

Meeting the Challenge Head On; ABAC Brings Virtual Seminars to Statewide Membership



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President's Message

Bob Amendola

Thank You!



Hello everyone. I hope this message finds you well.

During this pandemic, that we have all met with such tenacity and vision, let us not forget what continues to go on behind the scenes. I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to our ABAC Corporate Gold & Platinum Sponsors along with our many ABAC News Supporting Advertisers for their support of our organization throughout such a tumultuous time. In such uncertain times, it would be very easy to cut and run, but they have stood by us to weather the storm. We thank

you and we appreciate you immensely. The ABAC would not be who we are without your unwavering commitment and support.

Therefore, I would like to encourage all of our members to take note of the people who are supporting our association and support them in return with your business. Please refer to our list of supporting advertisers and vendors and consider patronizing their businesses. We always say that in unity there is strength and I'd like to extend this sentiment beyond our member shops to our supporting vendors as well. We will get through this difficult time together through mutual support.

I'd also like to thank each and every member of our association. Your partnership and commitment to the ABAC and our mission is not lost on myself or the board of directors. Because of this, I want to reassure you that while we may not be able to meet for our regularly scheduled membership meetings for the time being, we are still working tirelessly for you and the Connecticut motoring public. We have maintained our monthly board meetings to discuss and brainstorm various issues ideas etc.

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In lieu of a membership meeting, we recently created a virtual seminar for you that addresses a few key issues pertinent to our current climate. You should have received an email with information regarding how to access and watch this video. If you do not have that information, please feel free to contact Heather for such. I highly recommend that you set aside 25 minutes to watch the seminar and I'd like to thank all of our participants for doing such a great job.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns or ideas you have.

All the best,

Bob

Bob Amendola

Autoworks of Westville - New Haven
President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut



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ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT**

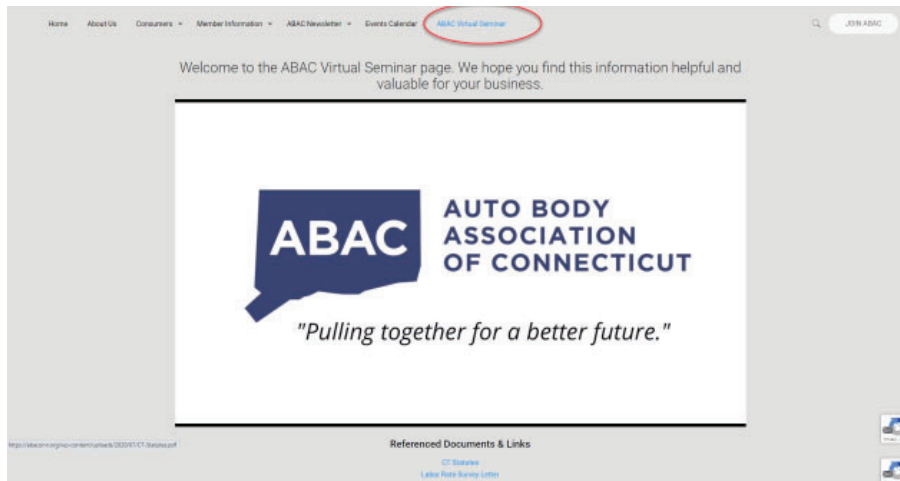
**Unity is Strength
Knowledge is Power
Attitude is Everything**

Bringing Information to the Membership

ABAC Virtual Seminar July 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted nearly everything in both our businesses and our personal lives. Due to local ordinances, we have been unable to meet for our regularly scheduled membership meetings.

These challenging times have forced us to get creative and make the best of the situation for the time being. Therefore, our board of directors collaborated to create a virtual seminar for you in lieu of our most recent membership meeting.



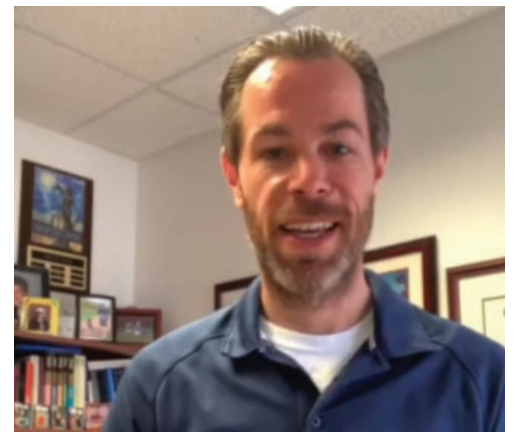
The virtual seminar is accessible on our website at abaconn.org under the page "virtual seminar". **For security reasons, it is password protected.** The seminar was announced by email which includes the login information. If you do not have this information, please contact Heather by phone 203-767-5731 or email abacadmin.heather@gmail.com.

You may watch the video on any phone, computer or tablet that has internet capability. It is around 25 minutes long and very easily accessible. At the bottom of the webpage below the video you will also find the corresponding documents for your reference.

