bringing both areas of expertise into the business as its body shop manager.

"Rick is so well liked by our customers that they have become second-generation customers," says Chris Zver, parts manager for Automotive Excellence in the 2015 Awards nomination. "He goes over and above, lending an ear when a customer tells in detail how their accident happened, even lending a shoulder when they cry."

Sacha was nominated for the 2015 FenderBender Awards for his expertise in customer service and community involvement. Lending a shoulder for customers to cry on was no big feat for Sacha, who values customer service.

Now, the shop produces roughly $1.5 million in annual revenue and stays in tune with industry changes like aluminum repair—all because of Sacha's ability to learn the industry ins and outs and emphasis on customer service.

The Lost Art of Customer Service

Sacha will take the extra 10 minutes to talk to customers about their car's repair process because he says the manager needs to focus on the customer's traumatic experience.

He treats everyone with integrity and honesty. Sacha's golden rule for customer service is to treat each car like you're working on your own vehicle. For the customer, the car is most likely his or her second-biggest life purchase after buying a house.

He says he will let the customer even cry on his shoulder, whether the tears stem from joy that his or her vehicle was fixed or sadness because his or her vehicle was totaled.

The Marketing Technique

In his free time, Sacha coaches his two sons' football and baseball teams. He'll advertise the shop on the back of their jerseys. And every start of the holiday season from roughly Thanksgiving and on, Sacha has the shop participate in a local food drive. Yelp reviews help drive traffic to the shop, too. Sacha has learned that when he promotes the training certifications the shop technicians have, more customers leave positive reviews.

The Effect of Training

Sacha sends his team to training about once per month or at least once every two months. Currently, all his technicians are I-CAR Gold certified and even though Sacha does not work on any vehicles himself, he is also I-CAR Platinum certified.By not neglecting training, Sacha was able to learn the importance of aluminum repair work and about five years ago, invested in a separate aluminum repair area. And he sets the example by attending training periodically with his staff.

Continued on Page 16

Continued from Page 15

The Body Shop and Mechanic Duo

While the shop does about 75 percent DRP work, the staff is also able to save time on cycle time by doing all mechanical work in-house. Sacha says not having to sublet the computer and structural work to another repair shop has enabled the shop to refine its cycle time to roughly four days. Simply being able to replace air bags and work on suspensions has cut down the shop's cycle time.

In order to manage both mechanical and repair work, Sacha makes sure to meet once per month and gather both the mechanical and body shop teams together. These meetings allow Sacha to address miscommunication issues in the process.

The Way to Delegate

As body shop manager, Sacha is able to get help from his shop foreman and his family, like his brother, who is the shop's parts director.

Sacha says it is important to meet with the shop's managers and discuss issues in repair procedures. He'll meet at least once per day with his shop foreman and another technician to brainstorm solutions to any repair problems.

Sacha's go-to resources are CCC repair method procedures and I-CAR. He also uses information his parts manager brings back from weekly business networking meetings. His brother will meet with owners of other local businesses and share strategies for growth.

Source: www.fenderbender.com Article by Melissa Steinken

Are ADAS Systems Here to Stay? American Honda Showcases Current Systems

Adaptive Cruise Control, Blind Spot Information and Collision Mitigation Braking Systems are just a few of the Advanced Driver Assist Systems (ADAS) in vehicles today.

According to Scott Kaboos, the assistant manager of collision marketing for American Honda Motor Co., not only will these systems prevent accidents in the future, but there may also be fewer claims on vehicles that are equipped with these systems.

Kaboos discussed "Honda ADAS Systems: Today and Tomorrow" during a recent Guild 21 podcast. Presentations are sponsored by Verifacts Automotive.

"Love them or hate them, ADAS Systems are probably here to stay," said Kaboos. "The question is: Are they going to be effective?"

During his Guild 21 presentation, Kaboos shared information from a study compiled by a major insurance company partner regarding 26,039 Honda Civic vehicles from the 2016 model year.

