ABAC NEWS

September
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2017

The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut

Are Your Repairs Lasting As Long As Your Written Warranty?

Corrosion Protection Process Is a MUST

Read What The Experts Say

Shawn Collins of 3M Explains The Steps

Your Car, Your Choice - *Find us at www.abaconn.com*

Also In This Issue

ABAC President Tony Ferraiolo

"Beware of check fraud"

This is more of a warning rather than a president's message.

This could happen to you too.

So I feel I must share my bad fortune so you may not have to experience it.

Over the last 30 days my business has been ripped off twice. I'm not talking about what insurance companies have refused to reimburse for. I'm talking about someone receiving a check from my company, reproducing a fraudulent check with their name on it and cashing it at a bank.

The first time this happened I was mad that someone was so low to try to steal from me this way. How could this happen in this day and age checks should be more secure? The bank has video of the person, has their picture and they even showed Id to identify who they were. That probably stolen also.

You see I don't even know who it really was who did the crime.

All I know is what a pain in the ass it is to close a business checking account, contact all our vendors who we sent checks to, inform them of the issue, write new checks to people that can't even cash the checks that were sent to them for services rendered, contact the police, open a new account, order checks, ect.,... you get the picture right?

The bank informs us that the only true way to protect your checking account is to inform them every day of the list of checks that were written, who they were sent to ect. Big pain in the ass.

So we figure no this is a one time thing and we will be alright the same way we have always done it for 27 years. Two weeks later it happens again. The same thing different person cashing the check. Now I'm mad as hell not because we have to do that all over again, no, because shame on me for thinking we will be ok. This won't happen again. But it sure did. Thank God my wife is on those accounts and caught it again.

These are some tips to think about and discus with your banks:

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- *Contact your bank and find out how exposed are you to checking account fraud.*
- *Do they offer fraud protection on your account.*
- *Is there a way to monitor activity electronically daily?*
- *Pay vendors and suppliers buy secure credit cards that have fraud protection. A credit card hacked is much easier to replace than a checking account.*
- *Set up a separate account for payroll and taxes, so these accounts don't get interrupted.*
- *Demand from your parts suppliers, towing company's, paint distributors ect, that their check collecting personal are checked out for integrity and can be trusted with your company's important information if not don't do business with them.*
- *Protect your business and secure your payment process.*
- *Contact your bank and ask for their advice on what they feel will work for your business.*

I hope if nothing else this makes you question your fraud protection and do something about it. I hope you never have to deal with this problem in your business or personal life.

Now on to up coming ABAC events.

October 24th in Norwalk the ABAC will have a membership meeting entitled "Refuse to Lose". You won't want to miss this one.

Then November 14th at the Foxon Country House, Stephens Ct Auto Mall Center will bring in GM instructor Jim Mickle to educate you and your technicians on Post Collision Power Steering Inspection and Repair, Supplemental Restraints Service and Repair.

Also remember with the growing trend of Insurance company's using photo estimating, Your customer has a choice to have their vehicle physically inspected if they choose to. Its Ct. state regulation and the Department of Insurance has on record stating this. There is no requirement that consumers have to use the photo estimate option. Inform and educate your customers now more than ever.

Hope to see you at our upcoming membership meetings. Enjoy the fall season.

President
Auto Body Association of Connecticut

ABAC AUTO BODY ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

SCRS experts: Don't be misled by single 'corrosion protection' line item

"Corrosion protection" is a process, not a single operation, and failure by a shop to realize this could lead to unfortunate outcomes down the road, SCRS experts suggested in an educational video released this month.

The second in the Society of Collision Repair Specialists' video series on repair procedures was posted on YouTube April 4 and is the first in a three-parter on corrosion protection. The film, which features SCRS and Collision Industry Conference educator Toby Chess (Kent Automotive), now-SCRS Chairman Kye Yeung (European Motor Car Works) and board members Michael Bradshaw (K&M Collision) and Tim Ronak (AkzoNobel), focuses on primers.

But the opening message served as an introduction to all three videos, which also examined cavity wax/undercoating and seam sealers. To wit: The term "corrosion protection" is "misused," Chess argued.

"We use it as a line item, and that is incorrect," he said. "We need to look at corrosion protection as a process. … We need to specify for each particular case what we are putting down there."

