



**Better Business Bureau[®]
of Central and Northern Alberta**

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Media Release

Savvy Strategies for Surviving a Fender Bender

BBB Says It Begins With Choosing a Trustworthy Collision Center

May 16, 2007, Edmonton, AB – The Better Business Bureau says that just as consumers must be vigilant about checking out credentials when choosing contractors to do needed repairs on their homes, consumers should be just as prudent after an accident in checking out which collision repair center is the most qualified to fix one of their most expensive possessions.

And there is a lot of demand. According to Alberta Infrastructure the number of traffic collisions increased 10.4% from 112,553 collisions in 2004 to 124,206 in 2005.

Chris Lawrence CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Central and Northern Alberta says, "Although an insurance company may make some recommendations, drivers have a choice when selecting an auto body repair shop. Choosing a trustworthy shop is very important for ensuring the best possible results."

Choosing a shop can be confusing. So the BBB has prepared these tips to help consumers better manage the collision repair experience with tips on choosing a trustworthy shop, saving money on a replacement rental car and knowing how to settle any disputes.

Choose a Trustworthy Collision Repair Shop

Compare collision centers before you need one. In addition to asking friends and relatives for recommendations on shops that have performed quality work for them in the past, check the shop's qualifications.

Verify commitment to ongoing training and customer satisfaction. One way is to look for decals or plaques indicating the shop's current membership status in industry associations, local business groups and consumer agencies such as the Better Business Bureau. Verify information on the BBB website at www.edmontonbbb.org will indicate whether the shop maintains a good reputation.

Arrange a Replacement Rental Car

Ask shop to pre-arrange rental car. Since the average car is in the repair shop for two weeks, ask if the shop can make recommendations for a rental car company and if they can make arrangements for a replacement rental car to be ready when you drop off your car.

Save on cost of replacement rental car. If your auto insurance policy includes replacement rental car coverage, which usually is only a couple dollars a month, you may get a rental car for little or no money. Keep in mind that one full-year of replacement rental car coverage may be less than the cost of a one-day rental car if you have to pay out of pocket. See an insurance professional for details.

Get Everything in Writing Upfront

Review price estimates for work and parts. Get a written repair and price estimate of the work to be performed, as well as an explanation of why specific recommendations are necessary to correct the collision damage before the job begins. Also obtain an itemized list for all parts and services, with prices, identifying any used or re-manufactured parts.

Ask about a warranty. Professional, reputable repair shops will stand behind their repair work by offering a warranty. Usually this warranty is for a specific time – from 30 days to lifetime – and covers the labor, materials used and installation. The actual parts will be covered by the manufacturer’s warranty.

Don’t shop for price alone. The lowest estimate could indicate that the shop’s estimator has improperly assessed the vehicle’s damage or that the shop specializes in “quickie” repair jobs and poor quality. If you get a quote that is significantly different from another shop, ask the estimator to explain why the quote is so different before you make a decision about where to have the car repaired.

Think about satisfaction after repair. Inquire in advance about the auto body repair shop’s policy in the event you are dissatisfied with the repair. Will they fix it at no additional charge and how long will the extra repairs take? Once the repair is completed, tell the technician or business owner before leaving the repair shop if you notice any problems with the body work of your automobile. It is best to bring up any concerns immediately in order to confirm a problem is a result of incorrect repair work. If you do happen to notice a problem after you get the car home, call the repair shop immediately and let them know that you will be returning your automobile for additional repairs.

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