Continued on Page 17

Continued from Page 16

"We compared how many vehicles were drivable vs. non-drivable after an accident," he said. "We noticed that with an ADAS system, the number of vehicles that were non-drivable after an accident decreased 31.5 percent. A lot more people drove home with their ADAS-equipped Civics than they did with the ones without ADAS."

They also studied how ADAS affects frequency---the percentage of time the vehicles were involved in an accident. "We found that the vehicles equipped with ADAS systems had a frequency rate of 12 percent. Those without ADAS had a frequency of 17 percent," said Kaboos. "That's a decrease of nearly 30 percent in frequency, which means drivers are 30 percent less likely to get into a collision at all with ADAS systems vs. without them." Then they looked at severity. The average claim for a 2016 Civic vehicle without ADAS was $3,002. The average with ADAS was $2,769.

"It was a surprise when we found out that the ADAS-equipped vehicles were less expensive to fix as a whole by about 7 percent," said Kaboos. "Our assumption is that it is because they may have needed to do some calibration and extra work, but the damage didn't go as deep into the car."

Kaboos used the example of repairers needing to aim a radar rather than replace a rail.

As part of Honda's 2030 vision, Kaboos said the OEM's goal is to have a zero-collision society at some point in the future. An important aspect of this is incorporating ADAS technology.

The ADAS systems on Honda and Acura vehicles are called Honda Sensing and AcuraWatch. The OEM's use of ADAS dates back to 2011 when the company used its first system on a Honda Odyssey. Up until 2016, ADAS systems were offered a la carte. Over the last two years, consumers have had the opportunity to order Honda Sensing and AcuraWatch as a full suite of products.

With the release of the 2018 Accord, Honda introduced its first mass production vehicle to include the Honda Sensing Suite as standard equipment on all trim levels, regardless of it being the base model or the touring edition. "I do believe that's probably going to continue as we release new models; we are going to see this become standard," said Kaboos. "By 2022, we want to have our entire fleet equipped with this equipment."

Levels of Automation

The Society of Automotive Engineers explains the five different levels of automation ranging from level 0 to 1---which includes some driver assist capabilities---to level 5, where the vehicle will be fully autonomous and have no steering wheel. Currently, the majority of Honda vehicles utilize level 1.

Three categories of level 1 ADAS include:

- 1. Driver Information Systems: Blind Spot Information, Lane Watch and Cross Traffic Monitor
- 2. Preventative Measure Systems: Adaptive Cruise Control, ACC with Low Speed Follow, Forward Collision Warning, Lane Departure Warning and Lane Keeping Assist System
- 3. Avoidance Assistance Systems: Collision Mitigation Braking Systems and Road Departure Mitigation

The 2018 Acura RLX will be released in November and include a new ADAS feature---Traffic Jam Assist.

"This is the first time Honda has equipped a vehicle with level 2 autonomous features," said Kaboos. "This car will go from a complete stop and then accelerate and follow the car in front of it at a safe distance and keep you in the lane without any input from the driver."

Continued on Page 18

Continued from Page 17

Honda is targeting 2025 for the introduction of vehicles with level 4 automation, which Kaboos said is nearly autonomous but includes a steering wheel and can be operated manually.

Kaboos discussed four ADAS systems and when it is necessary to calibrate them:

Collision Mitigating Braking System

The Collision Mitigating Braking System (CMBS) on the 2018 Accord uses radar, a camera, control modules and an electric brake booster.

"As you approach a vehicle in front of you, CMBS turns a dash light on and says, 'Brake,' he said.

Shortly after that, it will send a buzzer. As a driver moves closer to the vehicle, it will start putting on braking force. "It helps keep you from rear-ending the car in front of you and uses what is called 'millimeter wave radar,'" said Kaboos.

