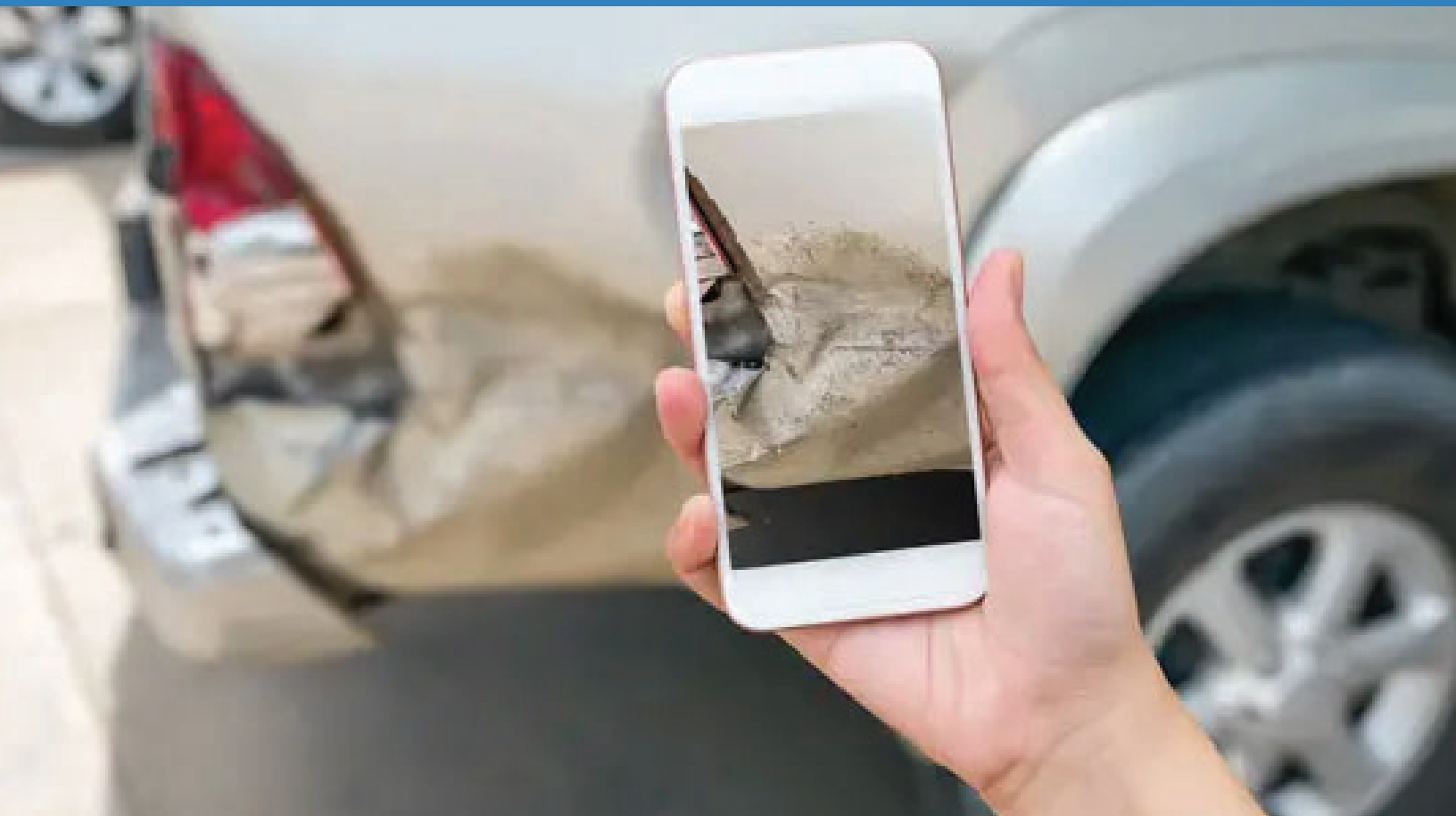


The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut

## ABAC - “Photo Estimating Should Be Prohibited Because it’s Unsafe!” Educate Your Customers



## “On The Minds of Members” - Feedback from the ABAC’s Revolutionary Seminar

**Your Car, Your Choice** - Find us at [www.abaconn.org](http://www.abaconn.org)

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### Vendor Spotlight

**Are you a Supporting  
Advertiser in the ABAC News? Are  
you interested in having your  
company in the Vendor Spotlight?**

**Contact Don Cushing at  
abacnews13@gmail or give him  
a call at 401-578-6945 and he will  
set up an appointment to feature  
your company in the  
ABAC News!**

## ABAC President's Message

**Bob Amendola**

### It's Time For Change!



Our industry is in the midst of change. We can no longer lie to ourselves about the true cost of repair, even though we are told otherwise by undue outside interference.

In the state of Connecticut, we have the "Appraisers Code of Ethics" 38a-790-8. The code of ethics states every appraiser shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to inspire public confidence by fair

and honorable dealings and approach the appraisal of damaged property without prejudice against or favoritism toward any party involved in order to make fair and impartial appraisals.

I ask how many staff appraisers can do this when they are afraid to lose their job... When we really consider this, appraisals should be written by independent appraisers. Staff appraisers are prohibited from following the code of ethics due to interference from the insurance company. If an appraiser is not following the code of ethics, do something about it. The cards have been stacked against us for too long. It's time to change that.

Stand up for yourselves, for your employees, your customers and our industry.

