

Making & breaking

High-quality replacement parts need not only come from a warehouse. So-called green parts are taken directly from a donor vehicle that has suffered accident damage, reports Peter Shakespeare

Household recycling is a huge part of everyday life. And salvage firm Synetiq claims to have supplied more than 1,200 salvaged doors to British Gas vehicles (mostly vans) and remanufactured brakes for over 100,000 vehicles per year (pictured bottom left and centre, p28). For a profile of another such supplier, see www.is.gd/onabek.

There is no doubt that today salvaged automotive parts are big business and have significant potential to save vehicle owners money, reduce waste and cut raw material usage and carbon emissions. The 40.4 million cars and 4.1 million vans (DfT figures 2019/20) on Britain's roads offer a rich source of parts, given there are around 122,000 road traffic collisions per year in the UK and large numbers of cars and vans reaching end of life. Not so rich is the commercial vehicle supply; there are only 501,500 heavy goods vehicles and 32,000 buses sharing the same roads.

In comparison to vans and cars, there tends not to be such a steady supply of popular recycled parts, like doors and body panels, according to Neil Marcus, a director of Selsia Vehicle Accident Centres, but that does not stop it working with salvage firms to offer this service. Its commercial vehicles group has an audited network of 50 heavy goods and specialist vehicle



RENAULT TRIES OUT TRUCK PART HARVESTING

Last summer, Renault Trucks began a one-year feasibility study with Indra Automobile Recycling in the reuse of truck parts that saw 15 trucks be dismantled.

The wider group Renault is expanding a vehicle breaking yard at its Flins, France factory. That yard is operated by Indra, which is a corporate daughter of the carmaker.

The group has resold parts from the Indra network since 2012, according to a November 2020 report from Green Car Congress (www.is.gd/enobux). The refurbished parts are sold under the 'Renault Standard Exchange' branding. It reports that a new dismantling line is being installed in Flins starting in 2024.

accident repair centres. Marcus says: "We can specify the use of non-OE as well as green recycled parts, which has a positive effect on our fleet clients' claims history and can help to avoid higher renewal premiums. Our HGV repairers have absolutely no problem in fitting green recycled parts; they are very resourceful operations, right down to their ability to fabricate of parts on their premises. As long as a recycled part does not compromise the integrity or the safety of the vehicle, we are happy to specify their use."

Selsia sources some of its green recycled parts from salvage company Synetiq and also Exeter-based Allparts Refinishing. Allparts' Martyn Newbery states that there are very few commercial vehicle dismantlers in the UK. It does not dismantle vehicles itself, but sources some of its commercial vehicle parts from specialist HGV dismantler Snows Commercials of Bristol.



Percy Snow, director of Snows Commercials, confirms: "Truck parts recycling is very different to car recycling. Cars enjoy a large throughput versus trucks, which is a relatively low number of vehicles processed per year. This relates to how many cars are on the road versus how many trucks.

"We supply parts to truck operators', repair workshops, body shops and we export. But we are one of a small number of dedicated HGV recyclers in the country. The HGV market for many years has been dictated to by legislation and emissions standards. Euro VI has caused the biggest changes of all for us, in terms of prices.

"We buy 99% of our stock from the auctions, as they are now the only place to get it. This means we are competing with literally the world on stock buying. Cat S [repairable damage] and Cat N

OPINION

While it is clearly possible to source green recycled parts for heavy commercial vehicles, and there are high-quality vehicle repairers that readily support their use, availability is somewhat hit-and-miss. The likelihood of sourcing parts for newer vehicles reduces significantly to the point of non-availability, thanks to the high prices they command at auction even as write-offs, putting them out of the reach of dismantlers. In terms of minimising the cost of vehicle cosmetic repairs, in the absence of recycled parts, non-OE body panels could be the way to go. Peter Shakespeare

[insurance write-off] examples of the most popular trucks in many cases command too high a figure for us to buy and break. Most are purchased to be repaired; also some operators are buying them as feedstock to keep their own fleet running. The fact they are breaking them without a licence does not even occur to these buyers.

"Currently we are not buying anything older than 2014 or Euro VI trucks for breaking. When the price

makes buying Cat N & S for breaking viable, they usually do have some good body panels but not enough to commit to promising a regular 'green parts' supply. The doors and grilles are quite large and heavy, so we only supply them if customers can collect; otherwise the packaging and carriage will just price the job out. Seats we sell regularly and use a pallet company to move them to customers. We supply panels and sometimes even cabs, which are usually



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damaged but repairable, to body shops carrying out contract repairs. There are a few specialist breakers, say DAF only or Scania only, but Snows Commercials breaks all makes of trucks.” (Its stock is pictured at left and below: two images from right).

SCARCE

Back at Selsia, Marcus says that in its experience, heavy commercial chassis and cab replacement parts are scarce. He continues: “Green part availability is stronger for older vehicles. If available, the use of reclaimed parts can be particularly useful where there are still a couple of years to go on a lease and it is not helpful to the company finances to replace an expensive vehicle before it is normally scheduled.”

Kieran McCahill, managing director at Selsia-approved repairer, Ferrymill Motors in Torrance, Glasgow, adds that it has used green recycled parts on a few occasions to avoid total loss situations from damaged vehicles sent by Selsia. He continues: “For us, the most common use of recycled parts is using bus parts, either to keep a badly-damaged older vehicle on the road, or re-upholstering bus and coach seats when we are changing seat configurations or adapting older vehicles for school bus service.”



Marcus adds that its repairers also trade green parts between each other, and being in a network, they use Selsia as a brokerage platform. He says: “Some of our HGV repairers have cab jigs and can repair and keep reconditioned cabs

in stock for either trading with other HGV repairers or to use themselves to hasten repairs. We also sell vehicles that are beyond economical repair to Synetiq and other operators, and re-source green parts from them.” **TE**



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