While work on a part like a fender might involve just one or two corrosion protection operations, a quarter panel might require 8-10, according to Chess.

These steps might even be more than is necessary than in the factory, for the simple reason that a shop can't duplicate factory processes (for example, dipping a car) but must match the result as closely as possible, according to Ronak.

"In many cases, it's more steps and more materials and more effort to put that … corrosion resistant process back in place," he said.

Besides knowing those steps, a shop must know their "sequential order," according to Yeung. "Confusion can set in," and a technician might transpose a step and affect the outcome, he said.

An adjuster or estimator might write a flat "corrosion protection" or "undercoating" while understanding that multiple steps are involved. But Chess and Yeung argued for more complete itemization.

Chess said listing out each line item of corrosion protection on an estimate provided greater customer transparency (the shop's giving a lifetime warranty on corrosion, he noted), and Yeung described it as useful to prevent technicians — who could otherwise go uncompensated for each procedure — from skipping steps.

"It's a natural reaction to try and do the job as fast as you can," Yeung said.

Shops should consider using the same brand's product suite across all of these steps, just as would be advised by a paint OEM, according to Yeung. Otherwise, the results might suffer, he suggested.

Though the video was aimed at collision repairers, insurers might find value in it as well. For example, actuaries and adjusters which are used to seeing a single line of "corrosion protection" procedures should understand that an itemized series of steps is another means of describing the same process — and possibly a more accurate one as well. This knowledge might help avoid friction in the claims adjusting process and more accurate calculation of risk potential in the underwriting process.

SCRS repairers offer advice for using, selecting corrosion protection primers

Using a brush and applying products before body filler were among two of the tips offered for certain corrosion-protection primers in a new Society of Collision Repair Specialists video.

The April 4 primer video was the first in a three-part YouTube series on corrosion protection. It also set up the series by pointing out that "corrosion protection" was often a series of steps, not really a single procedure.

Besides this point, the discussion featuring Toby Chess (Kent Automotive), now-SCRS Chairman Kye Yeung (European Motor Car Works) and board members Michael Bradshaw (K&M Collision) and Tim Ronak (AkzoNobel) examined characteristics and strategies for substances like weld-through, epoxy, etch, and aerosol two-stage primers.

Chess said weld-through primers on the market are copper or zinc, and there are "good and bad (points) for both." He said it's advised that "where you are actually welding, you want to clean off that weld-through primer because it does have a tendency to spatter it." Zinc weld-through primers aren't the best corrosion protection, and need to be removed before refinishing, he also said.

Etch and epoxy primers

In general, etch primer uses phosphoric acid and must be used on bare metal, Chess said.

"You cannot use them where Bondo is present," he said. A shop must wait for the acid to dissipate, "which now can affect your cycle time," according to Chess. He called epoxy primer the "best quality material," and recommending applying it with a "little foam brush." "Guys think that it needs to be sprayed," he said. But use the brush, and "it's dry in 20 minutes," he said.

There's no lag time for the painter, and unlike etch primer, there's no concern with acid contaminating seam sealer.

Bradshaw asked Toby about a few potential areas to use epoxy primer, such as flanges, welded seams and the backside or repair area of a panel receiving body work.

"Personally, I would just use epoxy primer in most of the areas," Chess said.

There is a cost factor, however.

"It's a little bit more expensive, so you gotta take that into consideration," he said. "Make sure you charge for it accordingly."

But there wasn't anything wrong with etch primer so long as it was applied correctly and the procedures followed. Both were tools in a "toolbox," he said.

"Understand your products and what the situation is," he said.

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As with the etch primer discussed above, Chess noted that epoxy primer must be applied before body filler, according to at least one OEM manual. Yeung said epoxy primer should be first before any repairs.

Bradshaw said that body filler and vehicle manufacturer instructions can be contradictory on these points. OEMs want it applied before filler, and body filler manufacturers sell it as "direct to metal." "That's not what we're supposed to be doing," he said. Chess said that moisture or contaminants could be trapped between the filler and primer by following the filler guidance — defer to the vehicle OEM's procedures above all others, he advised. "What is our Bible?" he said.

Two-stage aerosol

Asked about two-part aerosol primers activated within a can, Chess said they can work on both aluminum or steel.