Sincerely,  
*Bob Amendola*

Autoworks of Westville - President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut



**AUTO BODY  
ASSOCIATION  
OF CONNECTICUT**



## **Auto Body Association of Connecticut**

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"Pulling together for a better future"

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### **Ensuring the Integrity of the State of Connecticut Auto Appraiser Laws**

All licensed appraisers are required to comply with Connecticut law, including State Regulations§ 38a-790-1 through§ 38a-790-8. These laws require that:

- All appraisers leave a copy of their appraisal with the repair shop;
- Whenever there is a dispute on the repair price, an appraiser shall not solicit a competitive estimate from a photo - the vehicle must be physically inspected;
- No appraiser shall request that appraisals or repairs be made in a specified repair shop or shops;
- Every appraiser must reinspect a damaged vehicle whenever a supplement is requested by a repair shop; and
- Every appraiser must:
  1. Conduct himself in such a manner as to inspire public confidence by fair and honorable dealings;
  2. approach the appraisal of damaged property without prejudice against, or favoritism toward, any party involved in order to make fair and impartial appraisals;
  3. disregard any efforts on the part of others to influence his judgment in the interest of the parties involved;
  4. prepare an independent appraisal of damage.

If you are a Connecticut licensed appraiser that has been pressured by a supervisor to violate the language or spirit of the above law, or you fear that following the law will cause you to be penalized or fired, it is time to speak up. You are not alone. Contact the Auto Body Association of Connecticut today to document your account.

The ABAC will confidentially retain all reports for purposes of sharing them with the appropriate legal authorities such as the Department of Insurance (which is tasked with overseeing the insurance industry) and/or the Attorney General's Office (which is tasked with protecting whistleblowers).

No one is above the law.

We are here to support you and your rights. For further information, please contact Heather Romaniello at: [abacadmin.heather@gmail.com](mailto:abacadmin.heather@gmail.com). Thank you.



## Photo Estimating; Educate Your Customers

***ABAC Vice-President - Ashley Burzenski***

While the use of photo estimating is nothing new, we continue to educate customers whenever the opportunity presents itself about its shortcomings. As a company policy, we do not write estimates from photos for customers, and we do not participate in photo estimates or desk reviews with insurance companies.

Therefore, upon our first opportunity to do so, we explain to any prospective customer our position and their legal rights surrounding the matter. After hearing the other side of what is conveyed to be the “most seamless way to process their claim”, most people ultimately decide not to do a photo estimate.

However, sometimes a customer will still opt to do a photo estimate after they’ve left our office. Unsurprisingly, they will come back to the shop with a copy of it and concerns. While this is a learning moment, we are constantly adjusting our standard operating procedures and word tracking to help reduce the instances where a customer still opts for a photo estimate.

Recently, we revised the disclaimer that prints on every estimate we write in CCC to help our efforts of combating photo estimating and steering (see below). Since making this addition to our estimates, we have noticed an appreciation from our customers for giving them the information they need to protect their rights and a commitment from prospective customers that may have been on the fence. People appreciate honesty and feel more empowered when they understand the process.

As pictured, the disclaimer prints below the estimate total where it is visible to the customer. We make it a point to offer full assistance with their claim, but should they call their insurance company on their own, at least now they have the information in front of them reaffirming everything we explained to them. This revision took no more than 10 minutes to complete and prints automatically so we don’t have to think of it each time.

While we used this space on our estimates to focus on photo estimates, you can use the space to convey important information to your own prospective customers. This is an example of how streamlining things can work for you and your customers.

**To Our Valued Customers,**

Many insurance carriers promote photo estimating in lieu of dispatching an appraiser to properly inspect your vehicle. Connecticut law 38A-354 grants you the legal right to request your vehicle be inspected in person by a Connecticut licensed appraiser wherever you would like. Furthermore, you also have the legal right to choose the repair shop where your vehicle will be repaired at.

Any interference or refusal by an insurance company is a direct violation of your legal rights as the vehicle owner and would warrant filing a complaint with the Connecticut Department of Insurance. You are not required by law to submit photos to an insurance company for a photo estimate and we strongly recommend your vehicle is inspected in person by a Connecticut licensed appraiser at the repair shop.

If you experience any issues or have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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January 16, 2023

Commissioner Andrew Mais  
Connecticut Insurance Department  
P.O. Box 816  
Hartford, CT 06142-0816

### **Re: Photo Estimating Should be Prohibited Because it is Unsafe**

Dear Commissioner Mais:

It has come to our attention that many insurance companies may be moving to change policy language or Connecticut law to permit or escalate the use of photo estimates in the assessment of motor vehicle physical property damage. The practice of photo estimating often seeks to sideline a physical damage appraiser in favor of photos taken by consumers. Photo estimating is a dangerous and inadequate method of assessing the scope of damage to a motor vehicle.

The growing trend of using camera phone pictures prior to getting a repair professional involved is illegal, unethical, and most importantly, harmful to consumers. Specifically, the practice violates our unfair insurance practices law (CUIPA CGS § 38a-816) and possibly other consumer protection laws.

It is no mystery why insurers want to write damage estimates from camera phone pictures: they often capture only a fraction of the actual damage, thus allowing the insurer to send out an artificially low loss payment to the claimant (many of whom will pocket the check without repairing the vehicle). But many of these vehicles are not safe to be put back on the road, and the safety of a vehicle often cannot be assessed from a camera phone picture. Indeed, vehicle owners are frequently driving vehicles into auto repair shops with gouged tires, bent suspension parts and more safety issues.

Aside from the obvious safety infringements, and violations of the above cited insurance laws, this practice represents a fundamental misrepresentation of policy or third-party rights and benefits. In other words, it is a misrepresentation of benefits to attempt to pay off a claim based on claimant taken pictures – which we know do not, and cannot, depict the full extent of the damages.

