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WORKSHOP

VOLUME 54 | NUMBER 6  
JUNE 2015



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## AUTOMECHANIKA CHICAGO TRAINS MORE THAN 2,000

INAUGURAL APRIL EVENT WELCOMES SHOP OWNERS, TECHNICIANS TO SEMINARS, SHOW FLOOR AND TRAINING DEMONSTRATIONS

TECHNICAL

### ALUMINUM PAINTING PROCESSES

FOLLOW PAINT MANUFACTURER, OEM SPECS TO ENSURE PROPER PROCESS

MANAGEMENT

### BECOME A PROFIT CHAMPION

5 EASY STEPS TO HELP IMPROVE PAINT, MATERIALS MARGINS

TRENDING

### AXALTA, GFS DEMO GIVES HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

WORKING SPRAY BOOTH AT AUTOMECHANIKA CHICAGO OFFERS REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE, HANDS-ON TRAINING



TECHNICAL TRAINING

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Let paint manufacturers help you build a prep program in your shop

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**10** Dynamic, fresh, engaging and smart — that is the new Axalta that the company worked to show to attendees at Automechanika Chicago.

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**FEATURE**

## HOW CONSOLIDATION AFFECTS YOUR BUSINESS

BY BRAD MEWES | ABRN BLOGGER

Take a closer look at consolidation in the automotive industry to see its true impact on you, your staff and your business.

[COMMUNITY PULSE]

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**WHAT IS ABRN COMMUNITY?** The ABRN community is an online NETWORK for your business. It's a place to go to post articles, blogs, videos, photos and audio clips to share ideas with other collision repairers. Community content is used in ABRN's twice weekly e-newsletters. Check it out at <http://workshop.search-autoparts.com>



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BY JIM COMPTON | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

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**PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**

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**PRODUCT FOCUS**



**50** BASF's R-M Onyx HD family of Low VOC finishes can be mixed as either a waterborne or solventborne formula to adapt to your application needs.

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- Remanufactured/Rebuilt Products

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**BONUS ONLINE CONTENT**

**ABRN HOW2 VIDEO GALLERY**



JUNE'S FEATURED VIDEO  
**YOU HAVE THREE BUSINESS CHOICES TODAY**

[URL [ABRN.COM/3CHOICES](http://ABRN.COM/3CHOICES)]

**BLOG SPOTLIGHT**

**SERVICE KING** launches military veterans hiring initiative

Service King Collision Repair Centers has launched an aggressive long-term veterans hiring initiative under the title Mission 2 Hire.

[URL [ABRN.COM/MISSION2HIRE](http://ABRN.COM/MISSION2HIRE)]



**BLOG SPOTLIGHT**

**HAITI ARISE** aims to fight the country's rampant poverty and lack of education by teaching skills that allow Haitians to provide for themselves and their families while improving their communities. The organization seeks industry involvement to help improve infrastructure and offer financial support for continued success.

[URL [ABRN.COM/HAITI](http://ABRN.COM/HAITI)]

**THIS SPRING**, I-CAR began a new quarterly schedule for course launches and updates.

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ONLINE COVERAGE

**THERE'S MORE ONLINE:**
**KNOWING THE RIGHT MARKETING NUMBERS**

As shop owners and managers have become more aware of what they need to do to properly market their shop online, the need for information has shifted to properly measuring that marketing. So in the last year, Danny Sanchez, CEO of Autoshop Solutions, developed a new class to address these needs. "The Numbers Don't Lie" taught Automechanika Chicago attendees numbers and benchmarks they need to pay attention to when it comes to Internet marketing.

 »» [ABRN.COM/THERIGHTNUMBERS](http://ABRN.COM/THERIGHTNUMBERS)
**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT DOESN'T ALWAYS TRANSLATE TO LEAN**

Create a culture of continuous improvement in your shop by encouraging training, cultivating forward thinking and being open to new ideas. Mike Anderson with Collision Advice, and an ABRN columnist, shared these and other ways for shops to continue forward progress in the training course, "Continuous Improvement Best Practices," on Friday, April 24 during Automechanika Chicago.

 »» [ABRN.COM/ALWAYSIMPROVE](http://ABRN.COM/ALWAYSIMPROVE)
**DON'T MISS AUTOMECHANIKA FRANKFURT 2016!**

Looking for an international Automechanika experience? The brand's flagship show, Automechanika Frankfurt returns in 2016. The show is slated for Sept. 13-17, 2016 at Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH.

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**SHOW WRAP UP**
**automechanika**  
CHICAGO

**EVENT WRAP UP**
**Automechanika Chicago trains more than 2,000 shop owners, technicians**

CHICAGO — Automechanika Chicago opened its doors April 24-26, bringing to fruition a goal the event's parent company, Messe Frankfurt, has been working toward for nearly 18 years: to bring the Automechanika brand to the United States.

The largest trade show dedicated to the automotive aftermarket industry and high-end technical training garnered a successful turnout with a diverse group of exhibiting companies and nearly 6,000 attendees. More than 450 exhibitors from 23 countries showcased the newest tools, equipment and products for the automotive aftermarket industry. The event was also declared as the biggest platform for industry training, hosting more than 100 seminars and workshops with more than 2,000 shop owners and technicians attending the sessions.

"Our passion for the industry and the opportunity to bring the aftermarket manufacturers and suppliers together with the shop owners and technicians has fulfilled a dream," said Dennis Smith, president of Messe Frankfurt North America. "We appreciate the support of the industry in making this a reality and we look forward to an even

»» CONTINUES ON PAGE 9

**BREAKING NEWS**
**PAINT BOOTH DEMO**
**AXALTA DRIVES NEW INITIATIVES, PAINT DEMO**

CHICAGO — Dynamic, fresh, engaging and smart — that is the new Axalta.

At Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26, Axalta worked with show attendees and customers to showcase its 145-year history, but also its brand flexibility, said Laurie Kronenberg, strategic marketing director, North American Refinish with Axalta Coating Systems.

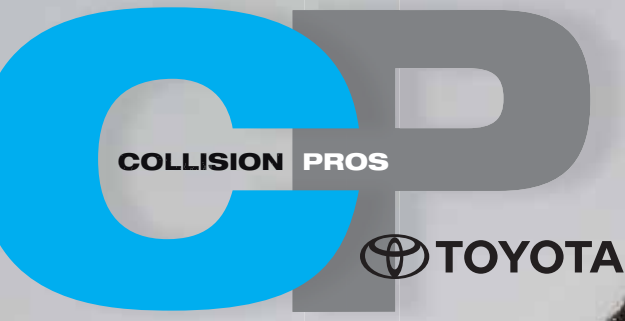
Axalta also launched its Axalta Learning Campus, a place to sign up for virtual, eLearning and instructor-led training.

Axalta teamed up with Global Finishing Solutions on the show floor to offer three days of opportunity to spray the newest paint-

»» CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

Photos: Messe Frankfurt





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Spring 2015



## Restoring Sound-Deadening Material

How to Replicate the Original Appearance for Customers

## Calibration Can Help Save a Life

Toyota Requirements for Occupant Classification Systems

## Two Easy Steps to Enroll in Training

Discover the New CR&R Training Website

Joseph DiDonato  
Collision Training Administrator

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## Providing the Support You Need

AT TOYOTA, OUR PASSION FOR THE VEHICLES we make doesn't end when a car drives off the assembly line or out of the dealer lot. We believe in our vehicles and we believe that each customer deserves an excellent experience, even in the event that they have repairs carried out on their vehicles.

We know that many collision centers feel just as passionate about our cars and our customers as we do. That's why we strive to work hand in hand with body shops to provide them with the support they need to deliver safe, high-quality repairs and superior customer satisfaction.

In this issue, we detail many of the resources Toyota makes available to collision centers. You can read about new online courses, available soon, which provide you with information about paint, welding, body repair techniques and more. You can learn about all of these subjects in a convenient, self-paced online format.

This issue's Best Practices Showcase details a Toyota-pioneered method for recreating the original factory appearance when replacing sound-deadening material. The article on occupant classification system calibration gives you Toyota's recommended guidelines for working with this important safety-related technology.

Collision centers are valued partners. Whether in the form of training, best practices or repair information, Toyota aims to provide the resources you need to get the job done right.

Kathy Capozza  
Wholesale Marketing Administrator Sr.  
Toyota Sales and Marketing | Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.  
Collision Pros Magazine | [info@collisionprosmagazine.com](mailto:info@collisionprosmagazine.com)



**"We know that many collision centers feel just as passionate about our cars and our customers as we do. That's why we strive to work hand in hand with body shops to provide them with the support they need to deliver safe, high-quality repairs and superior customer satisfaction."**

— Kathy Capozza



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# Restoring Sound-Deadening Material

TOYOTA, LEXUS AND SCION VEHICLES FEATURE FACTORY-INSTALLED SOUND-DEADENING MATERIAL in the floor pan area. This material helps suppress road noise that may enter the cabin and makes travel more comfortable for passengers.

## A LONGTIME CHALLENGE

Since factory sound-proofing material is installed by a robot during the manufacturing process, it can be challenging to replicate the original factory appearance for customers.

"Body shops have historically encountered considerable difficulty when replacing this material because they are unable to replicate the look of the original material," says Joseph DiDonato, Collision Training Administrator, Technical & Body Training Department, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. "I have created a simple process that replicates the original look of the sound-deadening material using the replacement material."

Replicating the look and feel of the original material allows collision centers to live up to the commitment of returning each vehicle to the original factory specifications.

## HOW TO

- Step 1: Use asphalt sheeting.
- Step 2: Take precise measurements of the sound-proofing material you are replacing before you remove the original material.
- Step 3: Using your measurements, cut a replacement strip from the asphalt sheeting.
- Step 4: Warm up the UV material with an infrared heat lamp or other heat source. This will make the material pliable.
- Step 5: Once the material is malleable, use a threaded rod from the hardware store to create the right texture by rolling the rod back and forth over the sheeting.
- Step 6: Immediately cool the strip by spraying it with water or submerging it in water. This ensures the material will retain its new texture.
- Step 7: Paint the material to match the original coloring.