However, he cautioned that "it does have a shelf life" — sometimes just a few days, depending on climate — and "it's not cheap." "It does have its advantages," Yeung said, noting the time saved from not having to mix the materials.

Bradshaw said the product could be charged to the job, as likely that's all you'd be able to use it for before the shelf life of the can ran out. That's in contrast to traditional epoxy, which must be mixed, measured on a scale, and billed accordingly.

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

3M: Corrosion protection easy, necessary, but neglected step

Collision repair reinspectors can catch shops failing to apply the necessary corrosion protection, a 3M expert warned this summer.

"You're going to see, again, a trend: It's a lot of corrosion issues," 3M advanced technical specialist Shawn Collins said while presenting several reinspection examples at NACE during a session titled, "Would Your Shop Pass an Intensive Forensic QC Inspection?"

"Most people don't consider that collision repairs are commonly the cause of premature vehicle corrosion," Collins and 3M's Dennis Keicher wrote in the July 2016 Auto Body Repair News.

"Consider that the minute your repairs are completed, the repaired areas are under attack by the corrosion process."

Collins showed several images of shoddy repairs caught by Collision Safety Consultants, work which put the offending shop on the hook for thousands in reinspection fees and making the customer whole. The shops' failures often included inadequate corrosion protection.

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"The welds are just not protected," Collins said of one example. Corrosion will quickly work into the untreated area, he said. Another example involved "low-quality" welding and no corrosion protection on a frame rail — a structural part — which was "starting to corrode already."

By using a "simple mirror," an inspector can easily catch errors on the bottom of the car, Collins said. He said one would be surprised how many times no corrosion protection is applied to the back side of the rocker pinchweld.

Collins also recalled being in a meeting with a large MSO, and the director of operations looked up how much cavity wax one of the company's shops bought in half a year.

"One can," Collins said, noting that it must have been an eye opener for the executive.

'Ideal joint'

The irony here is that it's not that hard to protect a car from corrosion, based on Collins' lecture.

Corrosion is science, Collins said — "but it's not rocket science." Cover an exposed surface with corrosion protection, and it stops or significantly slows the process, he said.

Besides, "it does not take that long to do," he said.

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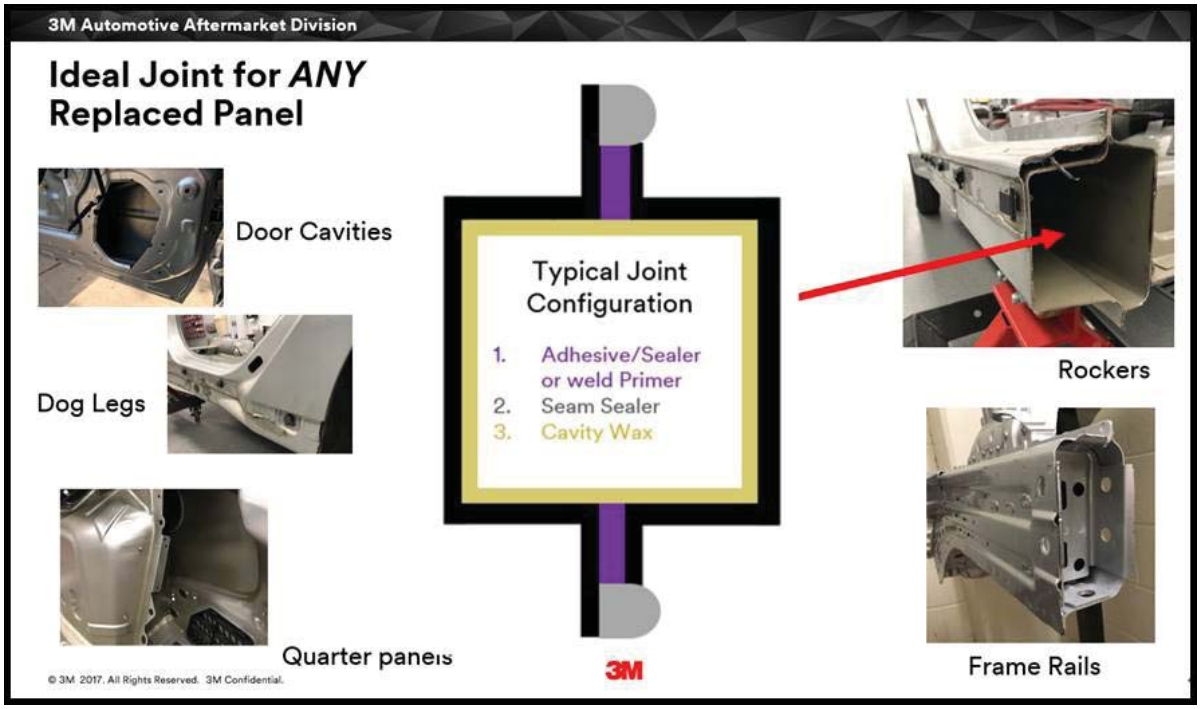
He shared his concept of an "ideal joint" involving adhesives, sealer or a weld-trhough primer, followed by seam sealer, and then cavity wax. (Never use adhesive in place of a seam sealer unless the OEM says to, Collins said — it could increase the strength of the joint and alter the structure's crash energy management.)