The virtual seminar addresses 5 topics that are pertinent to the current climate of our industry and the day to day operations of our businesses:

1. ***How to file complaints with the Department of Insurance***
2. ***Combatting the pressures of virtual estimates and steering***
3. ***COVID-19 safety procedures***
4. ***How to conduct an independent labor rate survey***
5. ***Social media and marketing***

The video segment begins with an introduction from ABAC President Bob Amendola and is immediately followed by a reading of the Anti-Trust Disclaimer by ABAC General Counsel John M. Parese.



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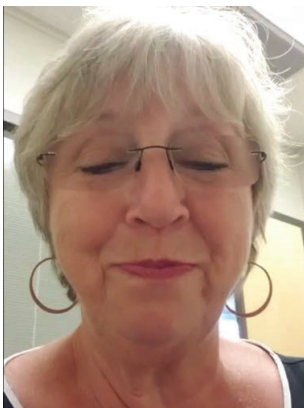
Vice President Ashley Burzenski discussed when and how to file a complaint with the department of insurance including a step by step demonstration of how to do so using the online submission form. Encouraging and assisting customers in reporting any violations or unethical claim practices is more important now than ever before. Ashley mentioned that getting complaints in to the DOI is absolutely imperative to enact any future change. The ABAC also asks that you forward any and all complaints to Heather for proper documentation and reference in future meetings with officials.

President Bob Amendola addressed the pressure many of us are facing from insurers to participate in virtual estimates as well as the pushback in return when we may decline to do so. Bob provided several great tips to help combat this as well as Connecticut laws that are already in place to help us.



In accordance with local ordinances and CDC guidelines, **Board Member Tony Ferraiolo** walks us through everything he does at his shop to help safeguard both his customers and employees. Tony demonstrated the step by step process he follows to effectively sanitize each vehicle without causing any damage.

Dave Fogarty explained why you may want to conduct your own independent labor rate survey and how to lawfully do so. As Dave explains in his segment, independent labor rate surveys can be a great tool during negotiations to educate any misinformed individuals.



Equally effective as they are affordable, **Board Member Joanne Serkey** walked us through several social and marketing strategies they use at their shop that they have found to be successful.

Article submitted by ABAC Vice-President Ashley Burzenski

Packing Heat: How Ford's Latest Tech Helps Police Vehicles Neutralize COVID-19

- Ford has designed a new heated software enhancement to pilot with its Police Interceptor Utility – one that law enforcement agencies across the country can utilize to help reduce the footprint of the COVID-19 virus.
- Software solution temporarily raises interior temperatures beyond 133 degrees Fahrenheit – hotter than Death Valley on the hottest day – for 15 minutes to help reduce the viral concentration inside the vehicle by greater than 99 percent
- Ford worked with The Ohio State University to determine the temperature range and time needed to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus; additionally, Ford conducted software operational trials with vehicles owned by the New York City Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department and others



Ford has designed a new heated software enhancement to pilot with its Police Interceptor Utility – one that law enforcement agencies across the country can utilize to help reduce the footprint of the COVID-19 virus.

The latest example of smart vehicle technology, this software solution is available immediately on all 2013-19 Police Interceptor Utility vehicles in the United States, Canada and other countries around the world.

“First responders are on the front lines protecting all of us. They are exposed to the virus and are in dire need of protective measures,” said Hau Thai-Tang, Ford chief product development and purchasing officer. “We looked at what’s in our arsenal and how we could step up to help. In this case, we’ve turned the vehicle’s powertrain and heat control systems into a virus neutralizer.”

How it works

The solution is simple: Bake the vehicle’s interior until viruses inside are inactivated. Using Police Interceptor Utility’s own powertrain and climate control systems, this software solution enables vehicles to elevate passenger compartment temperatures beyond 133 degrees Fahrenheit¹, hotter than Death Valley on its hottest day, for 15 minutes – long enough to help disinfect vehicle touchpoints.

Once activated, the vehicle’s powertrain and climate control systems work together automatically to elevate passenger compartment temperatures. The software warms up the engine to an elevated level, and both heat and fan settings operate on high. The software automatically monitors interior temperatures until the entire passenger compartment hits the optimal level, then that temperature is maintained for 15 minutes.

To research the effectiveness of this sanitization method, Ford worked closely with The Ohio State University to determine the temperature and time duration needed to help inactivate the COVID-19 virus.

“Our studies with Ford Motor Company indicate that exposing coronaviruses to temperatures of 56 degrees Celsius, or 132.8 degrees Fahrenheit, for 15 minutes reduces the viral concentration by greater than 99 percent on interior surfaces and materials used inside Police Interceptor Utility vehicles,” said Jeff Jahnes and Jesse Kwiek, laboratory supervisors at The Ohio State University department of microbiology.

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Law enforcement will have multiple ways to monitor progress. Hazard lights and taillights will flash in a pre-set pattern to notify when the process has begun, then will change at the end to signal completion. The vehicle's instrument cluster will also indicate progress. A cool-down process brings the temperature down from its highest points.