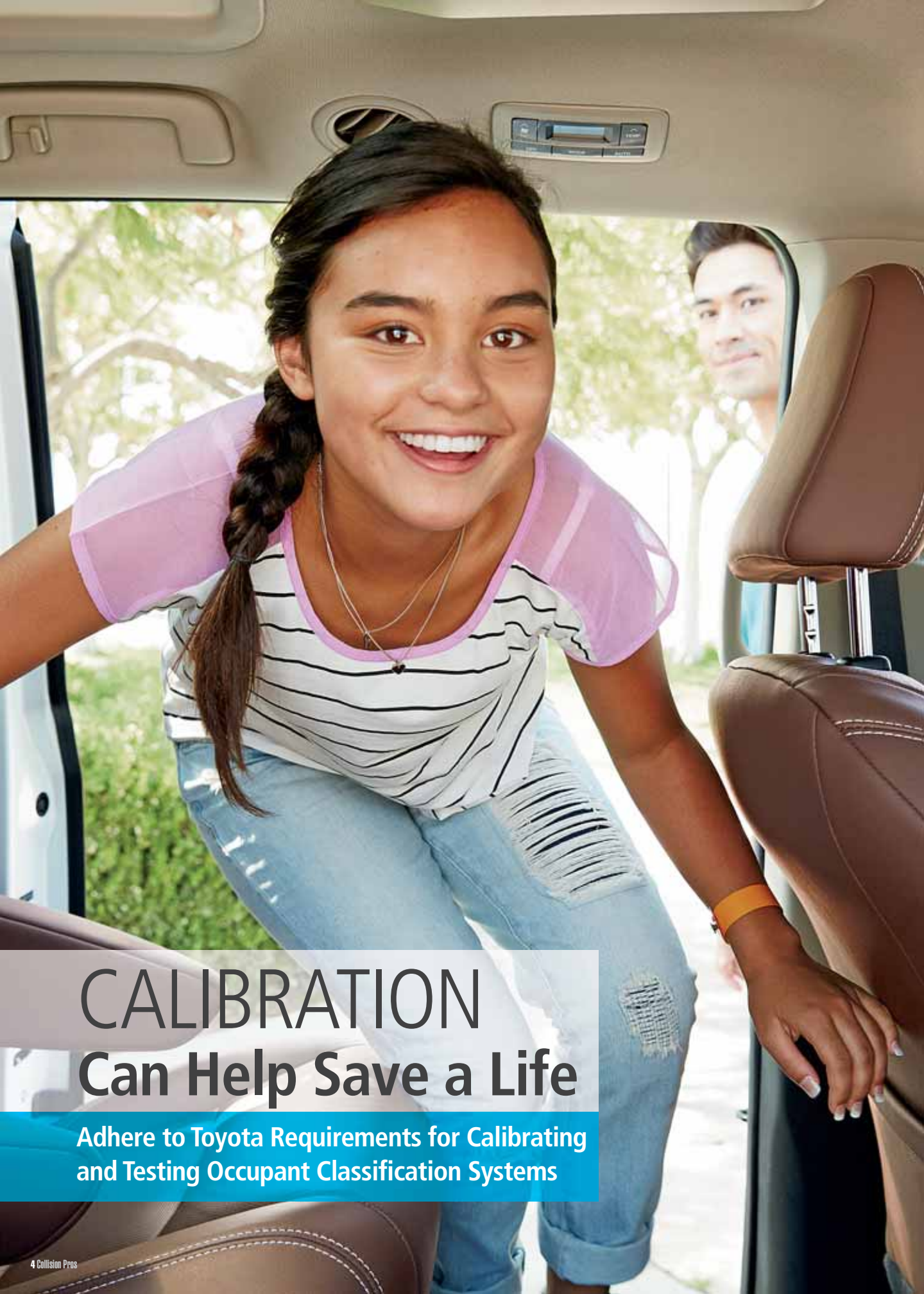
For additional reference material relating to sound-absorbing materials, see CRIB #159—*Corrosion Prevention and Sound-Absorbing Measures*. 📄



Keep various sized threaded rods available so you can closely match the texture of the original sound-proofing material.



3M asphalt sheeting, part number 08840, was used for this demonstration.



# CALIBRATION Can Help Save a Life

Adhere to Toyota Requirements for Calibrating  
and Testing Occupant Classification Systems

Frontal airbags have helped to save lives and prevent many injuries; however, special care must be taken when children are sitting in the front seat. To help protect these passengers, Toyota vehicles are equipped with an Occupant Classification System (OCS) that detects the weight of the occupant in the passenger seat and disables the passenger-side front airbags if a child is seated there. Because the accuracy of the OCS can have significant consequences, Toyota has requirements for OCS calibration after a collision.

#### THE OCS IS COMPOSED OF:

- An Occupant Detection ECU that judges whether the front passenger seat is occupied based on signals from sensors and from the passenger seat belt buckle switch.
- Occupant Detection Sensors that send signals to the ECU in accordance with the weight of the occupant.
- A front passenger seat belt buckle switch that detects whether or not the front passenger seat belt is fastened.
- An SRS warning light that alerts the driver of a malfunction in the airbag system.
- Airbag ON/OFF indicator light that informs the driver whether the airbag and outer belt assembly are active. In the event of a malfunction, both the Airbag OFF indicator light and the SRS warning light come on.



- The vehicle is brought to the workshop for repair due to an accident or a collision.

#### WHY CALIBRATE

“Just as a bathroom scale must be properly calibrated to show your accurate weight, OCS sensors require precise zero point calibration to correctly determine the weight of the passenger,” says Eric Mendoza, Collision Repair & Refinish Training Assistant Manager, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. “Toyota’s position on zero point calibration is stated in the Toyota Repair Manual. OCS calibration is an essential part of returning a vehicle to its pre-accident condition.”

Toyota requires a zero point OCS calibration and sensitivity check when any of the following occurs:

- The occupant detection ECU is replaced.
- Accessories (seatback tray and seat cover, etc.) are installed.
- The front passenger seat is removed from the vehicle.
- One of the bolts used to install the front passenger seat is removed.
- The passenger airbag indicator light comes on when the front passenger seat is unoccupied.

#### PRECAUTIONS ARE PARAMOUNT

Anything that puts pressure on the seat can throw off the OCS reading. To ensure the accuracy of your calibration, always observe these precautions:

- Make sure that the front passenger seat is unoccupied before performing the operation.
- Park the vehicle on a level surface.
- Remove all objects from the front passenger seat.
- Do not put a heavy load in the front passenger seatback pocket or attach a seatback table to the front passenger seatback.
- Do not put objects under the front passenger seat.
- Keep the front passenger seatback as upright as possible.
- Make sure that child restraint systems installed on the rear seat never come into contact with the front seatback.
- Never kick the front passenger seat or subject it to severe impacts.

#### GETTING STARTED

To perform the zero point calibration and sensitivity test, you will need a weight and the Toyota Techstream scan tool. Techstream provides immediate access to the detailed, model-specific OCS calibration procedure information.

After you have taken all precautions, position the front passenger seat position as follows:

- Rearmost slide position
- Lowest headrest height
- Upright recline angle

Next, place the weight so that it touches the seatback. Then proceed with the following steps:

- Turn off the ignition switch.
- Connect Techstream to the DLC3 connector.
- Turn the ignition switch to ON and turn the Techstream on.
- Enter the following menus: Body Electrical/Occupant Detection/Utility/Zero Point Calibration and Sensitivity Check.
- Follow the prompts on the Techstream screen to perform the zero point calibration and sensitivity check. You will get readings of “Zero Point Calibration Is Complete” and “Sensitivity Check Is Complete” when the checks are OK.

If the zero point calibration does not complete, refer to the repair manual information for additional assistance or send the vehicle to a qualified service department for diagnosis of the problem.

When you have successfully completed zero point calibration on the Occupant Classification System, you have helped to bring the vehicle back to its original factory specifications. Thanks to Occupant Classification Systems, airbags are safer than ever. By adhering to Toyota requirements, you play a crucial role in ensuring that they work effectively—and in doing so, you are helping to protect Toyota passengers from harm. 🚗



# Strengthening Our Partnership



## Get the Information Now!

- [techinfo.toyota.com](http://techinfo.toyota.com)—find Toyota's Technical Information System (TIS) here
- [www.toyotapartsandservice.com](http://www.toyotapartsandservice.com)—your latest parts and service information
- [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com)—sign up for Collision Repair & Refinish training today
- [www.autopartsbridge.com](http://www.autopartsbridge.com)—easily order parts online

## TOYOTA'S COMMITMENT—HELPING PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY AND SAFE REPAIRS FOR EVERY VEHICLE

TOYOTA IS WELL AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES COLLISION REPAIR CENTERS ARE FACED WITH EVERY DAY AND IS COMMITTED TO LAYING THE FRAMEWORK FOR SHOPS TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER A CONSISTENT, HIGH-QUALITY AND SAFE REPAIR FOR EVERY VEHICLE. Toyota is also aware that new technologies, new materials and constantly evolving vehicle manufacturing processes make this even more difficult. As a result, Toyota continues to close the gap between collision technicians and OEM training materials and technical requirements. The company is committed to supporting collision centers and ultimately helping you to deliver the best repairs for your customers. Here's how we do that.

### CONSISTENCY

Toyota's commitment to high-quality safe repairs begins during the vehicle manufacturing process. Each vehicle is manufactured with consistency in mind. For example, high-strength steel is typically located in similar places on each vehicle. That way, technicians know that they can look to places such as frame rails, door intrusion beams, fenders, hoods and door pillars to find this particular material. Consistency like this makes it easier for technicians to learn and understand how to repair Toyota vehicles.

In addition, Toyota recommendations are consistent across vehicles. As an example, Toyota never recommends using a sleeve for welding but instead recommends the use of panel bonding adhesives in combination with welds in specific locations. When guidelines are consistent, it's easier for shops to accurately and efficiently perform collision repair work.

### INFORMATION

The commitment to helping ensure high-quality and safe repairs extends to making sure that collision centers have the information they need to get the job done right. Toyota makes available all vehicle-specific repair information and all mechanical repair information, as well as Collision Repair Information Bulletins (CRIBs). This information can be accessed with a subscription to the Technical Information System (TIS), which can be found at [techinfo.toyota.com](http://techinfo.toyota.com). You can also find tips and additional information at [www.toyotapartsandservice.com](http://www.toyotapartsandservice.com). The latest *Collision Pros*, plus a selection of CRIBs and Toyota Service Bulletins (TSBs), can be found at [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com).