Collins called the trio "belt, suspenders, and another pair of suspenders" in terms of protecting the vehicle, and applying all three will ensure the car lasts a long time.

Many technicians think, "'It's not visible. I don't need to dress it,'" according to Collins. But the issue isn't aesthetics — it's keeping corrosion from eating away your work.

He demonstrated what 3M's salt spray chamber did to an unprotected and protected panel.

In 1,500 hours, the unprotected weld is choked with rust. The weld with three coats of cavity wax looks fine.

As the average American drives 293 hours a year, this might make some shops wonder what kind of corrosion is happening on the cars they fixed five years ago.

Parts of the 'ideal joint'

Collins noted that the weld-through primers within that ideal joint can be misunderstood.

"You have to use the correct weld primer," he said, noting that he called it "weld primer" because a shop shouldn't be welding through or on top of any coating. A technician ought to be welding to bare metal, but many don't understand that, according to Collins, who also serves as an I-CAR welding instructor.

As for seam sealers, Collins noted that manufacturers are even outright recommending seam sealers even if they weren't used in the factory, according to Collins. After all, a collision repairer can't dip the part or entire vehicle in a zinc phosphate bath the way an OEM can.

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Collins noted that bare metal seam sealers were viable, but they had to be used correctly. “You have to get good coverage,” he said.

The cavity wax alone can do a lot of heavy lifting.

“I cannot stress (enough) the importance of cavity wax,” Collins said.

“This material is made to be applied to these areas on both steel and aluminum vehicles alike, and yes, it really is that important,” I-CAR agreed in 2016.

It used to be more difficult to use, but the introduction of application wands has made it easy to introduce to the vehicle, according to Collins.

Appling the wax is “all about film thickness,” he said. 3M recommends two passes, maybe even three — particularly in a blind cavity — otherwise, the shop risks inadequate thickness. It’s OK to apply wet-on-wet, and “it’s a good thing” if it’s running out of drains and flanges, as that’s a sign that everything is sufficiently covered, according to Collins.

Collins noted that in the past, I-CAR used to recommend spraying in epoxy primer ahead of cavity wax, but it takes “forever” to cure and if uncured can mix with cavity wax for an undesirable result. He said I-CAR changed that guidance about four years ago, but many in the industry aren’t aware of the switch.

“It causes more problems than it helps,” Collins said of spraying epoxy primer ahead of cavity wax. The primer also will flake off in the presence of soot or paint, while cavity wax is sticky and will hang onto such substances.

Collins said 3M even found instances where cavity wax performed better on corrosion tests than cavity wax combined weld-through primer.

various OEM weld-through primer guidelines.

1K primers

Some failures of corrosion protection “comes from using inferior products,” said Collins, who in particular warned the audience about 1K primers.

A shop might use 1K spray can primers and paints, and unless there’s high-quality primer underneath, “you’re not going to have good corrosion protection,” he said. 1K primers aren’t always durable, and like etch primer, their presence can lead to seam sealer failing, according to Collins.

“The 1K primers are scary,” Collins said. He recalled a case where a shop sent back a sample to 3M and complained the seam sealer failed.

Collins was able to peel off the seam sealer “easily” — and found 1K primer.

“The primer failed,” he said. “… The 1K primers are dangerous.”

