Body Repairs - General Information - Body Construction

Print

Description and Operation

General

Under bodywork construction, a general distinction is made between monocoque and non-monocoque bodywork. The safety of the occupants is the main consideration for all types of bodywork construction. The front and rear sections are designed so that they absorb the energy of the impact via crumple zones. The use of modern design and manufacturing methods and the use of newly developed body panels (relating to their deformation and strength properties) mean that, despite the continuous weight-savings, all safety-related requirements made of the construction can be met.

Integral body-frame

In this method of construction, coverings, reinforcements, retaining panels and profiles are permanently joined together using a variety of joining techniques (gluing, spot welding, laser welding, soft soldering or brazing). The load-bearing function of the structure must always be achieved in each case.

There is no distinction made between components which are purely subject to bending/torsion or thrust loads and parts which perform sealing/covering functions (as in non-monocoque bodywork for example). In modern passenger vehicles, monocoque bodywork is very widespread and offers the advantages of a lightweight and low-cost construction.

The rigidity of the bodywork is achieved by a panel skin and panel cross-section with the largest possible profile and therefore the largest resisting torque (such as for instance the rocker panel). Swage lines in the outer area of the bodywork increase the stiffness and the natural vibration frequency, to prevent possible drumming noises. The mounting points for ancillary components such as doors and wings are permanently built into the monocoque bodywork.

High rigidity of the bodywork is vitally important to keep the elastic deformations low at the joins to the ancillary components and to prevent noise when driving. Small gap dimensions are therefore only possible on vehicles with very stiff bodywork. With high bodywork stiffness, the construction can exert an influence on the handling of the vehicle (e.g. on poor road surfaces).

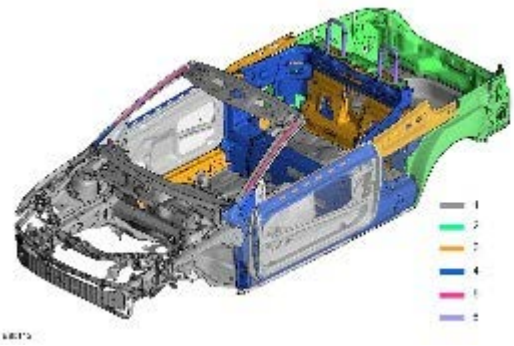
Advantages of monocoque bodywork:

- Weight reduction.
- Economical manufacturing technology.
- High torsional rigidity and high flexural strength.
- Defined deformation behavior at the front and rear.
- Maximum passive safety due to the strong passenger compartment

The protected passenger compartment with strong pillars, rocker panels and doors with integral side impact protection increase occupant protection. Opening of the doors is ensured, even if there is extreme deformation.

NOTE: Repair work must always be performed according to the established workshop literature. All the safety requirements must be guaranteed after any repair work has been performed !

Convertible



Description	Description
1	Body components adopted from the Focus 2004.75 (07/2004-)
2	Conventional bodywork construction steel
3	High-strength sheet steel
4	Super-high strength sheet steel
5	Maximum-strength sheet steel
6	Aluminium, can be subjected to high stresses

The body of a convertible differs from the principle of the integral body-frame of a saloon due to the lack of a roof construction. The body has a high degree of torsional stiffness. This is achieved by using high, super-high and maximum-strength sheet steel and body reinforcements in specifically-targeted areas.

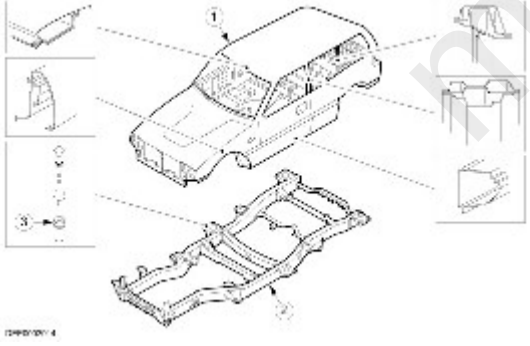
These reinforcements can be installed in the area of the doors (diagonal braces etc.) or on the underfloor. In contrast to the saloon (or other non-convertibles) with square-section side members (closed profile), these reinforcements have a profile which is open on the underside (U-section).

