WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A crash attenuator comprising:

a frame comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second frames are hingedly connected with said hinge assembly in an impact configuration, wherein said hinge assembly comprises a living hinge when said hinge assembly is in said impact configuration.

2. The crash attenuator of claim 1 wherein said hinge assembly comprises a pair of spaced apart hinge members.

3. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said hinge members comprise first and second plate members.

4. The crash attenuator of claim 3 wherein said first plate member is thinner than said second plate member, wherein said first plate member is breakable in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

5. The crash attenuator of claim 3 wherein said first plate member comprises a weakened region, wherein said first plate member is breakable along said weakened region in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

6. The crash attenuator of claim 5 wherein said weakened region comprises at least one opening.

7. The crash attenuator of claim 5 wherein said weakened region comprises a heated treated region.

8. The crash attenuator of claim 3 wherein said hinge members comprise different materials.

9. The crash attenuator of claim 3 wherein one of said hinge members comprises a fuse that is breakable in said impact configuration, and the other of said hinge members comprises said living hinge.

10. The crash attenuator of claim 1 wherein said hinge assembly comprises a single hinge member.

11. A method of attenuating energy from an impacting vehicle with a crash attenuator, the method comprising:

providing a frame comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration;

impacting the crash attenuator; and

moving said first frame member relative to said second frame member about said hinge assembly to an impact configuration, with said hinge assembly acting as a living hinge as said first and second frame members are moved to said impact configuration.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said hinge assembly comprises a pair of spaced apart hinge members.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said hinge members comprise first and second plate members.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said first plate member is thinner than said second plate member, and wherein said moving said first and second frame members comprises breaking said first plate member and wherein said said second plate member forms said living hinge.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said first plate member comprises a weakened region, and wherein said moving said first and second frame members

comprises breaking wherein said first plate member along said weakened region in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said weakened region comprises at least one opening.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said weakened region comprises a heat treated region.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein said hinge members comprise different materials.

19. The method of claim 13 wherein one of said hinge members comprises a fuse that is breakable in said impact configuration, and the other of said hinge members comprises said living hinge.

20. The method of claim 10 wherein said hinge assembly comprises a single hinge member.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A crash attenuator comprising:

a pair of laterally spaced side frames each comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second members of each of said side frames are hingedly connected about a vertical hinge axis with one of said respective hinge assemblies in an impact configuration, wherein each of said respective hinge assemblies comprises a living hinge when said hinge assemblies are in said impact configuration, and wherein each of said hinge assemblies comprises a pair of spaced apart hinge members, with at least one of said hinge members defining said living hinge.

2. The crash attenuator of claim 1 wherein said hinge members comprise first and second plate members.

3. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said first plate member is thinner than said second plate member, wherein said first plate member is breakable in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

4. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said first plate member comprises a weakened region, wherein said first plate member is breakable along said weakened region in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

5. The crash attenuator of claim 4 wherein said weakened region comprises at least one opening.

6. The crash attenuator of claim 4 wherein said weakened region comprises a heated treated region.

7. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said hinge members comprise different materials.

8. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein one of said hinge members comprises a fuse that is breakable in said impact configuration, and the other of said hinge members comprises said living hinge.

9. A method of attenuating energy from an impacting vehicle with a crash attenuator, the method comprising:

providing a pair of laterally spaced side frames each comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration;

impacting the crash attenuator; and

moving said first frame members relative to said second frame members about said respective hinge assembly to an impact configuration, with each of said hinge assemblies acting as a living hinge having a vertical hinge axis as said first and second frame members are moved to said impact configuration, and wherein each of said hinge assemblies comprises a pair of spaced apart hinge members, with at least one of said hinge members defining said living hinge.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said hinge members comprise first and second plate members.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said first plate member is thinner than said second plate member, and wherein said moving said first and second frame members comprises breaking said first plate member and wherein said second plate member forms said living hinge.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein said first plate member comprises a weakened region, and wherein said moving said first and second frame members comprises

breaking wherein said first plate member along said weakened region in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said weakened region comprises at least one opening.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein said weakened region comprises a heat treated region.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein said hinge members comprise different materials.

16. The method of claim 10 wherein one of said hinge members comprises a fuse that is breakable in said impact configuration, and the other of said hinge members comprises said living hinge.

17. A crash attenuator comprising:

a pair of laterally spaced side frames and longitudinally spaced front and rear frame members extending between and coupled to said side frames, each of said side frames comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second members of each of said side frames are hingedly connected about a vertical hinge axis with one of said respective hinge assemblies in an impact configuration, wherein each of said respective hinge assemblies comprises a living hinge when said hinge assemblies are in said impact configuration, wherein said first and second frame members each comprise vertically spaced upper and lower frame members.

