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## Are Some Dealers Selling Dangerous Cars?

*Michelle Krish* -- 10News.com Managing Editor

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**SAN DIEGO** -- California roads are beginning to resemble rolling chop shops filled with used cars that should be in a wrecking yard. That's the warning from consumer advocates who claim the driving public is at risk.

10News looked at a 2003 BMW. It was a beauty, but in the case of the Beemer, beauty is only skin deep.

"I found that there was damage here. See the way this hood is not sitting correctly on the car?" auto inspector Rocco Avellini told 10News.

Avellini said the frame was bent from a major accident.

"This indicates the car was placed on a frame measurement machine attempting to make a correction on the frame," said Avellini.

The problem is the woman who paid \$60,000 for the BMW never knew it had been wrecked.

"There was blood from the accident in the drivers seat," said Charvella West, who bought the wrecked BMW.

West said the real tip-off was when the tires blew out on the freeway.

West said she sued the dealer -- The Auto Gallery of San Diego.

The business took back the car and paid all of West's expenses. Then West said they turned around and put the car back on the lot, reselling it to another unsuspecting buyer.

"So far, every time we're on the road, we have problems with that car," said Robert McGrew, who bought a wrecked car.

McGrew said he is now suing. He said he had the same problems as West did, including exploding tires.

Avellini showed McGrew the wheels aren't straight.

The 2.5 million rehab wrecks on California roads are a serious problem.

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Insurance companies sell the wrecked cars off to auto auctions.

Why so many cars? Because in California, the insurance industry does not have to report them as salvaged vehicles.

Often, the only way you can tell if a car was seriously damaged is if its title is stamped "salvage."

What qualifies a car as salvage? Repair costs.

In Iowa, a salvaged title is given if repairs are more than 65 percent of the car's value.

In Texas, it's about 80 percent.

But in California, the car's loss must be 100 percent to be titled as a salvage vehicle.

"Which is a loophole for the insurance companies and fraudulent rebuilders," said Rosemary Shahan with Consumers For Auto Reliability and Safety.

So a car could be almost a total wreck and still not have a salvaged title -- like the Beemer The Auto Gallery sold twice.

Did The Auto Gallery of San Diego know the car's history?

10News learned Travis Ledford is one of the bosses, although he denied this. He never spoke up to 10News, leaving it up to his uncle Larry, to respond.

Larry threatened to sue and called police. He demanded 10News leave, which it did.

Ledford's attorney claimed the Beemer was never in a major accident, but just had a bent fender and broken headlight.

That's not what Avellini told 10News.

So, did the business pay off West over a broken headlight and bent fender? The lawyer told 10News it was to avoid the cost of a trial.

Consumer advocates and mainstream car dealers alike said disclosure laws need to be changed, forcing insurance companies to share vehicle accident histories.

"I don't see any reason why there should be limits on information we need, use, want and pay for," said Norman Erb, with Courtesy Chevrolet.

For more information to avoid buying a recycled wreck, click on [WreckCheckCarScan.com](http://WreckCheckCarScan.com)

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