This heated process can be used by law enforcement regularly to help sanitize vehicles when officers are not inside. When used in conjunction with sanitization guidelines approved by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flooding the passenger compartment with elevated air temperature can help reach areas that may be missed by manual disinfecting procedures. Heat has the ability to seep into crevices and hard-to-reach areas, helping reduce the impact of human error in applying chemical disinfectants.

Ford conducted software operational trials in vehicles owned by the New York City Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Michigan State Police, Massachusetts State Police, Boardman Township Police Department in Ohio and Seminole County Sheriff's Office in Florida.

The need to move fast

The Ford engineering team initiated a project in late March to de-contaminate vehicles using heat. Shortly after, a discussion with the New York City Police Department alerted Ford to its need for a more efficient disinfecting process during the pandemic.

"Law enforcement officers are being dispatched as emergency responders in some cases where ambulances may not be available," said Stephen Tyler, Ford police brand marketing manager. "During one trip, officers may be transporting a coronavirus patient to a hospital, while another trip may involve an occupant who may be asymptomatic."

Used to supplement recommended cleaning methods, safely heating the passenger compartment can help ensure vehicles are properly disinfected before being deployed again. "Officers can now use this self-cleaning mode as an extra layer of protection inside the vehicle in areas where manual cleaning is prone to be overlooked," said Tyler. "This virus is an invisible enemy and we are proud to provide a solution to help the law enforcement community fight it."

Initial rollout

Large departments with their own service centers can install the software solution using their own diagnostic service tools, while other fleets can work with their local dealers to install the software for 2013-19 Police Interceptor Utility vehicles.

For 2016-19 police vehicles, the heated software process can be activated by a smart sequence of commands that involves pressing cruise control buttons in a predefined order. For 2013-15 vehicles, this mode can be activated and carried out through an external tool that connects to the onboard diagnostics port.

"Vehicles from the 2013 to 2019 model years make up the majority of Police Interceptor Utility vehicles currently in use by first responders," said Tyler. "Delivering this new capability to these vehicles first allows us to help as many officers as possible, as quickly as possible."

Ford will continue working on ways to bring this software capability to additional Ford police vehicles.

When applied to factory-built Police Interceptor Utility vehicles. Ambient temperature, installation of partitions or other upfit equipment may impede temperatures from reaching the recommended threshold.

Source: *media.ford.com*

Ford: Aftermarket windshields, side glass not approved

June 9, 2020



Ford last week advised shops to use OEM windshield and side glass, warning that aftermarket panes could affect vehicle safety and comfort technology and cabin noise.

“Ford Motor Company vehicles contain many state-of-the-art features that provide occupant safety and enhance the driving experience. Windshield and side glass play an integral role in the performance and functionality of these features,” Ford wrote in a June 1 position statement. “During repairs that involve glass removal and replacement it is critical that the vehicle be restored to proper operating condition.

“The original glass used on Ford Motor Company vehicles is designed and built to provide optimum fit, function, safety and structural integrity. The quality, perfor-

mance and safety of aftermarket replacement windshield and side glass may not meet Ford Motor Company’s exacting specifications, and can result in key safety features not functioning properly and reduced customer satisfaction in the performance of their vehicle. For these reasons, Ford Motor Company does not approve the use of aftermarket windshield or side replacement glass. Only by using Ford Original Equipment Carlite replacement glass can you be assured of the fit, function, safety and structural integrity of the repair.”

The automaker also told collision repairers that you can’t reuse windshields in certain circumstances.

“HUD windshields, windshield glass equipped with a camera bracket and windshield glass equipped with adhesive moldings must be replaced anytime the original glass is removed from the vehicle,” Ford wrote.

The most critical concerns raised by the Ford position statement appear to be structural integrity and advanced driver assistance systems. Ford explained an aftermarket windshield might affect the performance of the camera mounted to it.

“Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Lane-Keeping, Pre-Collision Assist with Automatic Braking, Evasive Steering Assist and Auto High-Beam Headlamps use images from a camera mounted to the windshield,” Ford wrote. “Windshields equipped with cameras have integrated camera brackets that allow for precise attachment and positioning of the camera and are designed to have optical quality that is compatible with the camera. Aftermarket windshields cannot duplicate the precise location of the camera attachment brackets and often contain distortion that adversely affects the cameras operation, which can result in improper ADAS system operation. ...

“Calibrations associated with windshield replacements must be completed in order for the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems to function correctly.”

Motorists also might receive a safer ride (or at least a more convenient one) by consulting a Ford head-up display instead of glancing at the dash.

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The technology as of the June 1 position statement leveraged “digital light projection technology” to show “speed, driver assist features and navigation” on the windshield.

According to Ford, aftermarket glass might throw off the HUD.