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Insurers have a legal and often fiduciary responsibility to make fair and complete payments for covered losses. This system is plainly designed to save insurers money on its own labor costs (i.e. less paid appraisers) and on the amount it ultimately pays on claims (i.e. calculated underpayment of claims). These savings come at the expense of consumer safety and complete reimbursement.

The ABAC respectfully submits that the practice of photo estimating should be curbed, not expanded. Any effort to expand this practice should be met with great scrutiny and skepticism.

I look forward to hearing how your department intends to address this critical consumer safety threat. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you need anything further.

Very Truly Yours,



Robert Amendola  
President, Auto Body Association of Connecticut

Cc: The Hon. William Tong  
Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee



## Consumers Beware of Insurance Photo Estimates

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### **Are Auto Body Photo Estimates Accurate?**

The year of the pandemic altered many of our usual processes, including how insurance companies write estimates for collision repair. Prior to 2020 an auto insurance adjuster would assess your vehicle's damage at your home, workplace or at your local Scottsdale auto body repair shop. Even though many things have returned to "normal", insurance companies continue the push for photo estimates. When making a claim, the representative may ask you to download their app and submit photos of the vehicle's damage. After accepting liability, the insurance company will respond with an estimate and payment for collision repair. It sounds easy, but is it an accurate repair plan, and is it enough money to return your car back to pre-collision status?

### **What is a photo estimate?**

Photo estimates are still around partly due to the labor shortage and most likely make good financial sense to insurance companies. Similar to the self-checkouts at the grocery store, it is marketed as a customer convenience. Once you submit the collision damage photos via the app or email, the adjuster writes the estimate from his/her desk. This allows the adjuster to write many estimates each day because they are not driving around and inspecting vehicles in person.

### **How is it working out for the vehicle owner?**

After reviewing a photo estimate many vehicle owners get a bit nervous. They explain that the insurance company left off some damaged parts, and the amount appears less than the actual cost to repair. At this point, our office staff explains that this is just a starting point, and a quality-focused collision repair facility will evaluate the damage during disassembly and contact the insurance company for additional auto body repairs.

### **Are photo estimates accurate?**

The problem:

**The insurance company writes estimates based off what they can see in the photos and that is usually only part of the auto body repairs required.**

What happens:

- The collision repair technician inspects and disassembles the damaged vehicle. Besides examining damage under exterior panels a diagnostic scan is often ran to assess damage to computerized and electrical components. The technician reports additional parts and labor needed to repair the car to pre-accident condition.
- The technician identified the additional damage, however, that does not mean he can proceed with the collision repair. At this point, auto body shop estimator will write an additional estimate (supplement) for the insurance company's review.
- Once a supplement is submitted, it usually takes the insurance company a few days to review/approve the additional parts and/or labor. Unfortunately, this causes a pause in work. Once the auto body shop has the green light, repairs will continue.

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### **What can you do?**

Unfortunately, photo estimates are often notably less compared to the final cost of repairs. Remember insurance adjusters are writing based off what they can see. They cannot crawl under the vehicle or run a diagnostic scan to assess all the damage. While there will most likely be a supplement, you can help with the accuracy of the original estimate by submitting quality photos. Here are some hints before you submit photos:

- Take close-ups of broken parts.
- Take clear pictures with no reflection of yourself or other objects.
- If the car is in the sun, move it.
- Examine surrounding panels. Sometimes people are focused only on the big dent, look at adjacent panels, are they scratched, or compromised too? If so, capture these images.
- Take a photo about 3 feet back so the adjuster can see overall damage.
- If possible, photo underneath the vehicle or under the hood. Maybe you don't see something broken, but an adjuster might identify damage.
- Providing the adjuster with clear photos can assist in writing a better estimate and may save you time in the long run.

### **What happens if the insurance estimate is too low?**

Insurance estimates are notorious for being less than the actual cost of repairs. This is why choosing an auto body shop of your choice is so important. A collision repair facility with a good reputation will inspect the vehicle and prioritize returning your vehicle to pre-accident condition. They will work with the insurance company and spend the time needed to gain approval for necessary accident-related repairs.

### **Caution:**

Before making a decision to cash the check and skip the auto body repair, bring your vehicle to a skilled collision repair professional that can inspect your vehicle properly. After speaking with an estimator or repair planner, customers can make an educated decision.

### **While your vehicle is in for collision repair, a reputable auto body shop will:**

- Assess mechanical damage
- Pre and post-diagnostic scan newer vehicles to confirm all sensors and onboard computers are working properly after the impact of a collision.
- Check condition of wheels, alignment, etc.
- Inspect headlights and tail lights for illumination and aim.
- Examine doors and windows for proper operation.
- Communicate with insurance company to ensure the vehicle is repaired properly.

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### **Did You Know?**

- Some insurance companies require their adjusters to write a great volume of estimates each day. This very well may affect the accuracy of the collision repair estimate.
- The person reviewing the photos may be new, or even out of the country. Not all are qualified to assess vehicle damage on today's advanced vehicles. In addition, photo estimates do not allow for under the hood or under-vehicle inspection.
- **You may risk riding around in an unsafe vehicle.**

### **The problem:**

The insurance company writes estimates based off what they can see and that almost always results in a supplement. A supplement is a second estimate listing additional damage not found on the first estimate.