Finally, Toyota provides direct-from-the-manufacturer training that teaches technicians how to restore vehicles back to the original manufacturer specifications. Extensive instruction is offered both online and hands-on in a classroom setting at three training centers across the United States. Training centers are located in West Caldwell, New Jersey; Torrance, California; and Jacksonville, Florida.

### PARTS CATALOGUE

Toyota was one of the first automakers in the United States to make the full dealer parts catalog available to the collision repair industry. This helps collision centers fully understand the scope of a repair by letting them see all of the parts that will be needed to accomplish the job. This can help estimators write a more accurate estimate and help shops allocate time and resources more efficiently.

With an up-to-date parts catalogue, Auto PartsBridge is the most comprehensive online parts ordering system—it takes the guesswork out of parts ordering. It is the leader in the industry and can help you with efficiency and profit margins when using Genuine Toyota Parts.

Auto PartsBridge features include:

- Ability to place VIN-specific orders—get the right parts the first time and reduce cycle time
- Direct integration to estimating systems—seamlessly transfer orders and quotes to dealers
- Single click online ordering—available around the clock
- Competitive quotes from dealers—get the best fit part at the best price

The system also includes color photos and fitment instructions for frequently searched parts and tools that help technicians find the right part for a particular application. Auto PartsBridge is offered at no cost to collision centers working with dealerships that actively use Auto PartsBridge. Contact your local Toyota dealership for more information.

### COMING SOON

Toyota is constantly striving to bridge the gap and provide the information collision centers need to deliver the best repairs possible to their customers. The Collision Repair & Refinish website is being enhanced to add a host of exciting new features. Coming soon, users can expect a blog and a new Facebook page. Toyota is committed to being an ongoing partner and to adding valuable, new resources whenever possible. 📌



Go to [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com)  
for the latest Collision Repair  
& Refinish training news and  
course openings

# Two Easy Steps to Enroll in Training

ON THE NEW COLLISION REPAIR & REFINISH TRAINING WEBSITE you can browse course selections and, in a matter of minutes, be registered to take a Toyota instructor-led training course. The website incorporates an online calendar and registration function that make it fast and easy to enroll in training. Want to know how to register online? We'll talk you through the process.

## GET STARTED

Once you've decided which course you'd like to enroll in, click the registration tab on the site. You'll be prompted to enter your Secure Personal Identification Number (SPIN) prior to registering (See: Get a SPIN). Once you've entered your SPIN, you'll be taken to a calendar view of the courses.

1. Click the course and date you are interested in on the calendar. When the dialog box opens, select More.
2. On the upper right hand corner, select the link under "please click here to register," and then enter your email when prompted.
3. Fill out all required information and then click Continue. Be sure to use the email address at which you would like to receive your confirmation. Please note, all registrants must have a valid SPIN.
4. Confirm that all information is correct and that you are registering for the right class, on the right day, at the right training center. Take note of whether the class you have registered for is a one-day or two-day course.
5. Submit your registration.





## GET A SPIN

In order to be eligible to take instructor-led and online training, you must have a valid SPIN. The SPIN is used to keep track of your training accomplishments and certification requirements. To get a SPIN, first fill out the SPIN registration form found on [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com). Independent shops must be sponsored by a local Toyota,

Lexus or Scion dealership. Choose a dealership in your area and contact the wholesale parts manager, or contact a dealership that you already have a relationship with.

Employees who work at a dealership-owned collision center are advised to contact their body shop managers to be issued a SPIN.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Before enrolling in instructor-led training, be sure to take all necessary prerequisites. You can learn more about the prerequisites required for all courses by viewing the Course Map on [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com). Completion of all pre-work courses ensures that you're prepared for the instructor-led training.

Payment for all Collision Repair & Refinish courses is currently handled through billing the sponsoring dealership for each attendee. Independent shops should work out a method of reimbursement with their sponsoring dealership.

You are eligible to attend Collision Repair & Refinish training if:

- You are a collision repair professional who works for a Toyota, Lexus or Scion owned collision repair facility.
- You are an independent affiliate collision repair professional working for a sponsored referral shop for a Toyota, Lexus or Scion dealer.
- You are an independent affiliate collision repair professional working for a shop that is sponsored as a Toyota, Lexus or Scion wholesale parts account.
- You are a professional in an associated collision repair-related industry such as insurance companies, state agencies, educators or tool and equipment manufacturers.

## QUICK NAVIGATION

Have questions about navigating the rest of the new [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com)? Here are some helpful tips for the rest of the site:

- An at-a-glance overview of the Collision Repair & Refinish courses of study can be found by clicking the CR&R Course of Study.
- Course descriptions and detailed course information is located on the Courses page.
- A list view of upcoming courses can be found under the Calendar tab.
- Information about training locations, certification requirements and SPIN can be found by visiting CR&R Info.
- A resources library, including back issues of *Collision Pros* magazine, can be found under the Tech Info tab.

The [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com) website is your resource for the latest Collision Repair & Refinish training news and course openings. 📧



# New Required Courses



“A great benefit of adding these courses to the requirements is that it gives technicians a chance to deepen their knowledge of welding and safety requirements for hybrid vehicle repair.”

– James Meyer,  
Senior Technical Training  
Administrator, Toyota  
Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.



## Deepen Your Knowledge

The certification requirements for becoming a Toyota Certified Collision Repair Technician and a Toyota Master Collision Repair Technician have changed. New courses have been added to the requirements. The changes were effective as of January 1, 2015, so if you are looking to become certified or have fallen out of compliance with the requirements, sign up for the required courses now.

“What the new requirements mean for Toyota Certified Collision Center (TCCC) technicians is that certified technicians who have not successfully completed the new courses lost their ‘certified’ status when the courses became a requirement,” explains James Meyers, Senior Technical Training Administrator, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. “A great benefit of adding these courses to the requirements is that it gives technicians a chance to deepen their knowledge of welding and safety requirements for hybrid vehicle repair.”

### NEW COURSES

The new courses for certified technicians are:

- **T300 Welding Techniques for Collision Repair**—This course teaches students how to interpret welding specifications, educates them about the types of welds specified, as well as how to tune a welder, perform a quality weld and test weld strength. Students should take pre-work course *PB300 Welding Techniques for Collision Repair* prior to attending.

- **T601 Hybrid Collision Repair**—This course teaches students how to safely work on Toyota and Lexus hybrid vehicles. Students should take pre-work course *P070 Hybrid General Service* prior to attending.

The new courses for master technicians are:

- **B503 Steering & Suspension Analysis & Repair**—The objective of this course is to teach students how to analyze and repair suspension-related issues. Students should take pre-work course *PB503 Steering & Suspension Analysis & Repair* prior to attending.
- **T602 Advanced Hybrid System for Collision Repair**—Helps students understand how to safely perform collision repairs to Toyota and Lexus hybrid vehicles. Students should take pre-work course *PB602 Advanced Hybrid System for Collision Repair* prior to attending.

The collision repair certification requirements are guidelines for collision centers participating in the Certified Collision Center Program. Certified collision centers must have a minimum number of certified technicians in order to be eligible for certified status.

For more information about certification requirements and to sign up for these courses, visit [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com). 📞



For more information about certification requirements and to sign up for courses, visit [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com).

# Help Prime Your Success!

## NEW ONLINE COURSES FOR COLLISION REPAIR PROFESSIONALS

TOYOTA IS EXCITED TO OFFER NEW ONLINE COLLISION REPAIR & REFINISH TRAINING COURSES THIS JUNE. The new courses touch on subjects from painting to structural repair techniques. Each online course is a prerequisite for the related instructor-led course and provides valuable information that helps you prepare to make the most out of your time at the training center. Here's a sneak peek!

### **PB200 COLOR MATCHING FOR PAINTERS**

This course provides a solid foundation for color-matching. Upon successful completion, paint technicians will be ready to:

- Identify color judgement variables
- Use color reference materials to help make color adjustment decisions
- Identify color adjustments necessary to get a blendable match

Following the completion of this course, students will be ready to take the instructor-led course *T200 Color Matching for Painters*.

### **PB250 ADVANCED PAINTING TECHNIQUES**

Advanced Painting Techniques provides information about factory coatings, application processes and advanced refinish strategies. Students who complete this online training will be ready to:

- Explain the factory paint coating and application process
- Identify materials necessary to replicate factory coatings
- Identify Toyota-approved paint blending processes

Following the successful completion of this course, students will be ready for the instructor-led *T250 Advanced Painting Techniques*.

### **PB301 NON-STRUCTURAL BODY REPAIR TECHNIQUES**

Technicians who are interested in learning about how to perform non-structural body repairs and welded panel replacement should take this online module. Completing this online training will prepare students to:

- Evaluate and describe primary and secondary damage
- Identify precautions to be observed when performing non-structural repairs to Toyota vehicles
- Identify characteristics of high-strength steel

When this course has been successfully completed, students will be ready for the instructor-led course *T301 Non-Structural Body Repair Techniques*.

### **PB460 STRUCTURAL BODY REPAIR TECHNIQUES**

This course provides collision repair professionals with an advanced understanding of structural body repair. This course teaches technicians to:

- Identify and explain crash energy-absorbing body and frame features
- Perform a systematic structural damage diagnosis
- Identify precautions that apply to performing structural repairs

After completing this class, students are prepared to take the instructor-led *T460 Structural Body Repair Techniques*.

Ready to take one of these courses? Visit [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com) today. 📱

**“Online courses are flexible and allow you to learn at your convenience. They are a great way to increase your knowledge and skills.”**

**– James Meyer, Senior Technical Training Administrator, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.**



# CP The Last Word

Refer to the training calendar at [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com) for the latest training schedule.

