



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1625 North Market Boulevard, Suite N-323, Sacramento, CA 95834

P (916) 574-8170 F (916) 574-8612 | www.dca.ca.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2011

CONTACT: Glenn Mason (916) 574-8168

UNLICENSED INDIO AUTO BODY REPAIR SHOP OWNERS ARRESTED

Arrest underscores State DCA efforts to halt unlicensed operators

INDIO – An Indio man and his wife have been arrested for allegedly running an unlicensed auto repair operation and defrauding consumers and insurers.

An investigation by the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair (DCA/BAR) led to the arrests of Manny Torres (aka Manuel Torres Jr.) and Flori Torres, owners of The Auto Pro Collision Center II (aka Ultimate Auto Body Repair), 45116 Commerce St. Suite 10, in Indio. The two will be charged with numerous violations of the Automotive Repair Act, including failure to comply with provisions of the Automotive Repair Act, making false or misleading statements, and operating an unregistered repair facility.

The investigation began when BAR received complaints from customers who thought they may have been the victim of fraud. After BAR did a post-repair inspection of the customer's vehicles, they found evidence that Torres had claimed to have provided nearly \$6,000 in parts and labor, defrauding both the customer and his insurance company.

The case has been submitted to the Riverside County District Attorney for criminal action.

“Consumers who have had collision repairs done at The Auto Pro Collision Center II may have paid for parts they didn't receive or labor that wasn't performed and their vehicles may actually

be unsafe” said DCA Acting Director Brian Stiger. “We’re asking anyone who believes they may be a victim to contact BAR’s Auto Body Inspection Program.”

The Auto Body Inspection Program enables you to have those repairs checked free of charge by a BAR professional. To make an appointment, consumers can call toll-free (866) 799-3811.

“BAR will continue to partner with California’s district attorneys to aggressively discipline those who commit fraudulent acts,” says BAR Chief Sherry Mehl, who also pointed to the arrests as an important lesson for consumers. “Most businesses and professionals do a good job of providing services that benefit consumers,” said Mehl. “These arrests are a vivid example of why it is important for consumers to make certain they are doing business only with registered businesses and licensed professionals. This individual was not only unlicensed, but unscrupulous as well.”

BAR encourages consumers to remember the following tips before taking your vehicle to an automotive repair shop:

- Verify the Automotive Repair Dealer’s license is valid by checking online at www.bar.ca.gov or call 1.800.952.5210.
- Ask for a written estimate for any repairs before work begins.
- Ask for the return of any parts replaced during the repair.
- Ask for a detailed final invoice up completion.

Consumers can find the status of a license, get information, or file a complaint by calling the Department of Consumer Affairs hotline at 1-800-952-5210 or by visiting on the DCA Web site at www.dca.gov.

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The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers who wish to file a complaint against an auto repair facility can contact the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.autorepair.ca.gov.