“HUD windshields are specifically designed and manufactured to eliminate secondary HUD images,” Ford wrote. “Aftermarket glass often does not meet the same stringent specifications as genuine Ford glass and can result in poor quality HUD performance.”

Finally, Ford warns that aftermarket versions of acoustic front and side glass would deliver a noisier ride — one loud enough to throw off your customer’s ability to use their Ford’s voice-activated commands.

“SoundScreen® acoustic windshield and side glass are engineered with acoustic dampening technology within the glass layers to reduce road, wind and other exterior noise to maintain the quiet interior ride of the vehicle,” Ford wrote. “Aftermarket glass often does not include this technology and will result in increased road, wind and other exterior noise and can cause voice recognition performance issues with the SYNC voice-activated commands feature.”

Ford’s reference to side glass raises a potential consideration to check for other automakers. For example, we’ve covered how Ford competitors such as the 2021 Chrysler Pacifica, 2020 Kia Telluride, 2019 Honda Passport and 2019 Audi Q8 might carry acoustic side windows.

The Ford position statement describes consequences customers might be likely to notice — suggesting a bring-back threat if aftermarket glass isn’t up to snuff.

The Certified Automotive Parts Association, which announced a glass certification 801 Standard last year, has pointed out how a manufacturer’s mere compliance with the glass-related Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 205 doesn’t mean they’ve delivered modern windshield features. FMVSS 205 dates back to the 1970s and cites a 1990s ANSI/SAE standard.

“In the past, fit and clarity were the primary concerns when using aftermarket glass; however, with the growing trend of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) being incorporated with automotive glass, considerations surrounding the functionality of ADAS equipment must be also made,” CAPA wrote in a news release last year.

The June 1 Ford position statement also directs collision repairers to follow OEM procedures. **(See Page 10)**

“During windshield and side glass replacement and performing collision repairs requiring repair to the front and/or rear window channels, it is important to utilize Ford OEM repair procedures to ensure complete proper repairs are performed,” Ford wrote. “... Failure to follow the Ford OEM repair procedures may result in improper repairs and key vehicle safety systems not functioning correctly.

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

Article by John Huetter



Collision Position Statement

June 1, 2020

USE OF NON-OEM GLASS ON FORD MOTOR COMPANY VEHICLES

Ford Motor Company vehicles contain many state-of-the-art features that provide occupant safety and enhance the driving experience. Windshield and side glass play an integral role in the performance and functionality of these features. During repairs that involve glass removal and replacement it is critical that the vehicle be restored to proper operating condition.

The original glass used on Ford Motor Company vehicles is designed and built to provide optimum fit, function, safety and structural integrity. The quality, performance and safety of aftermarket replacement windshield and side glass may not meet Ford Motor Company's exacting specifications, and can result in key safety features not functioning properly and reduced customer satisfaction in the performance of their vehicle. For these reasons, Ford Motor Company does not approve the use of aftermarket windshield or side replacement glass. Only by using Ford Original Equipment Carlite replacement glass can you be assured of the fit, function, safety and structural integrity of the repair.

- Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Lane-Keeping, Pre-Collision Assist with Automatic Braking, Evasive Steering Assist and Auto High-Beam Headlamps use images from a camera mounted to the windshield. Windshields equipped with cameras have integrated camera brackets that allow for precise attachment and positioning of the camera and are designed to have optical quality that is compatible with the camera. Aftermarket windshields cannot duplicate the precise location of the camera attachment brackets and often contain distortion that adversely affects the cameras operation, which can result in improper ADAS system operation.
- Head Up Display (HUD) uses digital light projection technology to display driving information such as speed, driver assist features and navigation onto the windshield. HUD windshields are specifically designed and manufactured to eliminate secondary HUD images. Aftermarket glass often does not meet the same stringent specifications as genuine Ford glass and can result in poor quality HUD performance.
- SoundScreen® acoustic windshield and side glass are engineered with acoustic dampening technology within the glass layers to reduce road, wind and other exterior noise to maintain the quiet interior ride of the vehicle. Aftermarket glass often does not include this technology and will result in increased road, wind and other exterior noise and can cause voice recognition performance issues with the SYNC voice-activated commands feature.

During windshield and side glass replacement and performing collision repairs requiring repair to the front and/or rear window channels, it is important to utilize Ford OEM repair procedures to ensure complete proper repairs are performed. HUD windshields, windshield glass equipped with a camera bracket and windshield glass equipped with adhesive moldings must be replaced anytime the original glass is removed from the vehicle. Calibrations associated with windshield replacements must be completed in order for the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems to function correctly. Failure to follow the Ford OEM repair procedures may result in improper repairs and key vehicle safety systems not functioning correctly.

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COVID-19: A catalyst for implementation of new technology, or a harbinger of greater exploitation of the industry and consumer rights? Contrary to the implication of the follow article, I fear the latter.