## THE TRAINING CALENDAR



[WWW.CRRTRAINING.COM](http://WWW.CRRTRAINING.COM)

### WEST CALDWELL, NJ

- 06/03 300 Welding Techniques for Collision Repair
- 06/04 601 Hybrid Collision Repair
- 06/09 460 Structural Body Repair Techniques
- 06/11 503 Steering & Suspension Analysis & Repair
- 06/16 601 Hybrid Collision Repair
- 06/17 602 Advanced Hybrid Collision Repair
- 06/18 502 Body Electrical Diagnosis and Repair

### JACKSONVILLE, FL

- 06/15 502 Body Electrical Diagnosis and Repair
- 06/17 601 Hybrid Collision Repair
- 06/18 602 Advanced Hybrid Collision Repair
- 06/19 503 Steering & Suspension Analysis & Repair
- 06/22 301 Non-Structural Body Repair Techniques
- 06/24 460 Structural Body Repair Techniques
- 06/26 300 Welding Techniques for Collision Repair
- 07/14 200 Color Matching for Painters
- 07/16 250 Advanced Painting Techniques

NEW JERSEY



FLORIDA



CALIFORNIA



### TORRANCE, CA

- 06/09 200 Color Matching for Painters
- 06/11 250 Advanced Painting Techniques
- 06/16 502 Body Electrical Diagnosis and Repair
- 06/18 504 Air Conditioning for Collision Repair

### Can't find what you're looking for?

More courses can be found at [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com)



### LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Collision Repair & Refinish Training Is Getting Social. Find us by searching for

**TOYOTA COLLISION REPAIR**

For a complete training schedule and the latest information on Toyota's Collision Repair & Refinish training, visit [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com).

## TECHNICAL WEBSITES



## YOU NEED TO KNOW

### [www.crrtraining.com](http://www.crrtraining.com)

Get Toyota and Lexus Collision Repair & Refinish Training information

### [autopartsbridge.com](http://autopartsbridge.com)

Order all Toyota and Scion parts and components—clips, fasteners and decals—needed for a repair

### [techinfo.toyota.com](http://techinfo.toyota.com)

Get vital information you'll need to effectively service most Toyota, Lexus and Scion vehicles

### [toyotapartsandservice.com](http://toyotapartsandservice.com)

Search and order Genuine Toyota Parts right from your computer

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

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**TOYOTA**

**WHOLESALE PARTS**

**THE COMMUNICATOR AWARDS**

**APEX AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE**

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&gt;&gt; CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

## AUTOMECHANIKA CHICAGO TRAINS MORE THAN 2,000 SHOP OWNERS, TECHNICIANS

more successful event in 2017.”

Messe Frankfurt, producer of Automechanika, the leading international brand in the automotive trade and aftermarket arena, and UBM Advanstar, one of the largest tradeshow organizers in the U.S. and publisher of *ABRN*, *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World*, joined forces to launch Automechanika Chicago. The show was the 14th Automechanika event around the globe, and the first-ever in the United States. The next show is scheduled for Spring 2017.

“As a global brand, we are happy to introduce Automechanika to the United States. We found the right focus for the

show and partnered with the right organization to bring a unique platform that includes high level training to shop owners and technicians,” said Michael Johannes, brand manager, Automechanika.

The three-day event was characterized by a compelling opening ceremony with remarks from Detlef Braun, member of the Executive Board of Messe Frankfurt GmbH; Don Welsh, CEO/President of Choose Chicago; and Chris DeMoulin, Executive Vice President for Automotive, UBM Advanstar.

“Chicago was selected because of its central location and easy access for attendees. It was the tens of thousands

of service and collision repair shop owners, managers and techs who communicated their need for an event designed especially for them, which in many ways brought about this dynamic event. We are excited to bring their desires to fruition,” stated DeMoulin.

The trade show was focused on three main areas: innovation, education and inspiration. In addition to new products and advanced technologies being presented, show floor demonstrations and training seminars allowed shop owners and technicians to meet suppliers and vendors from around the world and to learn about the latest trends.

## SELL AND STREAMLINE TO BOOST PROFITS

BY **ABRN STAFF**

CHICAGO — Sell more on the front end while containing costs on the back end to get the most profit out of your shop.

Ryan Ross and Jeff Rhoades with AkzoNobel taught seminar attendees how to measure profitability, sell materials and contain costs during their presentation, “Optimizing Paint Material Profitability” on Friday, April 24 during Automechanika Chicago.

Measuring and benchmarking material profitability is the first step in better understanding profits, Ross said. He and Rhoades discussed how to calculate paint material profitability, account for sales and costs properly and identify key performance indicators for paint materials.

Selling more paint materials is also a way to boost profitability, Rhoades said. It is important that shops hone their estimating skills to ensure they are getting paid for every task they perform.

Ross and Rhoades also addressed containing paint material costs through

technical standards and training, a stringent inventory management process, waste reduction and safety and mixing room efficiency.

Shops were encouraged to follow the “you have to spend money to make money” adage, but only when they were able to truly understand what they are spending and if they are, in fact, optimizing their profit on paint materials.

“Your business will benefit when you have sufficient paint material inventory to repair vehicles in a timely manner while optimizing paint material profitability,” Rhoades said.

## CHIEF TO HELP TECHS WITH ENTIRE COLLISION REPAIR PROCESS

BY **ABRN STAFF**

CHICAGO — Chief Automotive Technologies offered two new products, teased a third and pushed a rebranding during the inaugural Automechanika Chicago show in April.

The Chief Fume Extractor collects weld fumes at their source, protecting against breathing harmful airborne particulates. The extractor offers a ProTura Nanofiber cartridge filter that delivers a combination of high efficiency, low operating costs and longer filter life.

It also features a MERV 15 rating — short for Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value. These ratings range from 1-15 and the higher the value, the more efficient the filter in trapping airborne particles.

The extractor has an ember tray and can be equipped with a built-in light and arc detector, allowing the extractor to turn on automatically.

The new PNP90 rivet gun was also featured at Chief’s booth. The pneumatic tool is “a powerful unit and gets the job done right,” said David Fischmer, marketing manager with VSG, Chief’s parent company. The tool differs from a battery-operated gun because it delivers the same power every time, saves time and is lighter for the technician.

The extractor and rivet gun are both part of the company’s product line

expansion into “fusion” products shops need to properly repair collision-damaged vehicles. A full line of spot and MIG/MAG welders, previously marketed under the Elektron brand, will now be branded Chief Elektron Fusion technologies.

“Elektron is a very well-known European brand, but in the United States, Elektron products are sold through the Chief distribution channels,” Fischmer said. The branding change will streamline the brand for the customer and help improve understanding of and exposure for the product line.

Chief also had its new immersion separator system, not yet available for purchase, on the show floor. The system removes sanding dust from the air to ensure shop safety and prevent explosions.



&gt;&gt; CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

## AXALTA FOCUSES ON NEW INITIATIVES, PAINT DEMO

ing products, experience cutting-edge booth capabilities and get hands-on training from leading industry instructors.

A Semi-Downdraft Ultra XD paint booth by GFS featured 11 windows for visitors to watch two daily training presentations by Axalta instructors focused on waterborne and primer applications.

"Our stuff is so easy. What will stun attendees is the speed. What they need to get a grip on is what their throughput could look like if they are using a wet-on-wet system," said Chris Edwards, application specialist with Axalta. "There is a difference in application and technique used when spraying wet on wet, but it's pretty easy stuff to use."

Attendees suited up and tried spraying the paint lines themselves in GFS' Ultra XD paint booth.

Standoblue paint in the Standox product line was featured Friday, April 24; Saturday, April 25 highlighted Cromax Pro; and Sunday, April 26 Spies Hecker Hi Tec and Cromax Mosaic were available for test spraying.

Axalta instructors performed spot repairs and complete full panel paints on Ford F-150 aluminum fenders. Attendees suited up to try all the paint lines on mini hoods within the spray booth. Technicians also sampled UV primers and used a UV curing light.

3M provided sandpaper, masking tools and booth coverings for the demonstrations, while SATA and Anest Iwata supplied spray guns.

## ALUMINUM REPAIR

## PROPERLY ANALYZE ALUMINUM DAMAGE

BY ABRN STAFF

CHICAGO — Aluminum damage analysis is not an entirely different process than that used with steel, but there are some inherent differences.

Attendees of the "Aluminum Damage Analysis" class, presented Saturday, April 25 at Automechanika Chicago by ABRN Technical Editor Larry Montanez of P&L Consultants, learned the different joining methods used by OEMs for the repair of collision damaged aluminum-intensive vehicles.

Montanez also reviewed the required equipment, tools and training needed, OEM certification programs available and the differences between steel and aluminum vehicle damage analysis.

Aluminum and steel damage analysis are similar, but there are differences you need to look for and different materials needed to repair these vehicles, Montanez says.

"Many are disillusioned or misinformed about aluminum repair," he says. "You have multiple different ways to attach a panel, multiple different types of rivets and adhesion methods. It is important that as technicians, you read the OEM information, not only to find out the actual materials they are looking for, such as when setting the car up on a frame machine and fixing the car to the bench, but also the types of machines required."

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Only those that pass our tests earn the right to be called CAPA Certified replacement parts and carry the distinctive yellow and blue CAPA Seal.

Those that don't pass—whether they're made of inferior materials, don't meet safety standards or don't fit correctly—will never be CAPA Certified. You'd be wise to steer clear of them.

So remind your customer's claims adjuster to specify only CAPA Certified replacement parts by name.

The ones with the yellow and blue CAPA Seal. And after the work is done attach the CAPA Seals right to your invoice as proof your shop uses only quality replacement parts.

Your customer wasn't driving a lemon before the accident: you can make sure they're not driving one after.



*The CAPA Seal is your proof a replacement part is CAPA Certified. If it isn't on the part, don't even start.*



[CAPAcertified.org](http://CAPAcertified.org)

*If it isn't CAPA Certified, it isn't a genuine replacement part*



Want to see what happens to a replacement bumper that isn't CAPA Certified? Check out the video at [CAPAcertified.org/crash](http://CAPAcertified.org/crash)

## ADHESIVE USE

## VEHICLE BODY CONSTRUCTION DRIVING ADHESIVE USE

CHICAGO — As vehicle body construction becomes more advanced and inclusive of materials like aluminum and carbon fiber, repairers must know how to correctly address damage to these different substrates for effective, safe and quality repairs.

New construction methods are leading to new developments and repair techniques for rivet bonding, hybrid substrates and when attaching dissimilar substrates like carbon fiber to aluminum or aluminum to steel.

In their seminar "How the Automotive Industry is Changing Structural Repair" during Automechanika Chicago, Shawn Collins and Jason Scharton with 3M focused on the process for using adhesives in partnership with mechanical fasteners and why vehicle makers have

chosen this route.

The use of adhesive during structural repairs "makes the vehicle more rigid so it increases torsional rigidity, which basically means it stiffens the structure so it is more responsive to handling on the road, helps prevent corrosion and it makes the vehicle much quieter," Collins said.