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

ABAC Kicks Off 2017-18 Session with Successful Meeting

ABAC President Tony Ferraiolo opened the meeting by thanking the over 100 people in attendance for taking time to join the first of many meetings scheduled by the ABAC for 2017-2018.

Ferraiolo then asked for a moment of silence for long-time automotive industry friend Angelo Campenella, 59, owner of Angelo's Auto Body in Stamford who passed away suddenly on September 20th. Angelo had owned his shop for the past 40 years and was known by many for his integrity, honesty and kindness.

Tony then recognized **Rich Perry, Director of Sales** at Albert Kemperle, Inc. who was instrumental in getting 3M Products to be a guest presenter for the evening.

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"I want to thank all of our Vendors, Supporting Advertisers, sponsors and members for their support of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut. We are a very active organization in the country. Our association gets many calls wanting to know what we do in certain situations from people throughout the country. I want to thank my great dedicated Board of Directors who are some of the hardest working people in the industry. The make my job a little bit easier. I have a great Administrative Assistant Heather Romaniello who is a tremendous help to me," says Ferraiolo.

"People in this room are the professionals and no one else should be telling you how to repair a car. That being said you need to get on board with your technicians' training through I-Car or Verifacts, companies of that nature, because Certified Collision Repair is here to stay and you may have to think about what brands you service in your area and get certified for to repair those vehicles because you're not only going to have insurance companies who will influence people where to go but you will have the OEM letting their customers know where to bring their cars. And that will be to a Certified Repair Center," continued Ferraiolo***. "The OEM's should be the ONLY should be giving you the procedures on how to repair a car. You could be liable for an improper repair!"***

Tony then welcomed Tony Lombardozzi, President of CCRE and co-owner of Superare Marketing to the podium.

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"Thank you to the ABAC for the opportunity to speak this evening. The first thing I'd like to discuss id the Honda Fit case. This situation where a Direct Repair shop decided to glue to roof on contrary to Honda's OEM Repair Procedures. A Second owner and his wife got in an accident and the facts of the case are that the Honda Fit rail separated and went into the fuel tank causing a fire and severely burning the occupants. Forensically they saw that roof had been bonded and due to not being repaired properly resulted in the body shop being liable for the repair. The repair shop is claiming that the insurance company (State Farm) told them to repair it that way," says Lombardozzi. (Since this meeting this Honda Fit case has been found that the Texas Auto Body Shop owes $31.5M for the incorrect repair. Read about it through Repairer Driven News dates October 2nd, 2017. Continued Lombardozzi, ***"Where does the insurer stand in the equation? Even if State Farm TOLD the shop how to repair the car, it is in my opinion, the shop took it upon themselves to make that decision to repair the car incorrectly. You cannot accept the insurers estimate if the repairs are not proper. You will be liable!"***

We took a break for dinner and then Tony Ferraiolo introduced our guest speaker for the rest of the evening, **Shawn Collins, Advanced Application Specialist for 3M**. Shawn's presentation *was* ***"Would Your Shop Pass an Intensive Forensic QC Inspection?***

Said Collins, ***"This presentation has really gained some steam. I did this presentation at NACE in Chicago in June. I thought there was need a need for this because we have done some studies in the past at 3M and found that many shops are not applying or practicing good corrosion protection practices and in the past, nobody was really looking. But now there's a lot of re-inspectors such as Wreck-Check that are doing these quality control checks. So, I saw this as an opportunity to help our shops and protect them from any kind of liability. And I'm going to show you some real-life cases where cars were purchased back from the owner, etc. so, as you will see, this really is an important issue."***

"You're going to see, again, a trend: It's a lot of corrosion issues. Most people don't consider that collision repairs are commonly the cause of premature vehicle corrosion. "Consider that the minute your repairs are completed, the repaired areas are under attack by the corrosion process, Collins continued.

Collins showed several images of shoddy repairs caught by Collision Safety Consultants, work which put the offending shop on the hook for thousands in reinspection fees and making the customer whole. The shops' failures often included inadequate corrosion protection.

"The welds are just not protected," Collins said of one example. ***"Corrosion will quickly work into the untreated area, he said. Another example involved "low-quality" welding and no corrosion protection on a frame rail — a structural part — which was "starting to corrode already."***

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"By using a "simple mirror," an inspector can easily catch errors on the bottom of the car," Collins said. He said one would be surprised how many times no corrosion protection is applied to the back side of the rocker pinch weld.