I have been asked to pen a foreword to the following ABRN Article. The topic relates to insurance claim technologies inspired by distancing and no-contact safety precautions secondary to COVID-19 concerns. The idea of simplifying auto repair claims seems attractive. But simplification requires sacrifices. Sacrifices such as in person visual inspections, which are necessary to assess the full scope of damages and to let a consumer know when it's safe to drive a vehicle. Camera phones may be nice for

producing "super cool" TikTok videos, but they are hardly adequate when it comes to assessing the safety of a vehicle or scope of damages caused by a crash.

While the push to automate and exploit technologies can seem like progress for the industry, and it is to an extent particularly in light of COVID concerns, we must be careful not to lose sight of the value of doing things right (which is sometimes the old fashioned way). The industry needs repairers. The industry needs insurers. And the industry needs appraisers to help navigate the gaps between repairers and insurers. Replacing appraiser physical inspections with phone apps or photos for estimates, for example, may be convenient and simple, but it causes more harm than good. I think we need to be very careful to identify those technologies that are transparently designed to underpay claims and short consumers. That's one man's opinion. But, read on and see what you think.

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.

WILL PANDEMIC "LEAPFROG" INSURANCE CLAIMS TECHNOLOGY?

As industry and the public embrace 'no-contact' options, International Panel agrees that pandemic may be catalyst for further implementation of digital claims handling

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has meant many have been using digital technology to work or attend school from home. Or they're now using smartphone apps previously unfamiliar to them to order groceries or meals for curbside pickup or delivery to reduce social contact. As such technology is embraced, some expect that technology used to process automotive insurance claims will have increased implementation and use, particularly for hail claims.

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A recent online discussion using one of those apps, Zoom, examined that topic, hosted by The Claims Bridge International, an insurtech company that specializes in hail claims management. "Is COVID-19 Driving Claims Innovation?" was moderated by Fred Iantorno, vice-president of IoT (Internet of Things) at VeriFacts Automotive, LLC.

"Our industry has been, I would say, lagging in implementing some of the new technology, and COVID-19 is a catalyst for leapfrogging into the future," he said.

From The Claims Bridge International, other panelists included David McDonald, president, international; Stuart Blake, president, APAC; and Jerry Volquardsen, president, Americas. They were joined by Chris Ashworth, Enterprise Holdings assistant vice president; Peter McAninch, director of engineering at AGL; Tom Gray, market development vice president and consultant at IV Auto; and Bill Park, CEO of Axiom Accident and Hail Repair, in Englewood, Colo.

Technology can improve communication and simplify claims, McDonald said, which also increases customer satisfaction.

"From a consumer point of view, one of the biggest issues is being kept informed," he said. "And that causes repeat calls into contact centers; it causes a whole bunch of different issues for insurers in terms of their claims handling expenses."

Technology may be something simple, he said, such as asynchronous text messaging that allows both parties to contact each other without them needing to be concurrently active in the conversation. It may mean increased use of desktop assessments of customer-supplied images. Or for simpler cases, it may include fully automated assessments.

Volquardsen agreed, noting that, "now that we're in this environment, I think we're going to start seeing insurers have a much bigger appetite to go away from face-to-face contact."

Increased use of mobile apps offers FNOL, efficiency advantages to insurers

In his 35 years of experience in the insurance industry, Gray said, he's never understood why insurance carriers have pushed for their adjusters to be away from their desks, particularly because they usually have little customer contact.

"Now everybody's working from home; they're remote, and they love it. Forty-eight percent of the people say, 'You know what? I'd take a pay cut if I could just get to work from home.' Now what's the ripple effect of that? We have to have managers who are strong enough to be able to run our organizations virtually, don't we? That's a big step. How do we reinvent our managers as virtual leaders, and what about all those buildings all that office space that we don't use anymore?"

Some use of this technology is critical so that insurers can more quickly get the first notice of loss (FNOL), he said. "We have to see FNOL involved at the right level as far upstream as possible so that then we can initiate a hand-off vis-à-vis technology to where that claim needs to go next."

Park, of Axiom Accident and Hail Repair, pointed out during the webinar that he was in a Texas office that formerly served as a small claims office. That helped illustrate his point: "Insurance companies are changing the way they do business and are reducing their footprint of brick-and-mortar facilities. They're relying on more of a virtual environment."

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Using technology, he said, insurers can cut costs by as much as 40 percent by cutting out such contact centers and by cutting down on the number of repeat phone calls.

As an example of such technology, The Claims Bridge International's smartphone app uses a questionnaire to ask the customer such data as the size and number of hail dents. The insurer can render a quote, and potentially a settlement, within 24 hours, he said, which pleases customers and can be readily used for simpler losses.

"Let's reserve our face-to-face workforce for really complex property claims and high-value claims and give the customers control as to how they manage those claims."

Ashworth, of Enterprise, said the company has been using customer-submitted images for a couple years, and consumers appreciate being involved in the process. Such images now are using in about 45 percent of the cases. But he doesn't look for claims to be completely "touchless" or digital anytime soon.