### **What happens:**

- A supplement leads to waiting. Understand the process, you drop off your car, truck, SUV at your auto body repair facility and forward them the insurance estimate.
- The collision repair technician inspects and disassembles the damaged vehicle. The technician reports additional parts and labor needed to repair the car to pre-accident condition. (Sometimes very visible parts are missing from the insurance estimate-like a broken headlight. Other times, its damage that is under exterior panels.)
- The technician identified the additional damage, however, that does not mean he can proceed with the repair. An additional estimate (supplement) has to be written and approved before your auto body shop can order additional parts or begin additional labor.
- Incomplete vehicle repairs will impact you at lease return or trade-in.
- The insurance company may recommend their "preferred" collision repair shops. Always do your home-work on the auto body shop before you agree.
- Choosing a reputable Scottsdale auto body repair facility is a great way to double-check the insurance estimate. A quality collision repair facility will have a lifetime workmanship warranty and repair according to industry and/or manufacturer standards.

**In conclusion, insurance photo estimates may seem convenient but choosing a repair facility is the key to a quality repair.**



# **“On The Minds of Members”**

## ***Follow up from the ABAC’s Revolutionary Seminar***

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***At the last meeting a few subjects were discussed. In this edition of “On The Minds of Members” we asked George Atwood and Bob Skrip to give us their thoughts on the following questions:***

### **Are you using labor rate surveys?**

**Atwood:** Yes. It's been some time since I've last done a survey but after listening to what everyone else is doing at our last meeting, I plan on doing the surveys more often. It will certainly benefit my business. I do stay stringent with my labor rate. My accountant tells me where I need to be as far as my labor rate. Prior to the last ABAC meeting, I was already using some of the methods discussed but the presenters reinforced the things that I do in my business and helped me to “tweak” some of my processes. However, you ALWAYS learn something new at every meeting.

**Skrip:** Being that I'm semi-retired, I leave that portion of the business up to my manager John Saturno. He does a great job making sure the operation here runs smoothly. We communicate well, he consults with me and I trust his judgement but as to the particular question, yes, John does perform Labor Rate Surveys at certain intervals, but again, we know what we need to charge for our labor rate, and we do as best we can to stay that course.

### **How are you dealing with technician shortage?**

**Atwood:** It's very difficult to find help. Good help. Mechanical, auto body and many other businesses have problems. We are booked solid for the next several weeks, so I really need to find help. I've talked to a couple of schools, but my location makes it a challenge. I've tried Indeed.com and several other online solutions. It's frustrating. I'm hoping to find anyone who has some interest in cars and train them. Homegrown would be a good deal for me. Job Fairs and tech schools can be a possible solution. We need to expose how collision repair is no longer a grubby type of job. We are all professionals, and the technology is such that we need trained, educated technicians.

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**Skip:** We all talk about finding good employees. No one ever talks about “how do we retain employees?” How do we keep what we got? Look, we all know that the demand is such that other shops try to steal other shops’ employees. That’s not my style.

We refuse to do that. We incentivize our staff whenever we can. We just recently implemented a 401k plan in my shop. This not only attracts new help but helps us keep our current staff. We did place ads but those didn’t work out well. When we did get calls from potential techs, one of their questions was, “what benefits do you offer?” Look, money is important but the perks that you can offer, like medical insurance/401k plans mean a lot to your potential and current employees, which can separate you from the rest. We also allow our trusted employees to use our shop if they have some work they would like to do, on the side, after hours. Not many shops would do that. We need to be more creative on how we can retain the valuable employees that we have.

### **Do you implement “short pays” using legal methods?**

**Atwood:** I haven’t normally used any solutions for short pays. I currently write my estimates and I let my customers know that my labor rate is non-negotiable and it’s possible that their insurance company may not want to pay the proper rate to repair their car and that the customer will be responsible for the difference. I let the customer deal with the insurance company since I do not have the time or the desire to go to court. Most customers want factory parts on their car, some don’t. I let them know that I will not put their safety at risk if non-oem parts are used on their vehicle.

**Skip:** No. We could spend all day doing that and it doesn’t fit my particular business model. We’ve come to the conclusion that no matter how much you’re getting paid by the insurance company, if we feel that the repair is worth more, we bill our customers an additional amount. We advise our customers before we begin the work, you may end up spending additional money out of pocket, because your insurance company may not pay for certain repairs that we feel are necessary to make sure your car is repaired correctly and safely.

### **Have you sent in any DOI complaints?**

**Atwood:** Not yet. I’m not too savvy like some of the other shops. I wish I could get more help so that I could spend more time doing that because I could send in a lot of complaints. I used to have a staff of 12 and currently I’m at half of that. Not making excuses, I need to find more help!!

**Skip:** Again, this is something that doesn’t fit my business model. It may work for some other shops, which is great, but we tend to pick and choose our battles. We try to do things a bit differently to get the same results. This is an area where customer education is key. We let our customers know, up front, what MIGHT be in store for them. We educate them on what their insurance company may try to do to them. It’s the most important conversation that you can have with your customer.

### **Are you charging for pre-storage?**

**Atwood:** I have not yet charged for pre-storage. That doesn’t mean that I won’t. It all depends on the circumstances. I do charge for totals and such. Seems I’ve been very fortunate. I hear horror stories from other shops. I actually stopped doing work for Allstate at one point but I now have an appraiser that I can call who takes care of that problem.

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**Skrip:** We've discussed that but it's always a battle. Our focus is on when a car is totaled. We make sure we consider everything that needs to be paid for when a car is totaled. The only challenge is we have to make sure we keep our customers happy. We know, as well as the insurance appraiser, where the threshold is before being a total. We don't want to put our customer in a situation that they end up with a potential unsafe vehicle, so, if need be, it gets totaled.