When to calibrate:
- If the radar is removed, installed or replaced
- If the ACC warning light is illuminated
- After collision damage to front end
- After structural damage anywhere on the vehicle
- After SRS deployment

Other considerations:
- Do not repair bumper cover near radar
- May require "special" grill or emblem
- Wheel alignment should be checked/adjusted prior to calibration
- Aiming should be performed after wheel alignment if needed
- Requires check of mounting position before aiming after a collision, especially with front end

Kaboos said one of the big concerns is how much space is required to aim the millimeter wave radar.

"Targets have to be set up at a predetermined distance from the vehicle and the area has to be clean, clear and flat," he explained. It is necessary to have a level ground area with 33 feet in front of the car and 16 feet on either side. Kaboos asked Guild 21 attendees how many have a space available large enough to complete a millimeter wave radar. About 68 percent answered they do not have sufficient space requirements, and the remainder said they do.

Adaptive Cruise Control
Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) uses many of the same systems as the millimeter wave radar, the multi-purpose camera and other modules.

"With ACC, drivers can set cruise control and follow the car in front of you," explained Kaboos.

When to calibrate:
- If camera unit is removed/installed or replaced
- If windshield is removed/installed or replaced
- If LKAS or ACC lamps indicate a potential problem
- If DTCs indicate a problem with system
- If vehicle is involved in a collision
- If SRS is deployed

Continued on Page 19

Continued from Page 18

Other considerations:
• Only use OEM glass for replacement in vehicles equipped with multi-purpose cameras
• Should be performed after wheel alignment if needed

Blind Spot Information
The Blind Spot Information (BSI) system uses a pair of radars on either side of the quarter panel mounted behind the bumper cover of the vehicle. It turns a light on in the mirror when someone is in the driver's blind spot. Kaboos said the informative system is meant to detect vehicles that move at a speed relatively close to the driver's speed and cannot detect things on the side of the road such as signs and trees.

When to calibrate:
• After removing/installing or replacing a BSI radar unit
• After repairing or replacing body panels where BSI radar unit mounts
• If BSI warning light is illuminated

Other considerations:
• Requires wheel alignment check/adjustment prior to calibration
• Do not repair bumper cover near BSI radar units

The BSI camera aiming requires about 13 feet to the side of each corner of the rear bumper; therefore, Kaboos said repairers need a 36-foot-wide space to work.

Lane Watch System
The Lane Watch System (LWS) is a camera that is placed in the right-hand mirror. When the right-hand turn signal is on, it allows the navigation unit to show drivers what is being seen by the camera. It can also be turned on manually. "A normal person has about 20 degrees of visibility in a rear-view mirror and with the LWS, this increases to 80 degrees," said Kaboos.

When to calibrate:
• LaneWatch camera is removed/installed or replaced
• Passenger side rear view mirror is removed/installed or replaced
• Passenger side rear view mirror cover is removed/installed or replaced
• Passenger side door position is adjusted
• Passenger side door is removed/installed or replaced

In terms of space requirements, LWS requires much less than other ADAS systems. Kaboos said to expect about 21.3 feet of depth off the left front of the car and 11.5 feet in width. The tools needed for these systems can be purchased directly from Honda dealers. "Any competent technician can probably perform these calibrations and have pretty good success," said Kaboos. Guild 21 attendees were asked how many had already done a calibration on an ADAS system; only 12 percent said they had in the field.

Those who were part of the call were also asked if they plan to embrace calibrations in the near future. About 70 percent said they are ready to do it right now or in the near future; 23 percent said they are not quite ready but will probably do it in the next two to three years; and the remaining 7 percent said they were never going to do it. Kaboos said recalibrations can be a new income stream for shops.

"Shops performing their own ADAS calibration will most likely have tighter control of cycle time on this part of the repair process," said Kaboos. "It also allows you to take control of the safety features of cars. You'll know that the repair is taken care of and the vehicle is going to perform the same way that it did prior to the accident."

Source: www.autobodynews.com - Written by Stacy Phillips

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