"Some consumers are going to want a very light touch experience, whether they're a business traveler they just want to get in the car and go, or they prefer the 'We know you when you walk into the store' kind of approach."

Gray noted that true artificial intelligence does not yet exist; desk reviewers must still review submitted images.

"Let's separate out the things as far upstream as possible so that the human resources we use are used at the right touchpoint. As we leverage technology incrementally to understand our loss experience, we'll be able to use predictive analytics and understand, based on the strength of our book, what our severity will be, what our frequency will be, what our IBNR [incurred but not yet reported] will be."

Volquardsen said the United States has been slow to adopt scanning equipment [including trailer-mounted drive-through lanes that can be deployed after a catastrophic event], but their use in the UK and in Australia has been shown to help the PDR industry reduce contentiousness in estimating.

'Holy Grail' for mobile estimating is in the works

"The obvious Holy Grail is if you could send a link to a person – and it's not an app, they just simply click on the link and open it up – and the product is smart enough to look at the vehicle and be able to actually size the damage and catalog the damage. Eventually, we will get an estimate from that. There are companies out there right now, and we're working with one of them in particular, that are moving towards that type of handheld technology."

The next step, he said, is intrinsic imaging.

"It is a technology that I think is going to leapfrog us into the next generation. Intrinsic is able to do three-dimensional imaging without using 1-D reflectometry. Basically, what it does is it creates a three-dimensional image and we can catalog the damage exactly what that is on that particular vehicle.

"In the interim, we believe that we can engage and and we have built a product that will engage the customer in particular in the hail industry hail damage catastrophe that will engage them through a series of questions, photos, and then them uploading photos that we can process and we can get that vehicle triaged and know what lane to send it down."

Source: www.ABRN.com - Article by [Jay Sicht](#)

Using extra techs, protecting interiors: More tips from the DEG

The Database Enhancement Gateway, which allows repairers and insurers to make inquiries and suggestions of the estimating providers at no cost, offers weekly tips for repairers on the Audatex, Mitchell and CCC programs online and through the Society of Collision Repair Specialists' email list.

If you haven't used the free service before to submit questions about estimating collision repair work or just browse responses to other carrier and shop questions, check it out. It's a good way to find information provider best practices and help write the most accurate estimates or appraisals possible.

Here's our latest monthly roundup of areas spotlighted as tip-worthy by the DEG. To receive the tips as soon as the DEG releases them, like/follow the DEG's Facebook and Twitter feeds. (It also posts videos to a YouTube channel once in a while.) Or just browse the nearly 17,000 inquiries and responses in the database and see what else you learn.

Diagnosing damage not included

The Database Enhancement Gateway in a tip tweeted June 8 reminded repairers that looking up repair procedures and diagnosing an issue isn't included in any Audatex, CCC or Mitchell repair times. "Diagnosing damage beyond a visual assessment may be a time-consuming process during repair planning," the DEG wrote. "Additional time to diagnose the damaged vehicle, research repair information, and locating the root issue to a damaged component is NOT included in any estimated work times. Diagnosing damage may require multiple methods and tooling. This would be an on the spot evaluation."

Audatex: Extra technician not included

Audatex in June said its labor times to remove and reinstall a 2018 GMC Sierra bumper don't include the multiple technicians a DEG user said were needed to complete the work.

The DEG drew attention to the response in a tip tweeted June 15. "Some procedures may require the use of more than one technician to complete," the DEG observed. "Examples include team lifting, scan tool operation while driving, large or heavy parts R&I/R&R."

A DEG user suggested June 5 that Audatex time should expand the time for a "Rear bumper O/H and replacement" to 5 hours "combined" as a means of accounting for the additional personnel. "We run into issues when trying to replace truck rear truck bumpers as the box generally has to be loosened and lifted," the user wrote. "The reason for not enough time as it generally takes 3 to 4 people to perform this operation and again to reinstall the bumper. The extra hands required to perform this on 'all trucks' is not accounted for in labor. It take 4 people to align the bumper. 2 to hold it. one to tighten and one to make sure its straight. all truck bumpers front and rear should take this time into (consideration)."

Audatex declined to change its time but confirmed the additional technicians weren't included in it.

"We have reviewed the current OEM service information for the BUMPER,REAR R&I," Audatex wrote. "The BUMPER,REAR R&I labor allowance remains unchanged. The Audatex labor allowance considers all OEM outlined procedures to complete this operation, which includes reasonable alignment. Any additional labor for additional technicians to assist with labor tasks are not included. No change warranted at this time."

Protecting the interior

"Various repair procedures may require additional protection to the interior of the vehicle to prevent welding/grinding/sanding sparks, dust going past the repair zone," the DEG wrote in a tip tweeted June 29. "Additional consideration for labor and/or materials to protect the vehicle interior is NOT INCLUDED."

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The tip highlighted two 2019 inquiries, one involving Audatex, and the other CCC.