"Now with the new types of adhesives coming to market, impact resistance structural adhesives also absorb energy during a collision event. This makes the vehicle safer all around."

Collins and Scharton presented attendees with examples of rivet-bonded joints, weld-sealed joints, weld-bonded joints and other construction methods. A Cadillac ATS frame rail was also on display during the presentation. "This is a good example of one of these newer technologies where they attach a cast aluminum strut tower and rivet bond to a high-strength steel frame rail," Collins said.

"This information is great for you

technicians, but shop owners, you need to know what is coming as well. You need to upgrade training and upgrade the ability to source the repair information," he said.

"Traditionally, we repaired the car the way it came into the shop. If a panel was spot welded on, we would plug weld that panel back on. But it is becoming more and more common that the repair method is different than the original build method. There are a lot of cases now where a panel may have been welded on at the factory, but the repair procedure calls for adhesive because they don't want to overheat the joint during the welding process," Collins said.

Collins and Scharton brought attention to some of the different bonding methods and the different application methods. They highlighted examples of what may currently be considered unusual repair and attachment methods, but ones that will most likely become more common in the future.

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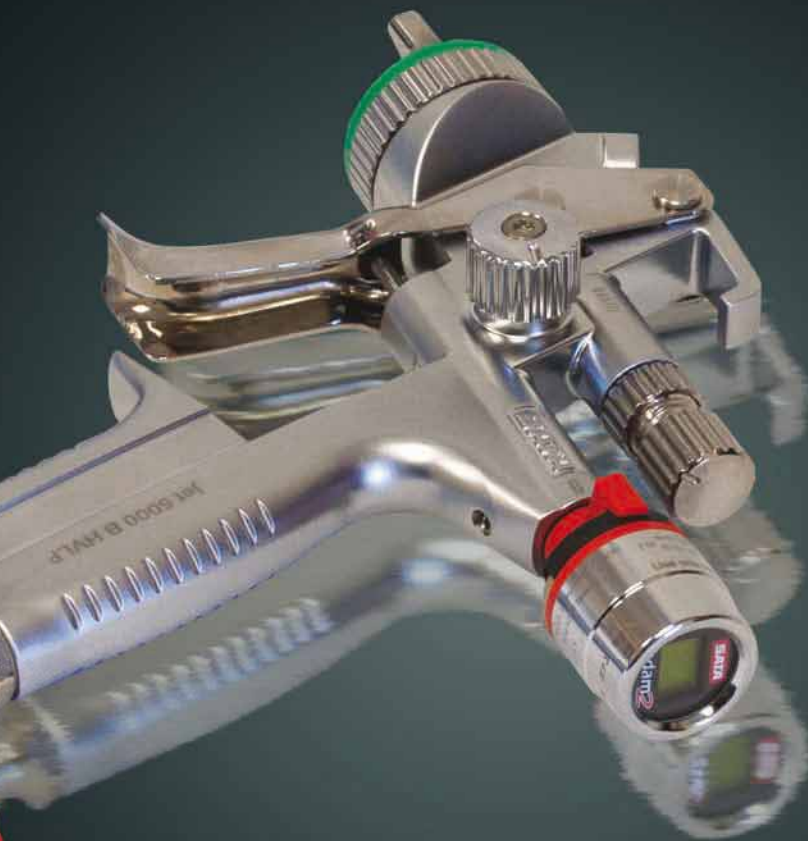
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## ADD MOBILE REPAIR OPTIONS TO YOUR SHOP

CHICAGO — Custom Upfits attended Automechanika Chicago in the hopes of shedding light on unique mobile repair practices as an option for generating more revenue.

The custom mobile trailer manufacturer showcased its 7x14 Alloy Wheel Repair Trailer, and Owner Todd Ford

said his business got a great response from the industry. Custom Upfits can also create a fully customized unit to match shop needs and budget.

With more than 200 mobile units on the road, including in Alaska and Canada, Custom Upfits allows repair shops to bring their business directly to the clients. And whether you have an existing shop or are just starting out, a mobile business platform is an inex-

pensive and profitable solution, costing a fraction of what you would incur to build a new retail shop, he said. This also helps to widen a shop's customer base and improve brand marketing.

"We have been getting increased notice from fixed operations managers from dealer groups and dealerships who are wanting to move their refinishing process in house," says Don Griffin, IT/Marketing/Sales with Custom Upfits.

## THE MAN BEHIND AUTOMECHANIKA CHICAGO SPEAKS OUT

The inaugural Automechanika Chicago kicked off April 24, marking the Automechanika brand's first venture into the U.S. market. With a successful global footprint, Automechanika's expansion into the United States was a long time coming. One of the men behind Automechanika Chicago, Michael Johannes, brand manager for Automechanika, spoke live from the tradeshow floor about the event, its roots and what is to come in the automotive aftermarket industry.

**What is the secret of the success of Automechanika as a trade-fair brand?**

**MJ:** The success rests on several factors. In the first place, we always set the same standards and insist on the same level of quality — irrespective of which trade fair you attend abroad; if it says Automechanika on the tin, then that's what you'll find inside. We keep developing the concept for the show in Frankfurt and then adapt it for all the trade fairs abroad. This relates, for instance, to the structure of the product groups, strict brand management, etc. In the second place, our strategy for international involvement has contributed significantly to the success of the brand. In 1997, we began to export Automechanika abroad. This was very successful and further shows abroad followed. Automechanika is now represented at 14 locations in 13 countries and on four continents. Thirdly, we have built up a large international network over the years. We now have representatives, partners and associations in 160 countries to assist us. Through them we have gotten to know the regional markets and their particular features very well and, of course, we watch the



Michael Johannes

markets very closely. Fourthly, we listen carefully to our customers. This happens both through direct discussions with them, but also through selected exhibitors

and visitor polls, which we conduct at Automechanika shows. The latest example of this kind of response is Automechanika Jeddah, which we are organizing for the first time in January 2016 in Saudi Arabia because our customers want to gain a foothold in this market.

**Why did it take you so long to come to the USA?**

**MJ:** The U.S. automotive service market is the most important and biggest in the world. Our customers want to be represented there. Thus, it is important for the Automechanika brand to be positioned there. We managed to do this by positioning Automechanika Chicago as the largest U.S. platform for first-class technical training and management seminars for motor vehicle technicians and shop owners. The search for partners was not an entirely easy one. In UBM Advanstar we have found an extremely competent and experienced partner. They have acquired a great deal of expertise in the exhibition and event business, with some 50 trade fairs of their own. I am, therefore, all the more delighted with the tremendous result: altogether more than 460 exhibitors have signed up for the first Automechanika Chicago.

**What major challenges do you see for the automotive aftermarket industry in the near future?**

**MJ:** The automotive industry is facing some far-reaching changes. Issues such as the connected car, driverless vehicles and alternative propulsion technologies

are coming to play an increasingly important role and will dramatically change the motor vehicle industry over the next few years. This will also impact the automotive service industry.

**Messe Frankfurt has been investing in automotive events like truck shows, auto shows and engineering shows lately. What is the strategy behind it?**

**MJ:** We would like to extend our expertise and our portfolio in the automotive sector further and consolidate our position as the leading trade-fair organizers in the motor vehicle sector. For that, we need more points of contact with existing and potential customers and will need to go down the path of diversification. Our objective is to reflect the entire value-creation chain in the sector and include the various segments such as cars, trucks, buses and bikes as well as engineering and logistics, in order to exploit the synergies that exist between them.

**What would you say is the most important requirement for doing a good job in the trade-fair business?**

**MJ:** I think that networking and teamwork is absolutely essential in my job. I like dealing with people and am always open to new things. I enjoy chasing up topics and developing them. It requires both strategic thinking and the ability to generate enthusiasm, as well as patience and perseverance; not every new event becomes an immediate success.

**What markets will you be targeting next?**

**MJ:** As far as Automechanika is concerned, we have already achieved pretty good worldwide coverage. In this respect, we'll be organizing rather more regional trade fairs. As for the other automotive trade fairs and congresses, we are still just at the beginning. We have already been researching some interesting topics and agreed on some new locations on the world map.

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# COLLISION REPAIR INDUSTRY Stats & Trends

2,000 – the number of attendees who were in training classes at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26.



## How consolidation affects your business

Taking a closer look at consolidation in the automotive industry

BY BRAD MEWES | ABRN BLOGGER

Recently I decided to take a closer look at consolidation in the industry since late 2012. It goes without saying that consolidation is a hot topic in the industry. We talk about it almost every week here. It also seems that every week a new mega deal is announced where one company buys another company.

Whenever rapid change hits an industry it often causes an emotional reaction. Some argue passionately against consolidation. Others strongly believe consolidation brings much needed improvement. Still others shrug it off with ambivalence.

My opinion of the consolidation trend is agnostic. I attempt to not attach a value judgment to it by labeling it either good or bad. Whether you feel something is inherently good or bad often depends on your position relative to the event. Rather I recognize consolidation is something that is happen-

ing. As prudent business people, there are lessons to be gathered by analyzing firms who are successfully operating in such an environment.

I prefer to be data driven rather than event driven. So I took a data driven approach to analyzing industry consolidation since late 2012. I analyzed the top four consolidators in the industry for a simple reason – their acquisition history is publicly listed on their websites. While we would have preferred to look at the top 10, unfortunately such data is not as easy to come by.

However, if we first look at the path of consolidation in the industry, consolidation has taken place in relatively large metropolitan areas. This probably comes as little surprise to most, as the more people there are in a given market, the



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### Electronic, diagnostic and repair decisions

BY DARRELL AMBERSON

We all frequently hear of and experience the complexity of new vehicles. As repairers, we all encounter the need to check for fault codes and reset warning lights. We all have our ways to address this work, at least to some degree, whether through in-house staff or by having a sublet source handle the issue. Many of us have concerns over whether or not we are being thorough enough. Some of us wonder if our approach is the best for our business. We wrestle with decisions over staffing, training, equipment purchases, information availability, profitability, cycle time and job control. Before discussing potential solutions, let's better define the issue.