### **Are you performing total disassembly?**

**Atwood:** We have processes for disassembly. My guys know what they need to do. Again, it's a matter of having the time and staff to do this correctly. We do the best we can to make sure we have it all covered. We all know that we need the vehicle totally disassembled so that we can order all the parts that are needed for repair.

**Skrip:** Every single car. We offer the appraiser the opportunity to come and see the car or you don't. This is what it is. Here's our ticket, what would you like to do?

### **Do you participate in photo estimating?**

**Atwood:** Not at all. I will write an estimate for a customer, take pictures and download them to their file. I send the customer their estimate along with the pictures but I will NOT send any pictures to the insurance company.

**Skrip:** Absolutely not. That seems to be that's all they want to do. We don't get involved in that BS at all! We don't touch photo estimating with a ten-foot pole. It's an absolute waste of time. COVID turned the world upside down and the insurance companies are using photo estimating as an excuse for a shortage of appraisers.

### **Do you find the forms on the ABAC Website to be useful?**

**Atwood:** Oh absolutely. The Repair Contract is probably the most important document that a shop can use. The website is set up nicely since you must be an ABAC member to see this important information or to use it. Our President Bob Amendola and the Board of Directors along with Attorney John Parese have done an amazing job putting all this critical information together. I think the sharing of information amongst our colleagues is extremely important.

**Skrip:** John is the one who benefits from all the information on the website. He uses many of the forms that the ABAC has to offer on the website. Something that has raised my concerns is how many shops we have lost. And the shops that are left? That statistic alone should raise concerns and be something that they need to focus on. I don't want to see any of those shops become a statistic. We get this information out to everyone. The ABAC has been doing a great job forever and how can they improve that statistic? The ONLY way it can improve is to have more ABAC Members. Getting these shops together has always been a battle. They need to become members and attend these meetings. The ABAC Board along with the ABAC News has been doing an incredible job of spreading the word. These meetings lately have been packed which means many shops are still looking for direction. Get that direction by talking with your colleagues at these meetings. That is where you can get most of your answers!

The ABAC want to thank George and Bob for their candid responses and wish them well in the future of their operations.

**Submitted by Don Cushing**

## Not all aftermarket scan tools give OEM results in all situations, Repairify study finds

A field study by Repairify has shown that not all aftermarket scan tools perform like OEM tools on every year, make, model, and trim (YMMT) vehicle, and there's no way for a technician to know which do and which don't, Chris Chesney, the company's vice president of training and organizational development, told an audience at an OEM Collision Repair Technology Summit session on Thursday.

During the summit, part of the Repairer Driven Education agenda offered by the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) during the SEMA show, Chesney revealed some of the findings of Repairify's research into aftermarket tools.

Repairify's teams gathered information by conducting a field study of more than 70,000 model year 2014-2022 vehicles located in a dozen Copart yards. The study connected multiple aftermarket tools to thousands of different YMMT vehicles and compiled a comparative analysis of the scan results, Diagnostic Trouble Codes (DTCs), and the ability to clear DTCs in the same manner as the factory tool.

Chesney did not provide full details of the results, saying that Repairify invested millions of dollars in creating the database to help identify for its customers when an aftermarket tool might be an appropriate choice. But he did present five use cases that identified some troubling failures by aftermarket tools.

"At the end of the day, aren't [the tools] all the same? Well, no, they aren't. And so what's the difference? Well, the difference is completeness and accuracy. And it's not just saying that, well, this brand C tool is really good on Asian vehicles, but not so good on Euro and domestic. You can't be that broad. And we didn't look at it that way."

He emphasized that the OEM tool is "the gold standard — always is, always will be, that will never change. That is the foundation." But he suggested that an aftermarket tool that functions like an OEM tool for a specific YMMT vehicle might present an acceptable, and less costly, option for a body shop.

"With respect to accuracy, are they returning exactly what the OEM factory tool returns in the way of all the modules that are communicated with and all the DTCs that are returned in exactly the same way the DTCs were served up by the factory tool? ... Surely some of them work on certain vehicles? And the answer is yes, but it's not every year make model trim, it's not every module, it's not every DTC, it's not every pin."

Chesney provided details of five specific use cases:

- On a 2021 Ford Escape, the OEM tool identified two DTCs in the occupant classification system module (OCSM), while the aftermarket tool gave it a pass. "That's a safety system. We're not going to call that a validation — it wasn't even close.... In the context of this scan on this vehicle year make model trim, that aftermarket Tool A should not be used on that vehicle."
- On a 2017 Toyota Camry, the OEM tool identified two DTCs for the ABS module, while the aftermarket tool showed none. "The aftermarket tool missed that. It missed it totally. So can we call that a validation? No. We're going to never say that you can use that tool to scan the vehicle, a 2017 Camry with that VIN, we're going to always serve up and recommend that you use the factory tool."

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- On a 2017 Kia Rio, the OEM tool identified three total DTCs with two active DTCs associated with the airbag module, requiring replacement of the module, “whereas the aftermarket tool came back and said, okay, no problem. That’s certainly not a pass. Because we’re dealing with safety systems, we’ve got to be exact.”
- On a 2016 Honda Civic, the OEM tool identified two DTCs in the ABS system, while the aftermarket tool, in this case Repairify’s own asTech tool, only identified one DTC.
- Finally, on a 2021 Jeep Gladiator, the OEM and the aftermarket tool returned the very same results. “So, in that case, we’d serve up an opportunity to the shopper.”