Special constructional changes within the bodywork structure:

- Reinforcing or increase in the thickness of the sheet steel in the pillar area.
- Reinforcing or increase in the thickness of the sheet steel in the floor pan structure (rocker panel area).
- Use of heavily structured reinforcing panels in the rocker panel and pillar area.
- In the area of the windshield frame and A-pillars, thick-walled reinforcing tubes are used (roll-over protection).
- Because there is no roof, the bridge construction principle cannot be used as it is on the saloon for example. Flexural and torsional rigidity must be ensured by other components.

Non-monocoque bodywork

Non-monocoque bodywork is built onto a frame or a chassis. Frames used for this have various construction forms, e.g. the ladder frame or tube frame. Non-monocoque bodywork is the original way of constructing vehicles.



Description	Description
1	Vehicle body.
2	Frame Assembly
3	Bolted connection

The ladder frame is still commonly used today for truck and off-road vehicles. The bodywork is placed on the frame or chassis. The total load which occurs while driving is transferred to the chassis.

More sporting vehicles can be built with non-monocoque bodywork, mostly using a lattice tube frame. Limitations in the design are accepted for the benefit of low weight. The outer skin here is usually made of plastic or alloy. This type of construction is also common in touring car racing for instance.

Special features of non-monocoque bodywork construction:

- Partly large surface panels and high volume shaped parts.
- Thicker materials and greater reinforcements in the frame area.
- Floor pan as frame structure with high torsional rigidity and flexural strength.
- Side panels only make a small contribution to the overall stability of the body.

Instructions for repair:

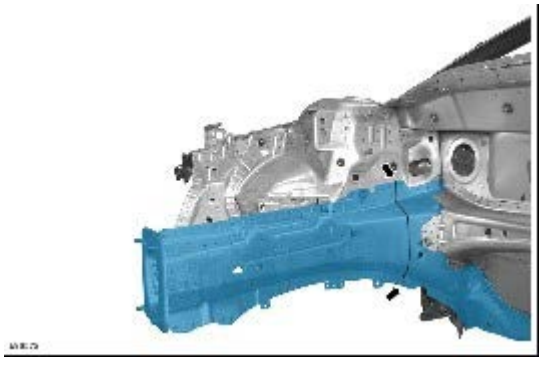
A different repair technique is necessary during repairs. A deformed frame structure requires high suction power during straightening repairs. Frequently, the body also has to be detached from the frame structure in order to carry out separate repair.

Due to the very stable frame structure, please note that the straightening behavior is completely different to that of a passenger vehicle. The frame and the attached body must be repaired independently of each other.

Further information can be found in the respective body repair manual.

Special points:

Tailored blanks



Blue: Tailored blank

Arrows: Laser weld seam

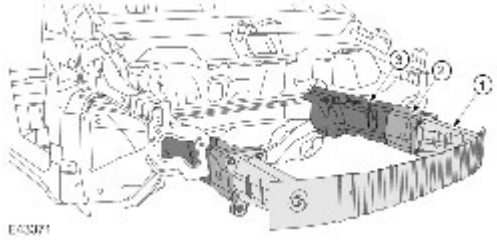
The term "tailored blanks" describes the connection of two different panel thicknesses and/or strengths in the bodywork carcass. This connection is done using laser weld seams. Cut locations exactly on the laser weld seams are not permitted, as at present no joining techniques are approved for use in repair procedures that would re-create joins of the same quality.

NOTE: No cutting, no welding and therefore no sectional repairs are permitted in the immediate area of the laser weld seams. The model specific requirements are documented in the respective Body Repair Manuals.

Typical application areas are:

- Side member
- Door inner reinforcement/door frames
- Wheelhouses
- Rocker panel inner reinforcement
- Roof rail inner reinforcement

Deformation behavior



Description	Description
1	Bolted crash element
2	Front side member
3	Rear side member

Different materials and design features lead to staged deformation of the front and rear of the vehicle in an

accident.

Crash element:

At the front of the vehicle there is a crash element which is connected to the side member by threaded connections. This crash element can absorb light impacts of up to about 15 km/hr. Because of the threaded connections, the crash element can be changed very quickly.

NOTE: Deformed crash elements must not be straightened or repaired.

Heavier impacts which can no longer be absorbed by the crash element must be absorbed by the side members or the floor pan structure. Depending on the extent of the damage, a part or complete replacement can be performed on the side member.

The rear of the vehicle, like the front of the vehicle, has structures which protect the passenger cell through staged deformation in the event of an accident. The design layouts, however, are adapted to the requirements of the rear area.