Most of us are woefully ignorant and negligent in terms of understanding current technology and factory repair methodology when it comes to vehicle electronics. Many of us think in terms of simply addressing warning lights. Yet there is an incredible complexity beyond that. Some fault codes will not set off a warning light. The issue of resetting lights and fault codes is just a portion of what we need to address. There are many recalibrations that need to be performed as part of a collision repair, even a minor one.

As the 2015 Toyota models arrive, they represent the eleventh consecutive year in which the manufacturer specifies that the right front seat occupant sensor be recalibrated after each and every collision. Anecdotally I know that most repairers have

only recently, if at all, embraced this repair requirement. I know many insurance field representatives in my area that are unaware of this and question the validity of it. After being a manufacturer repair standard for more than 10 years, it is pathetic to think we are only recently paying more attention to it. This seat occupant sensor adjusts the way the air bag deploys based on the weight of the passenger in the right front seat. In talking to some technicians, they tell me that it is not uncommon that the calibration is significantly off. When you consider the potential liability exposure for repairers, and potentially insurers, we should all be concerned. Many other common models, such as many Hondas, have had a similar requirement for years.

While we all know that vehicles are electronically more complex, I doubt that most of us understand to what extent. Some vehicles can have as many as 80 modules. These modules interact with an incredible amount of sensors. A technician just told me of a Volvo that has four sensors looking through the back glass. He also said that some sensors that "look" through glass are calibrated to understand the angle of the glass, such as a windshield, so that it can take reflections into consideration. Some not only monitor objects in or around the vehicle, but some can tell if it is likely a person or other living creature. Continue reading at [ABRN.com/RepairDecisions](http://ABRN.com/RepairDecisions).



**In business you have 3 choices — which is best for your shop?**



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Second, consolidator on consolidator competition is still relatively rare on a nationwide basis. However, upon closer analysis an astute analyst may note that the trend is for more rather than less competition between the big players. This means not only more operational competition, but also more competition for access to M&A opportunities. Wheth-

er your plan is to grow, sell or stand pat, have you thought through the implications of such?

Third, there are significant swaths of the country that still are relatively unaffected by consolidation. Knowing there are significant areas that still have not consolidated, what does that mean for your business in the future? Continue reading at [ABRN.com/BizImpacts](http://ABRN.com/BizImpacts).

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• **Training and marketing determine shop success**

Larry Montanez with P&L Consultants and ABRN Technical Editor discusses the importance of training and marketing to shop success.  
[URL: [ABRN.COM/MONTANEZTRAINING](http://ABRN.COM/MONTANEZTRAINING)]

• **Ensuring DRP compliance**

Ask anyone in a collision repair facility and they will tell you there are few requirements in their job as challenging as pleasing insurers. Most MSOs build a significant portion of their business model around direct repair relationships (DRPs). Insurers often change their requirements and they periodically change representatives. It quickly becomes apparent that being in complete compliance can be a daunting task.  
[URL: [ABRN.COM/DRPCOMPLIANCE](http://ABRN.COM/DRPCOMPLIANCE)]

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Noteworthy

READER FEEDBACK TO ONLINE DISCUSSION

**On LinkedIn Paul Jenkins, auto body repair tech, Steele Auto Group, wrote:** There have been rumors of some insurance companies planning to open their own collision shop(s) in my area. It seems to me that it may almost be a conflict of interest for insurance providers to perform their own repairs. It cuts out the middleman and likely saves the insurance company money. Will the quality of repairs suffer for the sake of profit? Could this be the future of our industry?

**Laurie Tomlinson:** There certainly is a potential conflict of interest. It is one thing for an auto insurer (i.e. Allstate or others) to own an auto body shop, however, they will run into significant consumer rights' challenges if they attempt to mandate their body shops must do repairs on autos they insure.

**Barrett Smith, AAM:** Why would they when they have so many independents and MSOs clamoring to get on their DRP lists? Why would an insurer take on the low profits and associated liabilities when they can get repairers to do the repairs at cost in the hopes of making it up in volume? No. They've been there and done that.

**Paul Jenkins:** With the extra control of running and/or owning a shop they would be tempted to do "hack" work to maximize profits. I suppose this may not be that much different than what some smaller independent shops do just to keep the doors open.

**Robert Medved:** I honestly don't think this is a business model most insurers would embrace. In recent years many big insurers added financial services, which is a good fit for an insurance company and dovetails nicely into their core business. Owning and operating collision shops for an insurer makes about as much sense as owning and operating their own hospitals and doctor's offices. It's really not worth the investment for the amount of potential return. I see many insurers moving away from automotive technical expertise within their ranks and relying more heavily on the collision repair industry. The insurers are big enough targets for lawsuits, why expand on that? As vehicles and repairs become increasingly complex I believe insurers will want the repair quality responsibility left up to the repair industry and shifted completely away from them.

To read more, go to [ABRN.com/Insurershops](http://ABRN.com/Insurershops)



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• **Car Care Council names new committee members**

The Car Care Council Women's Board has announced the new members of the Education and Development, Marketing and Recruitment and Member Development committees.  
[MotorAge.com/womensboard](http://MotorAge.com/womensboard)

• **AAPEX booth space limited**

AAPEX 2015 is shaping up to be another sold-out event as 95 percent of booth space already has been allotted.  
[MotorAge.com/AAPEXspace](http://MotorAge.com/AAPEXspace)

• **Delphi completes first coast-to-coast automated drive**

Delphi has completed the longest automated drive in North America, from San Francisco to New York in the first coast-to-coast trip ever.  
[MotorAge.com/Delphidrive](http://MotorAge.com/Delphidrive)

• **Westport Parts + Service launches at AMC**

Westport Parts + Service – a new division of Westport Innovations – launched at Automechanika Chicago.  
[AftermarketBusiness.com/Westport](http://AftermarketBusiness.com/Westport)

• **Enhanced inspection techniques improve customer satisfaction**

Techs can stop the cycle of telling customers they can't predict what might break next and start preventing breakdowns.  
[AftermarketBusiness.com/Inspectiontechniques](http://AftermarketBusiness.com/Inspectiontechniques)

• **The case for and against auto repair shop licensing**

The question is this: Should repair shops be required to be licensed?  
[AftermarketBusiness.com/Licensing](http://AftermarketBusiness.com/Licensing)

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2015 INDUSTRY CALENDAR

# Q+A WITH ADAM CHAFE

VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING,  
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FINISHES

## A MOTORSPORTS SPONSORSHIP CAN HELP SHOPS TO GROW AND PROMOTE THEIR BRAND, LEADING TO MORE MONEY

BY KRISTA MCNAMARA | MANAGING EDITOR



**ABRN:** There are many motorsports events and organizations out there — why is NASCAR a good choice?

**AC:** Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes has worked with NASCAR teams for more than 15 years. We work with a dozen different teams, and you'll see our products on 30 different cars and partnered with 30 different drivers each and every weekend. It started there, with alliances with the teams, and we continue those today. A few years ago, we formalized a relationship with the governing body of NASCAR and have become the Official Transportation Finishes of NASCAR, as well as the Official Paint of NASCAR.

**ABRN:** How does the loyalty of the NASCAR fan base benefit sponsors?

**AC:** NASCAR has unprecedented loyalty. We know that the loyalty of fans, particularly in consumer products, is exceptionally powerful. Over half of avid NASCAR fans agree they talk positively about and feel loyal to sponsors invested in the sport. Our market is more business to business, so our relationships are with collision shop owners and fleet managers.

One in three companies in the Fortune

100 is affiliated either with a team or with the NASCAR governing body. That's a pretty powerful statement that these companies with billions of dollars in brand value tie their brand equity to the equity of NASCAR.

**ABRN:** What are some of the opportunities a NASCAR sponsorship can offer at the shop level?

**AC:** One of the core strategies within our industry every day is how to help a shop owner become leaner in their operations — getting more cars through production makes them more money. It is a very simple formula, but so complex a practice. If a shop owner can get into one of these race shops to see lean in action, it really can offer ideas that translate back to their own business.

We host educational events in shops all the time, and it gives a shop owner a chance to see a different type of lean operation. A race shop may have 20-plus cars on their floor at any given time based on the schedule of events that they run. It is a really complex production system to get the three or four that they are taking to the race track optimized, on time and loaded in the trailer. It is a fantastic visual experience in lean

production on really tight timelines. Any shop owner is going to want to get an up-close view of one of these shops. They are spectacular facilities and production lines.

**ABRN:** Beyond management, how can shops capitalize on a NASCAR partnership?

**AC:** We've got a great wearables program that connects with NASCAR. That's the fun stuff to hand out at any event. But we invite our partners to use our brand and the NASCAR brand in the front of their stores. That endorsement that says "Proud partner of NASCAR" is a powerful one to suggest the quality of work you are going to get in a shop.

We bring the relationship into the production shop as well. We see these professionals as critically important to our business. We want to reward them too. One of the best rewards for your production team is to get them to a race or to get them into a race team production environment. We provide those opportunities all the time. We want our customers to use our relationship with NASCAR to reward their customers and employees. It is just a perfect partnership that way. 🏁

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# Stock up for Day 1

Get the equipment, employees and business you need for a new location launch

**I**n two previous columns, (*Ready, set, grow*, April 2015; *Location, location, location*, May 2015), I discussed some of the homework and steps that go into how we choose another shop location, and how we work with an architect and contractor to convert a building into a “Keenan” shop.

The next important step is to ensure the new shop is equipped like our other shops. We have specific frame and measuring equipment and welders we prefer, for example, so that when technicians move from one of our locations to another, they know how everything works. We similarly stock the new shop using our approved product list. Our jobber has that list – which includes only about 400 SKUs including tints – locked down so no one can order anything that’s not on the list. Again, this ensures consistency from one location to another. Techs know exactly, for example, what grits are used to finish all body work.

But as the new facility itself is being converted and equipped, it’s also time to ensure you have the employees and the cars you need there on Day 1.

Our ability to brand an existing building is an important part of this process. One key step for us is to get signage on the building as soon as possible. That gets people talking. When we opened our most recent new location this past February, the sign had been on the building since the previous November. It’s a high-visibility location, right off a main interstate, so getting signage up early helps build name recognition.

But beyond signage, we prefer buildings that we can also brand in other ways to look like one of our buildings. At times, that can be a challenge and require some creativity. The upper portion of many of our buildings has a green aluminum façade.

But unless you’re growing through greenfields, you’re not going to get a cookie-cutter look. So at one location, we just painted the aluminum pitched roof green.