18. The crash attenuator of claim 17 wherein said upper and lower frame members are joined with a vertical frame member.

19. A crash attenuator comprising:

a pair of laterally spaced side frames and longitudinally spaced front and rear frame members extending between and coupled to said side frames, each of said side frames comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second members of each of said side frames are hingedly connected about a vertical hinge axis with one of said respective hinge assemblies in an impact configuration, wherein each of said respective hinge assemblies comprises a living hinge when said hinge assemblies are in said impact configuration, and an energy absorbing cartridge disposed between said side frames.

20. The method of claim 9 further comprising providing longitudinally spaced front and rear frame members extending between and coupled to said side frames.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said first and second frame members each comprise vertically spaced upper and lower frame members.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said upper and lower frame members are joined with a vertical frame member.

23. The method of claim 20 further comprising providing an energy absorbing cartridge disposed between said side frames.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A crash attenuator comprising:

a pair of laterally spaced side frames each comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second members of each of said side frames are hingedly connected about a vertical hinge axis with one of said respective hinge assemblies in an impact configuration, wherein each of said respective hinge assemblies comprises a living hinge when said hinge assemblies are in said impact configuration, and wherein each of said hinge assemblies comprises a pair of spaced apart hinge members, with at least one of said hinge members defining said living hinge.

2. The crash attenuator of claim 1 wherein said hinge members comprise first and second plate members.

3. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said first plate member is thinner than said second plate member, wherein said first plate member is breakable in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

4. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said first plate member comprises a weakened region, wherein said first plate member is breakable along said weakened region in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

5. The crash attenuator of claim 4 wherein said weakened region comprises at least one opening.

6. The crash attenuator of claim 4 wherein said weakened region comprises a heated treated region.

7. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein said hinge members comprise different materials.

8. The crash attenuator of claim 2 wherein one of said hinge members comprises a fuse that is breakable in said impact configuration, and the other of said hinge members comprises said living hinge.

9. A method of attenuating energy from an impacting vehicle with a crash attenuator, the method comprising:

providing a pair of laterally spaced side frames each comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration;

impacting the crash attenuator; and

moving said first frame members relative to said second frame members about said respective hinge assembly to an impact configuration, with each of said hinge assemblies acting as a living hinge having a vertical hinge axis as said first and second frame members are moved to said impact configuration, and wherein each of said hinge assemblies comprises a pair of spaced apart hinge members, with at least one of said hinge members defining said living hinge.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said hinge members comprise first and second plate members.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said first plate member is thinner than said second plate member, and wherein said moving said first and second frame members comprises breaking said first plate member and wherein said second plate member forms said living hinge.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein said first plate member comprises a weakened region, and wherein said moving said first and second frame members comprises

breaking wherein said first plate member along said weakened region in said impact configuration such that said second plate member forms said living hinge.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said weakened region comprises at least one opening.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein said weakened region comprises a heat treated region.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein said hinge members comprise different materials.

16. The method of claim 10 wherein one of said hinge members comprises a fuse that is breakable in said impact configuration, and the other of said hinge members comprises said living hinge.

17. A crash attenuator comprising:

a pair of laterally spaced side frames and longitudinally spaced front and rear frame members extending between and coupled to said side frames, each of said side frames comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second members of each of said side frames are hingedly connected about a vertical hinge axis with one of said respective hinge assemblies in an impact configuration, wherein each of said respective hinge assemblies comprises a living hinge when said hinge assemblies are in said impact configuration, wherein said first and second frame members each comprise vertically spaced upper and lower frame members.

18. The crash attenuator of claim 17 wherein said upper and lower frame members are joined with a vertical frame member.

19. A crash attenuator comprising:

a pair of laterally spaced side frames and longitudinally spaced front and rear frame members extending between and coupled to said side frames, each of said side frames comprising a first frame member and a second frame member rigidly connected with a respective hinge assembly in a pre-impact configuration and wherein said first and second members of each of said side frames are hingedly connected about a vertical hinge axis with one of said respective hinge assemblies in an impact configuration, wherein each of said respective hinge assemblies comprises a living hinge when said hinge assemblies are in said impact configuration, and an energy absorbing cartridge disposed between said side frames.

20. The method of claim 9 further comprising providing longitudinally spaced front and rear frame members extending between and coupled to said side frames.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said first and second frame members each comprise vertically spaced upper and lower frame members.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said upper and lower frame members are joined with a vertical frame member.

23. The method of claim 20 further comprising providing an energy absorbing cartridge disposed between said side frames.