



NEWS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORD UNVEILS ALUMINUM WHEEL “CORE” PROGRAM

- Program designed to limit availability of improperly remanufactured wheels.
- Dealers provided incentive to capture and return wheels.
- Repairers provided “core” discount on new orders.

DEARBORN, Mich., **April 1, 2005** – Ford Motor Company has implemented a “core” return program for aluminum wheels in an effort to limit the number of damaged wheels that may be improperly remanufactured and used for repairs.

The “core” program provides an incentive to Ford-Lincoln-Mercury collision parts wholesaling dealers to aggressively capture and return damaged aluminum wheels to Ford. Dealers will be provided a credit for returned wheels, which will be scrapped by Ford. All aluminum wheels used by Ford in new-vehicle production since July 2004 are included in the program.

“Questions and concerns continue to be raised about the amount of base material being removed from wheels during the various processes used by remanufacturers,” said George Gilbert, who will administer the program for Ford Customer Service Division (FCSD). “Aluminum wheels are manufactured to very precise tolerances in relation to the vehicles for which they are designed. Removal of base material, as well as certain other remanufacturing techniques, can affect performance and durability, and raise safety concerns.”

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Aluminum wheels have been targeted by Ford because they comprise the majority of new wheels in the market and because their integrity is more likely to be compromised when improper remanufacturing techniques are used.

Ford recently issued guidance on wheel recycling in response to inquiries from dealers and repairers. The informational guidelines caution that removal of material other than cosmetic finishes during the remanufacturing/refinishing of steel and aluminum wheels is not an acceptable practice. The guidelines recommend that any wheel considered for recycling be discarded if any of a number of defects are found – ranging from cracks to corrosion – and discourages any re-machining, re-plating, welding, bending, straightening, reforming or adding new material during recycling processes.

Gilbert stressed that Ford does not warrant recycled, reconditioned or refinished wheels.

“Any repairer considering the use of a recycled wheel for a Ford, Lincoln or Mercury vehicle should receive assurances from the recycler that the guidelines we have outlined have been followed,” he said. “We also recommend that repairers require recyclers to permanently identify on their recycled wheels the recycler’s name and the date the wheel was recycled.”

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