

Help! I've Had A Car Accident!

(NAPSA)—If you are involved in one of the 7 million traffic crashes reported annually, you know that getting in a car accident can be extremely stressful and make you feel helpless. You numbly check that everyone on board is okay, your mind racing as you try to sort out what will get you safely back on the road.

While you can't eliminate the stress and inconvenience of a car accident, you can reduce it by following these three tips learned from leading insurance organizations: Take immediate action, report the accident and have your vehicle properly repaired by a qualified shop that will perform a complete, safe and quality repair. About 65 percent of vehicles involved in traffic crashes will require repairs.

Take immediate action

- Calmly assess the situation. Is anyone injured? Is there broken glass, fire, smoke or other potential hazards?

- Call 911 to report injuries and the accident.

- If no one is injured and your vehicle is drivable, move your car to a safe place and turn on your hazard lights. Otherwise, leave your car where it is.

Report the accident

- If other drivers are involved, exchange insurance and other information, including contact information, vehicle make and model, license plate number and witness information.

- Get a copy of the police report, which may be required to file a claim.

- Call the number on your insurance card to report the accident and file a claim with your insurance company. Be sure to get your claim number.

Have your vehicle properly repaired

- If your vehicle needs a repair to make it drivable, do your homework to identify a collision repair shop near the accident—whether that's home or elsewhere.

- If the vehicle is not drivable and you are far away from home, you shouldn't expect insurance to pay for towing or shipping it to your house.

When it comes to investing the time to find a qualified repair facility, people do more research to buy a TV. Fortunately, there is a way to find a collision repair shop with updated training and techni-



When you're in an accident, confidently find a collision repair shop whose technicians are trained to perform complete, safe and quality repairs. Go to www.GoldClass.com/locator to find a Gold Class® shop.

cians who have the knowledge to properly fix your vehicle; one that's more dependable than broad online searches or referrals from friends and family—since not all shops are trained in today's latest repair methods and vehicle technologies.

Gold Class® shops are designated by I-CAR®, an independent not-for-profit organization focused on improving the quality and safety of auto collision repair for the ultimate benefit of the consumer. Gold Class shops employ trained specialists who have undergone rigorous annual training.

Whether you're at home or out of town, you can find a Gold Class shop at www.GoldClass.com/locator. All you need is the local zip code.

At the repair shop, service personnel should tell you:

- How their technicians make the right decisions for a safe repair

- How they find hidden damages that others might not see

- How they decide which parts to repair and which to replace.

If you also need a rental vehicle, choosing a Gold Class shop may get you back into your vehicle sooner and reduce the time you need your rental car. An Enterprise Rent-A-Car report found that customers using the country's top 500 Gold Class facilities needed 31 percent less rental car time than the national industry average—and that can save you money.

It's important to remember the three key tips if you are involved in a car accident: Take immediate action, report the accident and do your homework to get your vehicle repaired by a qualified shop that will perform a complete, safe and quality repair. Visit www.GoldClass.com/locator.