Chesney said his assumption that aftermarket tools might be made more accurate over time by their manufacturers turned out to be false. “I will tell you that the aftermarket scan tool manufacturers, when they release a tool to you, have other things to do besides updating their software every year to make sure it covers more vehicles,” he said. “They will listen to their hotline and they will react and when they react, they’ll fix the problem and they’ll wait for the phone to ring again.

“They don’t have enough people. Consider they’re trying to consolidate 26 manufacturers into one box. They’re making concessions to begin with. But some of the content, some of the software that they’re providing works well. So the idea of this is to try to find where those cases are and expose those to you so you can make a decision.”

Customers will be able to set their criteria for tool selection through Repairify’s patented rules engine, Chesney said. Those aftermarket tools that did not perform like an OEM tool for a particular YMMT will be flagged as “not verified,” but can still be chosen by customers at their own risk.

Joining Chesney on the stage to talk about scan tool selection were representatives of three OEMs: Dan Dent, Manager, Collision, Certified Repair Network at Nissan Motor Corporation; Devin Wilcox, Program Manager and Strategist, Collision Network at Subaru of America; and Jake Rodenroth, North American Body Repair Program Operations Manager at Lucid Motors.

Rodenroth explained that Lucid is not typical, since its vehicles do not have OBD-II ports, relying on an Ethernet cable to connect the vehicle. But he said the OEM is committed to protecting its vehicles from hackers anytime they’re connected to the internet.

“So we have to have that layer of security for the diagnostic tool, but it’s also our umbilical cord to our car,” he said. “As we make changes to the car, and we make changes to the scan tool, we can push those in real time, and as we turn on other controllers in the car, then diagnostic tools set up those routines to service those components.”

Chesney raised the issue of payment, and those shops that have reported difficulty in getting insurers to pay for scans. “Is the data that we have presented at the beginning of this, where we talked about our testing of thousands of vehicles and the 100,000 diagnostic sessions and a data set that identifies the opportunity where on this VIN, with this tool, that it will return the same result as the factory tool, if that system is used and the documentation is applied, do you think that helps support the collision center in the way of getting paid?”

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Both Wilcox and Dent said their primary concern is that repairs are being done properly, and that they can help repairers substantiate why they should be paid for following OEM recommendations.

“One thing I note in all the seminars I’m part of, I’m not here to argue nickels and dimes,” Wilcox said. “I’m here to make sure that the work that needs to be done to our vehicles is being done. I can help explain the why, I can help qualify the why... I’m here to support the shops, regardless of if you’re on our network or not.”

He cited a recent discussion he had, justifying Subaru’s requirement for a “lengthy, invasive” visual inspection to be done after one of its vehicles is in a collision. The inspection is necessary because it may turn up problems, such as a frayed wire or an incorrectly installed airbag component, that a pre- or post-scan will not find.

“So back to the question of nickels and dimes, that’s not really my place to be. But when a question is asked, I can help with the substantiating information to get that payment,” he said.

Dent said it’s up to shop owners and operators to decide what’s best for them. “We can only tell you what’s best for our brand and our owners and where our opinion is. So you have to decide what kind of business model you want to go after.

“We’re gonna throw a blanket over the top of it and say it has to be our scan tool,” he said. “It’s the gold standard... We don’t test 30 alternative brands out there, we don’t know what they do or how bad it’s gonna mess it up or if they’re gonna mess it up at all. But we’re not going to take that risk.

“We’re invested in you, as shop owners, shop operators, just as much as we want you guys to do the right thing,” he said.

Rodenroth said it’s important that shops understand the whys behind the OEM procedures. For instance, he said, refilling a Lucid’s cooling system requires seven gallons of coolant, unlike most gas-engine vehicles, which typically require about two gallons.

An insurer is likely to balk at paying for so much coolant because they don’t understand how a Lucid differs from other vehicles. “What they don’t realize is that we have a water-cooled control unit in the car that is the autonomous driving unit. And if you starve that unit of coolant to keep it cool, it will actually burn the most expensive computer in the car.

“As repairers, we have to continue that product knowledge, and the three of us can give it to you all day. But the reality is, you’ve got to want it.”

**Source: [www.RepairerDrivenNews.com](http://www.RepairerDrivenNews.com)**



## GM Addresses ADAS Integrity, occupant safety with new windshield replacement position

General Motors (GM) has released a position statement related to the use of aftermarket glass in its vehicles.

Also known as non-genuine OE glass, the automaker said off-brand windshields could compromise its safety standards.

“GM vehicles, safety systems and components are designed, engineered, tested, and validated to protect vehicle occupants based upon both government mandated and internal corporate requirements,” GM said in the position statement. “The overall integrity of a vehicle’s Advanced Driver Assist System is dependent on maintaining the design specifications of each component of the safety system.”

GM Genuine branded glass is designed, engineered, tested, and validated to internal and government mandated standards and is the only equivalent to the Original Equipment glass. “With the safety of our customers at the center of everything we do, it is critical a service point calibration/learn be performed whenever a front view windshield camera or sensor is removed and reinstalled or replaced, or when a windshield is removed and reinstalled or replaced,” the statement said.

The statement was issued days after the release of a Global Automotive Glass Industry report, which said the worldwide market will reach \$42.1 billion by 2030. The U.S. market is expected to hit \$8.2 billion. Last year, the global auto glass market was estimated at \$30.7 billion; analysts have attributed the anticipated 37% increase to the geopolitical instability, inflation, and fears of new COVID-19 outbreaks in China.