The name recognition and reputation we’ve built in our market helps bring work to a new location, but we also arrange to be on several direct repair programs at a new location as soon as we open. Right at the point when we’ve established a firm opening date for a shop, our marketing director is out talking with insurance agents and other referral sources in the area. And we generally have a “grand opening” event at a new location within a few weeks or months of opening.

But a steady supply of wrecked cars won’t mean anything if you don’t have the staff there ready to handle them. First and foremost, you need to have a manager to run the location. I always tell my managers to be training their replacement. That way, when we add a location, a successful manager at one of our locations can move to the new location while leaving behind someone who is ready to manage the existing shop.

That means that when you’re in growth mode, you’re at times going to be a little top-heavy with people. We sometimes have several people who aren’t yet managers but are ready to undertake that position. If I opened two new locations tomorrow, I have the management ready for them. There’s a cost associated with that, but it’s a necessary one when you are growing and adding locations.

When we open a new location, we put other Keenan veterans in there with the manager as well. At least one body tech, painter and customer service rep (CSR) will come from our existing locations. As the first person the customer sees, the CSR especially has to understand “the Keenan way.”

Because all of our locations will have to back-fill these positions, we generally try to pull no more than one or two people from a location when we’re staffing the new location.

And like many MSOs, even before those employees are working on the first cars at the new location, we’re checking demographics and traffic counts on various other locations, looking for the one that will become our next new shop. 📍

**“A STEADY SUPPLY OF WRECKED CARS WON’T MEAN ANYTHING IF YOU DON’T HAVE THE STAFF THERE READY TO HANDLE THEM.”**

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**Tell Me What YOU THINK**



If there's a topic you'd like me to address, I'd love to hear from you.

Mike LeVasseur is president and COO of Keenan Auto Body, which has 12 shops in Pennsylvania and Delaware.

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## MINDING YOUR BUSINESS



# BECOME A PROFIT CHAMPION

## 5 EASY STEPS TO HELP IMPROVE PAINT AND MATERIALS MARGINS IN YOUR SHOP

BY **JIM COMPTON** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**COLLISION** repair body shops across the country often share the same types of challenges and frustrations. A common challenge for many shop owners is finding effective ways to improve their paint and material (P&M) margins. So are there truly quick fixes that will help to boost P&M margins?

There are several steps that collision shop owners and their paint departments can utilize that are almost guaranteed to quickly improve profits.

### Measure

Shops must have a strong measuring method in place so that accurate comparisons can be made. You can't manage what you don't measure. The first step to see an improvement in your margins is to measure everything the exact same way — consistently — each month. Be sure to exclude items that

are not part of P&M — this can have a huge impact. Items that are billed as separate items or are the cost of goods sold in another department such as clips, cavity wax or seam sealers, should not be considered P&M costs.

Reports with a local or regional comparison can offer great insight. Paint jobbers and third-party companies can provide reports of and comparisons to local, regional and national key performance indicators (KPIs) to help you see where your shop stands.

Being able to evaluate how your shop compares to similar shops in the same area — on paper — can spur effective action. If the shop across town can do this, why can't you?

### Share

Having good reports is necessary and important to tracking performance and change. But these reports can only bring



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**“GET FASTER IMPROVEMENT IN THE PAINT DEPARTMENT BY SIMPLY SHARING THE INFORMATION YOU DO HAVE. LET YOUR STAFF KNOW THEY ARE BEING MONITORED OR MEASURED, AND HOW. THEN BE OPEN ABOUT THE RESULTS. PEOPLE TEND TO IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE IF THEY KNOW THEY ARE BEING MEASURED.”**

about positive action if their data becomes information that is shared across the shop. It can then become a tool for savings. A great report that sits on the manager's desk unread, unanalyzed and overlooked doesn't have much of an impact on the technicians working in the shop.

Get faster improvement in the paint department by simply sharing the information you do have. Let your staff know they are being monitored or measured, and how. Then be open with them about the results. This is cited as the Observer or Hawthorne Effect, where people tend to improve their performance if they know they are being measured.

Once you begin to see improvement, it must be maintained. Continuing on a forward trajectory means keeping all staff in the information loop. Get those reports off your desk and in the hands of staff. Everyone wants to know the score, and once they do, they will be more invested in working to change it.

### Expect the best

Another slightly more obscure psychological tool is the Pygmalion Effect, also known as the Rosenthal Effect. This is the belief that the greater the expectation of performance that is placed upon a person, the better they actually perform. The effect is named after the Greek myth of Pygmalion, a sculptor who fell in love with an ivory statue he had carved. So be sure to tell your staff that you expect great things! Be the cheerleader in your shop, and you may be rewarded with a winning team.

But let me also pass on a warning — there is also counterproductive theory called the Golem Effect. This is when low expectations can lead to a decrease in performance. Don't bring a negative attitude into your shop and display it in front of staff and expect them to not notice. Even if things are a bit tough, you don't want to let them see you cry.

### Expect the best

The steps thus far may seem obvious at first glance, but even with the best

intentions, we can exclude people and cause feelings of resentment. For example, everyone knows that the bulk of shop spending on P&M is in the paint shop. With paint and other liquids accounting for often 70 percent of all material costs, it seems logical to look to the paint department first to do measuring and then look for the improvements. But to be truly effective, you need to include everyone.

Who else in the shop has an effect on P&M margins? Including everyone in this initiative not only makes good sense, but often will return good dollars as well. For example, establishing a method for the body technicians to track flagged hours versus material used is a great way to keep them invested and in the game. Taking this approach over several months will smooth out most of the blips that can appear because of normal spikes in hours or purchasing.

A little more challenging is getting everyone else involved. Let the employees vote on the best implementation for improving P&M margins each month. At a recent lunch and learn at my shop, it was pointed out that the cost of using shop towels as pizza napkins was considerably more expensive than keeping paper napkins on hand. A new employee processing invoices had noticed and pointed out the cost after she keyed in some invoices. Another example is using two-inch-wide masking tape to reseal parts boxes. Box sealing tape, which is much cheaper, will do the job just as well without unnecessarily adding to your P&M expenses. Small suggestions can add up to big changes.

Parts managers or other people involved in the ordering of materials can surely have an impact. They should pay special attention to inventory. Make sure excess stock is either returned for credit or stored safely, if needed in the short term.

A porter in a local shop noticed what looked like still-good sandpaper sheets as he was sweeping and placed the scraps in a box for miscellaneous use

or reuse. Encouraging your staff to pay attention to these types of misplaced items can help save money.

So who else can you enlist to be on your team? Consider the vendor or insurance claims representative who walks through your shop and sees your operation on a regular basis, in addition to those of many others. I'm not talking about enlisting these people to act as your spies, but rather as an outside observer. If they see other effective business practices that you do not employ, they can share some suggestions. Sometimes that third set of eyes doesn't need to be a paid coach or advisor. Sometimes good ideas or questions can come from people who see your operation with a more objective view.

Once you have everyone aware and everyone involved, you have a team. A team is always more effective than a bunch of individual players. There are big things that can be changed that improve P&M margins. There are also a lot of little things that can add up quickly.

### Keep score

Score keeping is a great way to let the natural competitive spirit of your team members drive profit boosts. Post the results or reports for everyone to see. This alone can and often does lead to improvements without any further action needed. Push for better performance in the shop, but with attainable goals for improvement. And give credit where it is due to foster a continued cycle of improvement — stand up and cheer those who meet those goals. ☑



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MINDING YOUR BUSINESS



# DOLLAR\$ BEYOND COLLISION

SHOPS CAN CREATE ALTERNATIVE  
REVENUE STREAMS BY EXTENDING  
BEYOND THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

BY ED STAQUET | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**ARE YOU ON** the lookout for new revenue streams to expand your business and increase profitability? Have you considered repairing vehicles other than automobiles – such as motorcycles, snowmobiles, ATVs (all-terrain vehicles), boats or personal watercraft (jet skis and wave runners)? Any vehicle that can be repaired and sold for market value can be an additional source of income.

As the collision repair market contracts across the country, the market is becoming more competitive; consequently, many shops are looking for alternative revenue streams. According to a 2013 survey conducted by the Collision Repair Education Foundation and I-CAR, the economy and the collision repair industry have been through significant changes. The report, “A Snapshot of the Collision Repair Industry,” states that the industry has experienced a market size reduction of 3,047 shops to a current count of 40,488 shops since the last survey was completed six years ago.

### A changing business outlook

There are many reasons why the collision repair industry is shrinking, including automobile construction, environmental

regulations, repair equipment costs, an aging workforce and retaining employees. Technological advancements in manufacturing have led to vehicles that are built to last longer. Safety innovations, such as collision avoidance systems, not only help to prevent accidents by warning the driver of a potential collision, but, ultimately, also reduce the number of damaged cars that need repairs.

Some collision shops are finding it difficult to remain in business due to the expense of keeping pace with increased environmental regulations. Painting restrictions, solvent recycling, hazardous waste considerations and personnel safety equipment needs are all areas that require investment to meet government standards for shop operation. Even though these standards are good for the environment and personnel, they add to the costs of running a repair shop.

As automobiles become more sophisticated in their design, collision shops must continue to invest in computer-controlled diagnostic equipment and other specialized equipment for repairing today’s vehicles. An aging workforce is also taking its toll on the industry. As experienced technicians retire, there is a lack of younger talent coming into the industry to replace the more skilled workers.

This can be especially problematic for smaller shops that have fewer workers overall and are finding it difficult to hire new talent. Although a collision technician can have a lucrative and rewarding career, it is not seen as a top career choice by many young people. Still, there are several technical training schools and courses available to younger people to help them learn about the industry's career opportunities.

### New business prospects

The challenge, then, for shop owners who are able to hire good employees, is retaining them. If an owner cannot meet the income expectations of its employees, those employees will leave. So the shop owner must always be on the lookout for new business to keep employees busy with interesting work and to keep wages at a competitive level.

Repairing vehicles other than automobiles should not incur any extra investment for a body shop, nor does it require any extraordinary knowledge, techniques, products or tools. The substrate body materials on ATVs, boats,

snowmobiles and other recreational vehicles are similar to those found on cars. Collision technicians will be familiar with these materials – plastics, composites, aluminum, metals, fiberglass – and the products used to repair damage to these substrates. It is likely that no initial investment will be required to repair other types of vehicles.

