



NEWS

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CAPA's Unique Vehicle Test Fit Program Celebrates Milestone

**15 Years Ago CAPA Dramatically Improved the Quality of
Aftermarket Parts Meeting CAPA Standards**

Washington, D.C. – Fifteen years ago this month, the Certified Automotive Parts Association dramatically increased the quality of CAPA Certified aftermarket parts by developing its unique Vehicle Test Fit (VTF) program.

Since incorporating the CAPA VTF into its program in 1999, CAPA has performed over 10,000 VTFs to insure that the gap, flush and fit of CAPA parts matches those of the car company brand parts. Since then, there has been a dramatic increase in the quality of the aftermarket parts submitted for testing under CAPA's rigorous certification standards. Prior to CAPA's VTF, independent manufacturers were often matching the characteristics of car company brand parts that, themselves, didn't fit well. The program was so successful that after it was initiated, CIC performed blind test fits to compare CAPA Certified parts to car company service parts. CIC participants selected the CAPA Certified part 5 out of 8 times as a better fit. CAPA added the VTF process not only to replicate the experience of the shop in installing parts, but because car company brand service parts could not be depended on as fitting well all the time.

CAPA introduced a second test fit center in Irvine, California in 2012. Both of these locations employ highly trained ASE service technicians using the latest measurement tools to insure that CAPA Certified parts provide the fit demanded by today's collision repair shops. Manufacturers who participate in the CAPA Program have the option of having their CAPA VTFs performed at multiple locations in the U.S. using the very same, publically available, fully transparent CAPA Certification procedures and requirements.

“While today, CAPA's unique vehicle test fit process has become the industry-accepted standard for test fitting aftermarket parts, it was entirely innovative when we introduced it,” said Debbie Klouser, CAPA's Director of Operations. “Considering all of CAPA's extensive certification requirements, the VTF has played the single most critical role in today's acceptance of CAPA Certified parts as the best way to contain repair costs without compromising quality.” CAPA's ability to consistently and accurately identify those parts which are truly comparable to car company brand parts has been responsible for the dramatic increase in the use of CAPA Certified parts. (CAPA part usage has nearly doubled in 5 years and is increasing at about 15% per year.)

In order for a part to become CAPA Certified, each part must go through an exhaustive set of comparative tests as well as the vehicle test fit. These comparative tests insure that all of the important fit, finish, material, and performance properties of the CAPA Certified part are the same as the car company brand part. “Because full transparency is critically important when evaluating the efficacy of any certification program, CAPA makes all of its standards, procedures, tolerances, and processes fully available to anyone who asks,” said Jack Gillis, CAPA’s Executive Director.

CAPA Competition Improves Quality

Each CAPA Vehicle Test Fit includes detailed measurements of the vehicle’s original part, the car company service part and the CAPA Certified part. As a result, CAPA has been able to monitor the quality of car company brand replacement parts over time. During the first few years of the test fit program, only 54% of the car company service parts met CAPA standards for fit and finish. In our most recent analysis, we found that approximately 91% met CAPA’s requirements. “Clearly, in response to the increase of high quality CAPA Certified parts in the market, car company quality has also improved,” said Gillis.

“CAPA takes the guess work and risk out of finding high quality, fairly priced parts for insurers, repairers and, most importantly the consumers they serve,” said Gillis. “Unless the part is CAPA Certified, consumers, insurers, and repairers are taking a risk that the fit, materials, welds, strength, and performance of the competitive part is not the same as the car company brand service part.”

Collision repairers have installed over 66 million parts since 1990 and there are five, publically available, CAPA standards covering over 15,000 CAPA Certified part applications for use in high quality collision repairs.

For further information, contact debbie@CAPAcertified.org.

The Certified Automotive Parts Association, founded in 1987, is the nation’s only independent, non-profit, certification organization for automotive crash parts whose sole purpose is to ensure that both consumers and the industry have the means to identify high quality parts via the CAPA Quality Seal. CAPA is an ANSI accredited standards developer for competitive crash repair parts. For more information see CAPAcertified.org.