

State Farm Auto Insurance Forced John Eagle To Make Shoddy Repair That Trapped Driver in Burning Honda

DALLAS, Aug. 4, 2017 -- A federal lawsuit accuses State Farm Auto Insurance of forcing John Eagle Collision Center to cut costs by using a dangerous, untested adhesive to replace a hail damaged steel roof. The [Complaint](#) blames the defective car repair for crushing and burning the owners of a used 2010 Honda Fit when their car was struck in an accident.

"State Farm advertises that it is a 'good neighbor.' On the contrary: behind the closed doors of auto collision centers, State Farm's 'good neighbor' becomes a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde creature that turns into the 'neighbor from hell,'" according to the Federal Complaint filed by Matthew and Marcia Seebachan.

The lawsuit alleges that State Farm forced John Eagle Collision Center, "to use glue instead of welds and the shoddy and substandard repair work turned Matthew and Marcia Seebachan's Honda into a bonfire."

"State Farm secretly and covertly plays Russian Roulette with its customers and the public by forcing body shops to choose their profits over the safety of the motoring public," said Dallas vehicle safety lawyer Todd Tracy who represents the Seebachans.

During a family Christmas visit in 2013, Matthew and Marcia Seebachan suffered serious injuries when the safety cage of their 2010 Honda Fit collapsed because their roof literally separated where it had been glued with 3M 8115 adhesive rather than being welded at 104 spots as specified by Honda.

The failure of the glued roof set off a domino effect that crushed the couple and set their car on fire. Matthew Seebachan was trapped behind the steering wheel of the burning vehicle, and was conscious while his body burned.

The hail damaged body work was not disclosed to the Seebachans when they purchased the used Honda four months before the accident occurred.

The Body Shop Director for John Eagle Collision Center admitted, under oath, on July 7, 2017, that John Eagle deliberately violated Honda's 2009-2013 Honda Fit Body Repair Manual when it glued the new steel roof on to the 2010 Honda Fit with 3M 8115 adhesive. Honda's official repair manual for dealers specifies that a new roof must be welded onto a 2009-2013 Honda Fit when the roof is replaced. John Eagle's corporate representative further testified that the 3M 8115 adhesive used to glue the new roof on was used despite the fact that 3M has specifically stated that Honda does not permit the

use of adhesives.

According to his testimony the collision center's profits trump safety, "State Farm dictated to John Eagle how the car was to be repaired, i.e., to use adhesive rather than spot welding. Furthermore, State Farm can 'trump' the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) (Honda) specifications because the repair facility needs to get paid."

Tracy stressed that, "State Farm sells auto insurance. They are not in the business of designing vehicles, or testing vehicles, or repairing vehicles. And their adjusters are certainly not professional automotive engineers with an expertise in designing vehicles that provide crashworthiness protection to prevent serious injuries. No insurance company should ever dictate to a collision center how to repair a vehicle. Such coercion jeopardizes public safety on the nation's highways."

Yet, Repairer Driven News for the Society of Collision Repair Specialists reported that representatives of State Farm and Allstate at the Collision Industry Conference and NACE MSO Symposium for collision repair industry executives failed to support the idea that Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) instructions are always the standard of care — a position endorsed by all major collision repair trade groups, I-CAR, and even CIC's own definition of a collision repairer.

According to the report, Clint Marlow, director at Allstate stated: "I think there's a lot of ... mechanical acumen in our industry, and while most of us are not mechanical engineers by trade, I believe that we are educated enough to form an opinion." Asked about OEM repair procedures, State Farm claims director Russ Hoffbauer said, "We don't consider them Gospel."

"State Farm Insurance needs to find some old time religion when it comes to protecting the safety of its flock, i.e., policyholders and motorists. Ethical safety minded collision centers clearly believe that the OEM is the industry Bible. The arrogant attitude of this insurance giant who pretends to be everybody's 'good neighbor' reveals its two faced Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde mentality when it comes to putting profits before safety. How many of their customers are driving defectively repaired cars that are ticking time bombs set to explode in an accident?" asked Tracy.

The federal lawsuit also accuses State Farm of violating the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act (DTPA).

Civil Action No. 4:17-cv-537

U.S. District Court For The Eastern District Of Texas
Sherman Division

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