GM isn’t the first automaker to insist upon using original glass parts when making repairs. In 2019, Volvo released its own position statement instructing collision repairers to only have windshield replacement done by an authorized Volvo location, using only OEM glass and its approved adhesive.

And last year, Ford drove home the importance of using OEM glass in collision repairs, most importantly for advanced driver assistance systems to properly function and gives an overview of the Mustang Mach-E’s body construction.

Lawmakers in several states including South Carolina, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island have backed those concerns by introducing legislation that would mandate the use of OE glass in auto repairs.

Critics have, on previous occasions, defended the use of aftermarket parts for repairs, claiming OE parts are being mandated to give auto giants a monopoly on parts. However, GM maintained safety as its top priority, adding that aftermarket glass could impact the integrity of a vehicle’s advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS).

“We test Genuine GM Parts (OEM glass) as part of our vehicles’ structural and advanced safety systems. We do not approve or test aftermarket glass nor claims of Original Equipment Equivalent (OEE) glass,” a spokeswoman told Repairer Driven News. “The windshield has always been integral to vehicle safety structure. With the evolution of ADAS, the windshield’ has an even greater role in vehicle safety. For this reason, we only recommend GM Genuine Parts (OEM) for windshield replacement.”

The spokeswoman said GM informs the industry of vehicle-specific repair procedures through its GM Service Information, which offers engineer-developed procedures for safe removal, installation, and calibration of windshield replacements.

**Source: [www.RepairerDrivenNews.com](http://www.RepairerDrivenNews.com)**

## Honda issues 'do not drive' warning for 8,200 vehicles

Honda has issued a "do not drive" warning for an estimated 8,200 Hondas and Acuras believed to remain on the roads with unsafe airbags. The "urgent, lifesaving recall" applies to certain 2001 to 2003 vehicles equipped with unrepaired Takata Alpha driver side bag inflators, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in a statement.

"These vehicles are 20 to 22 years old now, and they pose a 50% chance of rupturing in even a minor crash," said Ann Carlson, NHTSA acting administrator. "Don't gamble with your life or the life of someone you love – schedule your free repair today before it's too late."

Takata airbag inflator issues came to light in 2008 and continue today; they have been attributed to at least 23 deaths in the U.S. The inflators use phase-stabilized ammonium nitrate (PSAN) as a propellant that has been known to result in violent explosions and send metal shrapnel into the faces of vehicle occupants. A federal class action lawsuit was filed in May against ARC Automotive, Audi, Volkswagen, General Motors, and Ford for use of the same propellant in their airbag inflators. A \$1 million lawsuit was also filed in Texas against Ford Motor Co. and Yaklin Ford in July 2020 for injuries allegedly caused by an inflator explosion.

The NHTSA's Recalls Lookup Tool and SafeCar app are among the resources available for shops to check for open recalls on behalf of their customers. Generally speaking, auto techs who have failed to properly address recalls while making repairs have faced lawsuits in the past. Last September, a Mississippi woman filed suit against Volvo Cars and the dealer that serviced her vehicle, alleging that their negligence led to a "severe life altering accident" in 2021.

The suit alleged that technicians assured the plaintiff that the vehicle was safe to drive when it was not, and that they failed to address a seat belt recall that was apparently outside the scope of the work the dealer was asked to perform.

Last June in Texas, a woman claimed a defective Takata airbag inflator allegedly not replaced by Ford or an OEM dealership was at fault for her losing an eye and sustaining other injuries in a June 2020 crash. The suit alleges that technicians assured the plaintiff that the vehicle was safe to drive when it was not, and that they failed to address a seat belt recall that was apparently outside the scope of the work the dealer was asked to perform.

Affected models include:

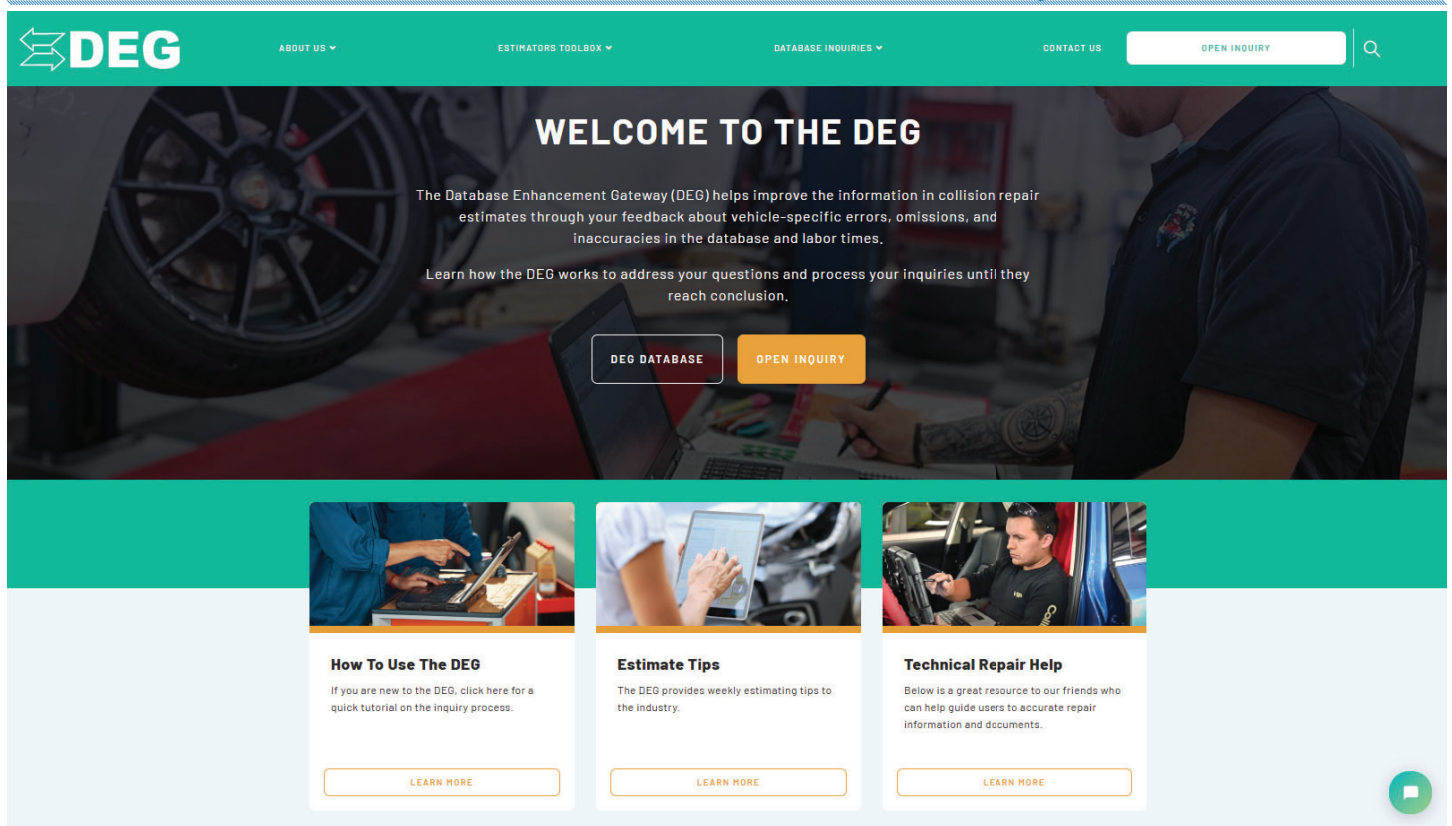
- 2001-2002 Honda Accord
- 2001-202 Honda Civic
- 2002 Honda CR-V
- 2002 Honda Odyssey
- 2003 Honda Pilot
- 2002-2003 Acura 3.2 TL
- 2003 Acura 3.2 CL

Those impacted by the recall can arrange repairs by calling Acura/Honda customer service at 888-234-2138 or by visiting the Takata website.

Source: [www.RepairerDrivenNews.com](http://www.RepairerDrivenNews.com)



## New DEG website boasts enhanced security measures, advanced analytics



The Database Enhancement Gateway (DEG) has launched a new website with updated features that allow visitors to more easily and securely access information.

The gateway, initially launched in 2008, helps improve information in the collision repair estimating databases through user feedback related to vehicle-specific errors, omissions, and inaccuracies. It is a free resource to the industry funded and managed by the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS), the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers (AASP), with support from additional individual donors.

The site's primary function is an inquiry process to allow repair planners, technicians and any estimating system end-user to submit questions about the information within the collision estimating products, to an administrator who works to manage the communication with the Information Providers (IPs) to gain clarification and resolutions. Often, the resolutions result in changes to the database, or additional clarifying language or additions of missing information that might be needed to write a complete and accurate estimate.

The process of using the website has remained largely the same, although the inquiry process has a new look and feel. Designers also updated the way it works with all web browsers, as it previously worked best with Google Chrome.

"Visitors of the site will see improved search functionality as well as a much faster, responsive, and intuitive experience," said website designer Nicholas Schoolcraft of Phoenix Solutions Group.

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“A fundamental component of the redesign was to make sure visitors had a seamless experience across all devices, from desktop and laptop computers to tablets and mobile phones. We wanted the site, as well as database inquiries, to be effortlessly consumed by visitors on any device. With the enhanced security measures in place and faster load times, visitors can feel good that DEG is doing its part to keep its data safe.”

Website improvements include:

- Enhanced security measures, including secure databases for information provider inquiries
- Advanced data and analytics capabilities
- Streamlined workflows
- Improved search and filtering for vehicle-specific information
- Improved media attachments process to insert into the inquiry resolution section

More information within the “Estimate Toolbox” section and a dedicated section with DEG videos as well as SCRS Quick Tip videos

Security was a major factor in creating and upgrading the DEG site, with designers working to ensure the highest level of security was maintained without hurting the user experience, Schoolcraft said.

“We invested in enhanced security measures that don’t slow loading times or make the user experience cumbersome. By taking these extra precautions, we’ve been able to make sure visitors get the best possible experience while still keeping their data secure,” he said. Designers developed a unique temporary token-based access system for each visitor, which is temporarily stored in a secure environment. Each of those tokens can be assigned privileges so that they can access the site’s database without having the ability to see sensitive information.

“Phoenix Solution Group’s No. 1 priority was ensuring the security of the data we receive cannot be accessed by anyone,” said DEG administrator Danny Gredinberg. “We understand that the information can be sensitive and was our No. 1 priority when redeveloping the website. Each user that accesses the information only has a certain level of access depending on the permissions assigned to them for the specific information necessary to complete their review of the inquiry and database.”

On top of a new redesign, the site was optimized for mobile and tablet accessibility, making it easier for users to navigate it while on the go.

“We are hoping this will encourage additional use straight from the shop floor,” Gredinberg said. “When adding attachments to support the inquiry, you can quickly add photos, videos, and various documents right on the spot to streamline the inquiry process.”

**Source:** [www.RepairerDrivenNews.com](http://www.RepairerDrivenNews.com)

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