Collins also recalled being in a meeting with a large MSO, and the director of operations looked up how much cavity wax one of the company's shops bought in half a year***. "One can,"*** Collins said, noting that it must have been an eye opener for the executive.

This presentation was in-depth and full of many steps that shops can take to protect themselves and their customers.

At the risk of being repetitive, the ABAC does not go into depth with meeting material since we feel that being here live for a meeting is far more valuable than trying to read and understand the material in a newsletter.

Once again, great information for members who attend. You learn, you apply, you move forward in your business

The value of attending these ABAC meetings cannot be measured. There is a lot of information that is discussed during our meetings that you won't see in the ABAC News. It's information that you need to be successful.

The ABAC continues to bring in guest speakers and industry professionals from throughout the country who are willing to share their knowledge, expertise and processes with ABAC Members to help make their businesses more profitable. The Auto Body Association continues to make their mark nationally in the Automotive Industry by offering this type of knowledge and education to their membership. Be a part of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut. Feel free to reach out to any of the Board of Directors listed on the back page of this newsletter. Contact them. It will forever change the way you think about your collision industry!

IMPORTANT UPCOMING ABAC MEETINGS

Tuesday Oct 24th — **"Refuse To Lose!"**
Norwalk Inn - Norwalk

Tuesday Nov 14th — **Post Collision: Power Steering Inspection and Repair**
Supplemental Restraints: Service and Repair
Country House Restaurant - East Haven

Seen the light on OEM procedures? Montanez shares tips on using them

A $31.5 million verdict against a Texas shop who failed to follow Honda repair procedures might hopefully have inspired collision repairers to research and adhere to the OEM instructions.

Or not. "It hasn't sunk in," P&L Consultants co-owner Larry Montanez argued in a Monday interview. Many shops are "still going to slap cars together," he said.

But while he expressed pessimism about a chunk of the industry, Montanez will offer a primer on accessing OEM instructions to the shops who do see the light with "How to Find, Read and Understand OEM Repair Procedures," 3-5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 1, during the SCRS Repairer Driven Education series at SEMA. (Sign up for the class here, or buy the series pass package deal here.)

"All it takes is one Todd Tracy" to catch a shop not researching procedures, Montanez said, referring to the plaintiffs' attorney in the Texas John Eagle Collision Center case. Other attorneys would likely follow Tracy's lead following the verdict, he said.

Practice

OEM repair procedure websites can seem daunting, but they're learnable, Montanez said. Just practice, he said, likening it to buying a cellphone with a new OS. "You screw around with it" and learn the system, he said.

"That's for your own benefit," he said.

But flat-rate techs refuse to put in the effort because they won't get paid for it, according to Montanez. "It's laziness and greed," he said.

In general, if a tech keeps practicing with the OEM repair procedure sites, "it becomes easier," Montanez said.

OEM certification training can help here. Mercedes has one of the most difficult sites to use, if not the most difficult, he said. But every Mercedes class has students look up and explain repair procedures so they can practice the system.

After a while, the technician gets used to the system and what parts are likely to be involved in the repair, he said.

Montanez said some OEMs with robust certification programs also support repairers with procedure hotlines.

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If the shop can't find a procedure or has a technical question, they can contact the OEM and get an answer.

He recalled one instance where the OEM procedures seemed to suggest a vehicle be totaled for damage to the underside. Contacted for clarification, the automaker sent a shop a letter from their German headquarters filling in the gap and explaining precisely how to repair the damage safely.

It's not just technicians that balk at researching repair procedures because of compensation. Advised to put the cost of researching OEM procedures — both the subscription price and the labor hours spent researching the instructions — on the estimate, owners insist that it's impossible.

"You just want to fight with me and argue with me," Montanez said. "… My shops get paid for it."

Go part-by-part

The technician needs to research the procedures for each part involved in the repair, and this might involve some skipping around the manual instead of having all those instructions in one place.

Montanez offered the example of a repairer who looks up procedures related to replacing the mirror and complains that it doesn't say what work is needed on the camera mounted within the part.

The technician needs to look up those steps under the part of the manual dedicated to replacing the camera, Montanez said.