CCC doesn't include any interior protection, according to its response to a Feb. 13, 2019, query about a 2017 Mercedes GLE43 SUV. "After review of the concern, it has been determined that covering the exterior, interior and components of the vehicle to prevent weld spark damage is not included with welded panel replacement estimated work times," CCC wrote. "Determining an estimating work time for these procedures would require an 'on the spot evaluation' when developing the estimate."

The DEG user had suggested adding protecting the exterior and interior while welding to the lists of not-included items found in the CCC P-pages. "It is not listed anywhere in the CCC Motors Guide," the user wrote. Audatex's times only include placing and removing weld blankets, that information provider confirmed in November 2019.

The DEG user had noted that the Audatex P-pages listed "Cover to protect interior during repair" as included when replacing a quarter panel on a 2018 Honda Pilot. "I would like to know to what extent is included and how many units are actually allotted to this operation," the user wrote. "When we replace the quarter we pre-plastic all of the interior before placing the welding blankets which we also tape for a good seal. Then we remove these blankets and have to clean and restore for the next job, remove all plastic before it goes to the paint side where they once again recover if necessary."

Audatex replied that the covering referenced in the Database Reference Manual only meant welding blankets. "We consider time to place and remove welding blankets only," Audatex wrote. "Any additional operations are not considered in our guidelines. No changes are warranted at this time."

Removing Audi wheel moldings in CCC

The DEG in a tip this summer pointed out that removing the rear wheel opening moldings on a 2017 Audi Q5 wasn't part of the overhaul time for the bumper. "After review of the concern, the estimated work time applied to the Wheel Opening Molding is for installation only," CCC wrote in response to a June 30 inquiry. The DEG user had described the moldings (Part No. 8R0853828C4U8) "held on with adhesive/ double side tape" and wondered about situations where a bumper cover would be reused.

"If replacing the bumper cover which allows 3.5 hrs (Same as o/h) there is no need to physically remove the wheel opening molding since part is being replaced," the user wrote. "Otherwise if part is being reused the technician must carefully remove the part. Please define if the removal of part falls into the same category of adhesive body side moldings where labor is only inclusive of being installed on the vehicle and time does NOT include to remove and save the part. ...

"(P)lease define part is NOT INCLUDED for removal if needed or change the labor of INCLUDING it in bumper r/r or overhaul since there is NOT always a case when replacing the bumper the molding would be removed as it would simply be replaced by installing new ones only."

The user said the part didn't come standard on the Q5, but CCC clarified that it does in some situations.

"The Wheel Opening Molding is standard equipment on the S-Line and SQ5 model Bumper Covers," CCC wrote. "MOTOR only lists the Wheel Opening Moldings in those bumper groups. The estimated work time is for installation only and is included with R&R and Overhaul. The estimated work times applied to the Bumper Covers are appropriate."

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

Article by John Huetter



This issue's Vendor Spotlight is focused on the Bald Hill Auto Group in Warwick, RI. Bald Hill provides OEM Parts for Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Ram and KIA.

We recently connected with Parts Director Matt Jarvis and asked him a few questions about one of New England's largest Mopar/ KIA parts wholesalers and their involvement with the ABAC.



Jarvis has been in his role as Parts Director since 2014. He has managed to keep Bald Hill moving forward even through the challenges he has faced, none more challenging than the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected many businesses.

What is the size and scope of your operation?

We currently have \$2.5 million in Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram inventory and our Kia parts inventory consists of \$350,000 all housed in our separate wholesale parts building. Our facility is separate from the dealership which allows us to focus more on our wholesale customers.

Size of the delivery fleet?

We have 15 ProMaster 2500 vans which cover our many deliveries to Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut collision and mechanical facilities.

How do you handle such a sizable operation?

We normally have 30 employees that are dedicated strictly for wholesale. Currently, we are operating with 26. We also have 7 dedicated wholesale specialists who are versed in both FCA and KIA product lines and are ready to take your orders! We are only as good as the staff that serves our customers and we pride ourselves on that fact.

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What is your involvement with the ABAC?

Our Wholesale Parts Representatives that handle our road sales are Anthony Pickett and Sid Simoes. These two members of our team attend multiple ABAC Meetings and events throughout the year along with me. We are a Gold Level sponsor for the ABAC. We have been a member of the ABAC since 1999 and have also been a Supporting Advertiser in the ABAC News since its inception in 2000.

What parts solutions do you offer for collision repair shops?

We currently offer all our customers the ability to use CCC1, OEConnection's CollisionLink and ReparLink for online parts ordering. We also offer EliteExtra for dispatching and order tracking.

How is your operation handling the current pandemic?

We are constantly adjusting to ensure that our customers are comfortable with our delivery process. Our dealership is handling the pandemic extremely well. All departments have worked closer than they ever have before.

Thank you to Matt Jarvis for taking time to respond to our questions.

