



CAR CARE CORNER

A Little Collision Repair Is A Good Investment Before Selling Your Car

(NAPSA)—Before you trade in your car or truck at a dealership or decide to sell it yourself, it may be well worth your while to make a quick walk-around to assess its exterior condition. A dented fender, broken light or similar defect will reduce the re-sale value of your vehicle by hundreds of dollars.

Exterior condition is among the most important factors in determining your vehicle's re-sale value, and it's becoming an even more crucial consideration every day. Why? The continuing surge in new-vehicle sales by manufacturers—prompted by short-term leases and aggressive incentives—has created a surplus of high-quality used vehicles.

Potential purchasers of these used vehicles—whether auto dealers or discerning consumers—now have a large and growing inventory from which to choose. More important, more used vehicles in good condition, regardless of age, are showing up on dealer lots and in the classified ads. This surplus has the effect of driving down the value of cars or trucks with obvious external flaws. In many cases, this devaluation may be greater than you think.

For example, according to one vehicle-rating group, the difference between the value of a 2001 Ford Taurus LX in Texas is more than \$1,000 when sold in “excellent” condition compared to being sold in “fair” condition. (See first chart.)

The re-sale equation is significant for even older vehicles. For example, the equivalent value difference for a 1996 Ford F-150 pickup truck tops \$1,000. (See second chart.)

Of course, getting the most value from your vehicle will require

2001 Taurus LX Sedan 4-Door—Standard Options—36,000 Miles

<i>Dealer Trade-In</i>					
Texas	Poor N/V	Fair \$4,765	Good \$5,580	Excellent \$6,075	Fair-to-Excellent +\$1,310
<i>Private Party Sale</i>					
Texas	Poor N/V	Fair \$6,650	Good \$7,390	Excellent \$7,985	Fair-to-Excellent +\$1,330

1996 F-150 Long Bed—Standard Options—100,000 Miles

<i>Dealer Trade-In</i>					
Texas	Poor N/V	Fair \$2,535	Good \$3,195	Excellent \$3,600	Fair-to-Excellent +\$1,065
<i>Private Party Sale</i>					
Texas	Poor N/V	Fair \$3,755	Good \$4,310	Excellent \$4,790	Fair-to-Excellent +\$1,035



Values from Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com) on Sept. 3, 2003. Values vary by location. “Excellent” means the vehicle needs no reconditioning. The paint is glossy and the body is free of visible defects. There is no rust. “Good” means the vehicle is free of any major defects. The paint and body have only minor blemishes. “Fair” means the vehicle has cosmetic defects. The paint and body need work to be performed by a professional. There may be repairable rust damage. “Poor” means the vehicle has severe cosmetic defects. The vehicle may have problems such as a damaged frame or a rusted-through body. “N/V” means “no value.”

an investment on your part. Ford Motor Company offers the following advice to help balance the investment you make with the return you may expect to receive.

1. Rely on the professionals for collision repairs. While fixing an exterior cosmetic defect may appear simple, you may run the risk of creating more problems than you solve. Your local dealership either provides the repair services you need or can refer you to an independent collision repair shop in your area.

2. For exterior body parts—such as fenders or bumpers—you are likely to be faced with the choice of having the parts re-

paired or replaced. For significant sheet metal dents or cracks in plastic components, replacement may be the most cost-effective option.

3. For safety-related items such as lighting—replacement of the part is a necessity.

When replacing exterior parts, always remember to ask for genuine replacement parts made by your vehicle's manufacturer. Genuine replacement parts are the same as those used on your vehicle when the vehicle was built, with equivalent fit and finish—two of the key factors that vehicle appraisers assess when determining a vehicle's value.