But I'm not replacing the camera, the tech might complain.

Collision repairers need to understand that unlike collision repairers, mechanics generally only replace parts — they only R&I a part if it's blocking the component they're trying to access, according to Montanez. The procedures for reinitializing the camera are located within the segment related to replacing the camera.

"That's what these guys don't realize," he said.

The technician needs to put two and two together. Montanez also described a sort of peel-an-onion approach to repair procedures.

Remove a bumper fascia and see electronic components underneath it? Look up those parts in the manual and see what procedures and considerations might be needed. Don't know what one of these uncovered parts is called? "Google the (part) number," learn its proper name, and search for that item within the repair procedures, Montanez suggested. Remove a decklid with a rearview camera? Check to see if the wheels need to be realigned.

Sometimes, the instructions will admittedly be in a completely obscure location, such as BMW restrictions on reconditioned wheels which are located in the OEM's refinishing repair procedures, according to Montanez.

"You can see why some guys just don't see this," he said.

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

The Buck Stops with You: What the John Eagle Collision Center case means for your business … and your conscience.

John M. Parese, Esq, ABAC General Counsel

Over the past decade or so, I've lectured on legal issues affecting the auto body industry. I've talked here in Connecticut and throughout the country. On almost every occasion, the following question inevitably comes up or is asked: who is responsible if something goes wrong with a repair – and more specifically who is responsible when an insurance company or appraiser dictates a repair procedure or auto part that contradicts the repairer's better judgment? The answer is and always has been the same: the repairer.

First, as a licensed repair professional, you should never take instructions from an insurance company on how to fix a vehicle or what parts to use. The fact that such a practice is so prevalent in this industry is maddening. Second, the buck stops with you, the repairer. When you return a vehicle to your customer, you are representing that the job was done correctly and in accordance with industry standards. Most importantly, you are telling your customer and his or her family that that vehicle is safe. There is no such defense in a negligence action that an insurance appraiser made me do it; or that an insurance company would not pay for the job to be done correctly.

The recent John Eagle Collision Center case highlights the dangers of what can happen when an auto body repair shop does not follow OEM guidelines. In that case, it was alleged that in 2012, a repair shop failed to follow Honda's OEM roof replacement procedures when repairing a 2010 Honda Fit. The alleged deviation involved adhesive bonding the vehicle's roof instead of welding it. A year after the repair, a couple driving the previously repaired Honda Fit was involved in a significant t-bone crash. The couple was badly injured and caused to be trapped inside the burning vehicle. Experts in the case testified that faulty structural repairs a year earlier compromised the crashworthiness systems resulting in these terrible injuries.

On October 2, 2017, a Texas jury returned a verdict against the repair shop totaling $42 million, which amount was reduced by 25% for the negligence of the other driver, resulting in the shop's exposure to pay $31.5 million in damages for its misconduct that contributed to this couple's suffering. I would expect this verdict to be the subject of an appeal. But, either way, the verdict alone is a big deal and something the industry should take careful notice of.

From my perspective, this verdict reinforces what I (and others) have been saying for over a decade: you, the licensed repairer, have to exercise your professional judgment when fixing vehicles; and you have to make sure that what you are doing follows OEM guidelines and conforms to industry standards of what constitutes a safe and proper repair.

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Insurers will continue to infuse tremendous pressure on repairers to cut corners and fix vehicles on the cheap. This pressure can be overwhelming. This article is not meant to minimize how difficult this dynamic is, particularly in light of take-it-or-leave-it negotiations and categorical reductions in the payment of fair costs of repair. It goes without saying that shops today are being squeezed harder and harder and being asked on an almost daily basis to do more with less.

I would encourage all of my friends in this business to get acquainted with the circumstances of what happened here. And make your customers and the appraisers aware of how this works. You simply cannot cede your better judgment or that of OEM guidelines for anyone, let alone an insurance representative paid to save the company as much money as possible. Not following professional standards can have grave consequences, which in this case included trapping a young couple inside a burning car. The next time an appraiser tells you that he or she's not paying for a necessary repair, remind that appraiser of the John Eagle Collision Center case. See if he or she wants something like that on their conscience.