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Article submitted by Don Cushing

Free Time Isn't Free



As our industry moves through the summer, I hope everyone reading this is doing as well as possible and making things work. Fortunately, I know of many shops out there that have work coming in and have been able to maintain their employee numbers. For many of us, the past few months have provided an opportunity to use unexpected free time to improve our businesses. Employees have caught up on training, while shop owners have done everything from spruce up their facilities to focus more attention on equipment and in-house procedures. Obviously, the insurance industry has had free time on its hands as well, but this hasn't always worked in our favor.

Photo estimating has always been a controversial topic in Massachusetts. While estimating vehicle damage in this manner provides convenience in principle, it is clear that the extent of damage in certain jobs

cannot be fully captured with a digital image. Collision repair is not a cookie-cutter operation; every car that enters your shop is there as the result of a unique accident that occurred under unique circumstances. Some things can only be uncovered and acknowledged through a physical inspection that allows someone's eyes and hands to truly experience what happened in a collision. Photos could be a good start if taken properly, but they do not provide the definitive word on what is necessary for a safe and proper repair.

Unfortunately, it doesn't appear that the insurance industry got the memo on this. The ongoing need for social distancing has prompted insurers to refuse to send out appraisers to look at damaged vehicles, leaving us to essentially do this work for them. In many cases, this has resulted in shops experiencing delays in completing jobs as they are required to take more and more photos to get carriers to finally accept the level of damage that could have been identified in one in-person visit. Constantly having to take photos and wait for the other end to get its act together results in added administrative burdens for collision facilities, very often without receiving appropriate compensation for these extra efforts. Auto body businesses are here to serve vehicle owners, not to serve as unpaid help for insurers.

I understand that COVID-19 came out of nowhere and continues to put a burden on every facet of collision repair. I'm sensitive to the safety of everyone who works at or visits my shop, and I would never willingly put anyone in danger.

However, I'm also aware that insurers have used their downtime to take a closer look at their processes and how they can save money. I'm sure they've realized that keeping appraisers off the road saves them a fortune. I'm also very aware that they've been pushing photo estimating for many years despite protests from our industry. This pandemic has given insurers an opportunity to roll out their plans, and we are already seeing the results we've long feared. My greatest concern is that photo estimating will become commonplace long after the coronavirus crisis is fully addressed.

As you've seen in recent issues of New England Automotive Report, AASP/MA is working hard to bring this issue to a greater spotlight and assist shops. Please read all communications and updates from the association on this matter, and definitely reach out to us if you are encountering new obstacles due to this trend. Also, I encourage anyone you know who is not currently an AASP/MA member to join us today. Our voices will be heard.

Article by AASP/MA Vice President Kevin Gallerani owner of Cape Auto Body in Plymouth, Massachusetts and appeared in New England Automotive Report (NEAR) August 2020 Issue.

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Longtime jobber: Cash advances, higher discounts led to reduction in support

Upset at the lack of training or support from your auto body shop's distributor? Blame the discount or advance you're getting, according to a veteran jobber.

Auto Care Association PBE segment committee Chairman Joe Mattos, the former owner of Mattos Pro Finishes and a 40-year veteran of the PBE industry, said discounts didn't exist when he was young.

As a distributor then, he could make a 36-37 percent gross profit with paint list prices, enough to hire good people and pay reasonable wages, he said.

Mattos, now largely retired but a manager at ComCept, said paint MSRPs have "basically remained the same" in allotting a 36-40 percent gross profit to the distributors. However, a jobber must now give away "half of that" in discounts or advances.

Faced with such a pinch, "I have to cut costs," Mattos said.

Two-thirds of his costs were people, which made for a logical place to reclaim profit, he said. Distributors have engaged in such cuts for a while, and "there's nothing new now."

With the number of auto body shops shrinking, the competition for their business grows even tighter, Mattos said. As a distributor, he might need to bump what had been a 25 percent shop discount to 30 percent off list and figure out how to live on the 6-10 percent gross margin left.

Mattos said cash advances to repairers started about 25 years ago to subsidize equipment like spray booths.

A paint manufacturer and distributor might project how much paint the shop would buy in five years and offer 10 percent of that amount as cash up front — but the shop wouldn't get a discount, Mattos said. The repairer would pay MSRP but get what Mattos said was dubbed a "prebate."

Such advances started as subsidies for shops to improve operations, but competition led to the percentage advanced rising "up and up and up," said Mattos.

Mattos said shops have become "really great negotiators."

The percentage of effective prebates has grown higher, and shops will test the market and renegotiate their contracts around Year 3.5-4 of a five-year deal, Mattos said. He also shared an example of how a repairer could play two distributors carrying the shop's preferred paint line against each other.

Mattos estimated that this had a "pretty heavy effect" on services distributors could provide.

"It had to," he said.

Mattos recalled he used to have staff to assist with waterborne training or hard-to-match colors. But it reached the point where the distributor couldn't give a shop 40 percent and afford such staff — the shop had to pick one, he said.

"They always took the money," he said. Then, they would complain about the lack of support, he said.

"That's life," Mattos said.

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

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