John M. Parese, Esq. is a Partner with the law firm of Buckley Wynne & Parese and serves as General Counsel to the ABAC. Buckley Wynne & Parese maintains offices in New Haven, Hartford and Stamford, and services clients throughout all of Connecticut. The opinions set forth in Attorney Parese's articles are for education and entertainment purposes only, and should not be construed as legal advice or legally binding. If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this or any of Attorney Parese's articles, you are encouraged to contact Attorney Parese directly.

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ABAC AUTO BODY ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

How to Properly Repair the Blind Spot Monitoring Sensor

Toyota Class 301 has been updated to help you repair the Blind Spot Monitor Sensor (BSMS) bracket to OEM specifications. Whenever you repair the BSMS, it is critical that the rear Blind Spot Monitor Sensor is properly oriented to ensure a successful repair. If you have previously taken this class, retaking it will ensure you benefit from the new repair information. Follow the steps below to properly repair the BSMS

STEP 1: From the center of the emblem on the rear bumper, hang a weight with a pointed tip. Mark the rear center point of the vehicle on the ground (mark "A").

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STEP 2: From the center of the emblem on the front bumper, hang a weight with a pointed tip. Mark the front center point of the vehicle on the ground (mark "B").

STEP 3: Use a string to draw a center line that passes through marks "A" and "B." Lightly flick the string several times to confirm that it is aligned with marks "A" and "B."

STEP 4: Hang a string with a weight from the Blind Spot Monitor Sensor (BSMS) bracket (front and rear studs) and mark the positions on the ground.

STEP 5: At a 90-degree angle, measure from the centerline of the vehicle (string) to the marked positions on the ground.

STEP 6: Using masking tape, write the measurements on the marks on the ground. Measurements must be done in millimeters.

STEP 7: Compare the measurements to the "Specified Value" in the repair manual illustration.

Example:

Front of the bracket	800 mm
Rear of the bracket	–715 mm
	085 mm

The "Specified value" in the repair manual (on position "Y") is 78 to 87 mm. Illustration shows the view from above.

STEP 8: Perform a "Blind Spot Monitor Sensor Installation Condition Inspection" to confirm that the sensor is perpendicular to the floor (+/- 5 degrees). Using a jig, confirm the sensor is 46 to 54 degrees from the line parallel to the vehicle centerline.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Find class 301: Non-Structural with Blind Spot Monitor Sensor Installation Condition Inspection Repair Procedures at Toyota's training website— www.crrtraining.com.

Find all the specific procedures and measurements to repair the BSMS in the Toyota repair manual.

Source: www.searchautoparts.com

Social Media: Building the Foundation

It's no secret that social media has become a powerful tool to reach the masses and over the last 7 months, we've been working hard to do just that. Beginning our work in May, we set out to build a strong foundation for ABAC's social media presence and we have had great success in spreading awareness and education to consumers.

When we first began, our Facebook page had 542 likes/followers. As of October 13th, we currently have 974 likes/followers and hope to surpass 1,000 before the end of the month. We are also proud to report that in the last 2 months we have reached over 40,000 people through our posts and advertisements. Some topics we've covered in our posts include photo estimates, loss of use, steering, distracted driving and aftermarket parts, to name a few. We constantly monitor the page for comments, questions and concerns from followers to show consumers that we are here to help and inform them.

In terms of advertising, boosted posts and paid advertisements on Facebook have been very effective and budget friendly in promoting our message. Running advertisements on Facebook has helped us to significantly increase our follower count. The biggest benefit to Facebook advertisements is that they are completely customizable, which allows us to cater to our specific target markets effectively.

Since ABAC's core message is **"your car your choice"**, one of our goals is to create a social media presence that promotes education and awareness of a vehicle owner's rights after an auto accident. We have been posting our messages, important safety information and tips to help educate the motoring public as best we can.

The feedback we have received through comments, likes and messages have continuously increased. What has been most rewarding is seeing the discussions our posts have started between others on our page, which has further helped us grow our presence online. Most recently, we have even had a couple people reach out to seek advice in processing their insurance claim. As we continue to grow our presence, we expect the conversations to increase with our followers.

P.S. You can help us expand our reach! From your Facebook account, search "ABAConn" and make sure you "like" and "follow" our page. Additionally, please share our page with your family and friends and encourage them to do the same.

Ashley Burzenski - Autoworks of Westville - ABAC Board of Director

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