Larger repair shops, such as those geared towards the heavy-duty trucking industry, might also consider repairing equipment used in farming, construction and industrial settings. The idea is to keep the focus on vehicles that can physically fit into your facility layout – automobile-size vehicles for a smaller shop and larger pieces of equipment for heavy-duty facilities. As an alternative, consider going into the field to perform repair operations.

The organizational repair structure for these alternate vehicles is not as apparent as for the automobile repair market. Many of these recreational owners do their own repairs or rely on the expertise of friends and acquaintances, while others seek out dealerships for repair needs. But using a

dealership for repair might not be convenient since many of the recreational vehicles sold, such as boats, personal watercraft and snowmobiles, are used many miles away from their original purchase locale.

If you have satisfied, regular customers who trust your shop and its technicians, you can build on that relationship to attract new business to repair different types of vehicles other than cars. Similarly, a customer who has been consistently using your repair shop and is happy with the service might be overlooking your shop as a potential place to repair these vehicles. The convenience of using a local repair shop can be a big draw for both existing and new customers.

### Same repairs, same products

There should be no concern about what repair products or equipment are required for repairing recreational vehicles – it's the same products that are used for auto repair! Collision repair shops have these products on hand, ready to repair any vehicle – metal-bonding adhesives, plastic-bonding

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adhesives, cross-bonding adhesives, repair adhesives for rigid and flexible substrates and two-component seam sealers. The same tools and equipment are used for repair operations, also, such as manual and pneumatic dispensing guns for adhesives and seam sealers.

Suppliers of automotive repair products are labeling their products to be more inclusive of various types of re-

pair applications. While these repair products can be used on vehicles other than automobiles, the product descriptions tend to be more market specific. As suppliers transition to product descriptions that reflect applications and substrates, rather than a particular market, do not be concerned about using automotive repair products on recreational vehicles. These products are formulated for repairs on substrates

found in all vehicles. If in doubt, consult with your supplier to make sure you are using the proper product for the substrate.

Many suppliers also offer informational sheets featuring standard operating procedures (SOPs) for properly bonding metal or fixing plastic substrates in any application. The SOPs offer details on identifying a repair, choosing the right repair product, preparing the substrate surface, applying the repair product and finishing the repair. Technical tips teach techs key steps for repairing damaged vehicles, and help determine if repairs are cosmetic or structural.

A well-trained, experienced technician should be able to repair any substrate damage incurred by a recreational vehicle, much as the technician would for automotive damage. As an example, whether you are repairing damage to a personal watercraft or a fender on a motorcycle or a bumper on an ATV – if it is a flexible plastic part – you use the same product as if you were repairing damage to an automobile. It's the same substrate, so you use the same repair products and techniques.

Repairing alternate types of vehicles is really simpler than you might expect. If you are bonding metals on a snowmobile, you are still bonding metal. If you are repairing a flexible plastic part, you are still fixing a flexible plastic part. If you are bonding aluminum to aluminum or aluminum to steel or steel to steel or steel to fiberglass on any type of vehicle, the repair products and processes are still the same.

For a collision repair shop, diversifying the repair menu can be a potential revenue stream. Bringing in different types of vehicles for repair can keep a shop functioning and busy, and help with employee retention, while providing better overall service to an expanding customer base. ■

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## MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

SHINING A LIGHT ON  
**SOCIAL  
MEDIA**

ARE YOU IN THE DARK WHEN IT COMES TO OPTIMIZING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE?

BY MICHELLE BIZON | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**LET'S SAY** you've been delaying attending to your online presence. It's uncharted territory, so it's natural to be weary and even doubt whether you'll be successful there. Still, with a larger and larger percentage of your customer base being glued to mobile devices, you know you can't afford to not be active online. So, what do you do when learning to navigate the social media landscape feels like a full-time job?

Sure, it's tempting to hop on the bandwagon of the newest flashy trend, but putting all of your proverbial eggs in one basket can hurt your bottom line over the long haul. With so much competition, that's not a risk you can afford.

The platforms might ebb and flow in popularity, but you'll notice your activity here will revolve around two main functions: publishing content and managing your reputation.

**Content sites**

Gone are the days when just having a Facebook page would put you ahead of your competition. Quality is now the name of the game, and it's a do-or-die struggle. Remember, you're not just competing with the body shop around the corner. Your messaging is up against posts from your customers' family members and friends, as well as from businesses of all sizes in other industries.

Social media is about your audience. Content sites, especially Facebook, tailor home feeds in response to user behavior, so you need to cater to their preferences. Essentially, you're playing in someone else's sandbox. So, what's a business owner to post?

Your foundational content should be entertaining or educational — or, better yet, both. Create and curate content

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your customers would thank you for. Then, get fans talking by asking questions and running contests with valuable prizes up for grabs. Keep the selling to a minimum.

With organic reach growing more difficult to earn, you also might want to consider investing in social ads, particularly on Facebook. You'll increasingly need to pay to play in the social

media world, but that investment also gives you options. By allotting some of your budget to ads, you can target your ideal customers where they're already hanging out online.

### The other players

Beyond the behemoth that is Facebook, you'll also want to take a look at Twitter, Google+ and, perhaps, Instagram.

As you expand your social presence, keep in mind that it's better to do a few things well than a hundred things poorly. Take the time to get to know the platforms you're adopting, so you can follow each one's best practices to engage with your audience sincerely and successfully.

Twitter lends itself to casual conversation, customer service and news distribution. It's not about what you ate for lunch (unless you're really dying to share how much you enjoyed that tuna salad). If you're always on the lookout for the latest trend or hot topic, you'll find yourself in good company on Twitter. By networking here, you can position yourself as an industry expert and connect with your customers online in real time. As you acclimate, you'll find your sweet spot for posting frequency, but you'll want to tweet more than you post on any other network to remain in your followers' constantly refreshing feeds.

Google+ is growing in importance to automotive repair shops, in particular, for localized search engine exposure. By posting content to your Google+ site (and taking care of reviews properly, as we'll discuss later on), you're building a robust history for yourself online to show Google you're a trusted source and an active member of its community. Especially if you don't have an active blog or intense SEO initiatives, Google+ is a must-have. You'll find your posts might not receive as much interaction as on other networks, but your ultimate goal here is to create a body of high-quality, searchable content for Google.

With about 300 million users, Instagram is an up and comer to keep an eye on. Instagram is all about sharing real-time moments and has, perhaps, the most simple engagement options: Hit the heart icon to "like" and the speech bubble icon to comment on the photo or video. Worried about your sub-par photography skills? Instagram offers filters and editing tools to help you make your photos stand out. Shops still are learning how to define their success here using business metrics, so, if forced to choose, prioritize other networks with a stronger tie to your bottom line.

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The first step is to claim your business pages. You'll want to claim your Google+ and Yelp listings, as well as any other sites that are popular in your particular region. (Not sure which sites these are? Do a Google search for your business and take note of what shows up on the first page of results.) Most of these sites verify your ownership via an automated phone call to your main business line, so you'll want to be at your shop to streamline this process.

Once you claim your listings, update your business information. At best, they'll likely be incomplete. The more complete your listings are, the more likely you are to show up in search, both internally and via search engines. A prospective customer might be looking for a shop that offers a shuttle service, so, if you neglect to include it in your profile, they might never find you.

At worst, your listing could be dis-

seminating incorrect information about your business. (Never assume that the vetting processes for user-submitted information are thorough.) Many prospective customers look to these sites to find your hours, and arriving to a locked door on a Sunday morning when your Yelp listing says you're open will put an end to that customer relationship before it can begin.

Be sure to subscribe to email notifications for new reviews. (Check the "Account Settings" section of your account to subscribe to them.) Take the time to post thoughtful, individualized responses to all reviews you receive. By responding to positive reviews, you strengthen customer loyalty and show your appreciation for them putting in the time and effort to help your business. By responding to questions and concerns in negative reviews, you have the opportunity to salvage the relationship and assure the prospective customers who are researching you that they'll be treated well at your shop. (If you find yourself with a major snafu on your hands, take the conversation

offline as soon as possible and communicate with the reviewer privately.)

**Measuring success**

The bottom line is that your social media presence is an investment in your business — just like your other marketing and advertising initiatives. Treat it as such. It quickly can become just an expense if you don't set clear, measurable goals. Set aside time each month to review your progress and tweak your strategy to help you reach your milestones.



**MICHELLE BIZON**  
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Michelle Bizon is the Social Media Manager at Moving Targets. Her team helps hundreds of businesses engage their community, protect their online reputation and define their competitive advantage. Moving Targets is a print and digital marketing firm with more than 20 years of automotive industry experience. They help businesses build trust through campaigns that seamlessly blend print and digital messaging to reach customers at home, at work and on the go.

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MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

# PLAN FOR SUCCESS

## HAVE A REPAIR PLAN FOR THE REFINISH DEPARTMENT

BY **TED WILLIAMS** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**THE GOAL** of every collision center is to create a consistent production rhythm throughout their shop that leads to a targeted throughput achievement. In many shops, this rhythm becomes disrupted within the refinish department. The questions to ask are: Why do these disruptions exist? How do you correct them?

Some shops attempt to address refinish department deficiencies through investment. They throw money at additional equipment, more people and new technology. Instead of spending money or hiring extra techs, they must first take the time to address deficiencies within the process.

For years, I have heard the refinish department referred to as the “bottle-

neck” of the collision center. The term bottleneck may be appropriate if you understand what a bottleneck is really designed to do: a bottleneck is something designed to purposely reduce the flow. Typically, without a bottleneck, the contents of the bottle would simply pour out faster than what was desired – or could be controlled. This definition needs to be clear because what we see every day in collision centers is an unintended, restrictive bottleneck in the refinish department, which is often-times the shop’s own creation.

So, to open the bottleneck up to more flow, we need to remove restrictions. We must start by looking at the items that contribute to issues within the paint shop. I typically break these into three areas: Procedures before the booth; in

the booth; and after the booth. The focus of this article is primarily before the booth operations.

A great way to start is to evaluate contributing factors by looking at redos or rework in the department and the sources of those redos. A redo is defined as doing something completed again in order to do it better.



Photo: Sherwin-Williams



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In looking across a spectrum of shops, I have identified several areas of refinish redos that are common.

- Color correctness: This is where a poor match is chosen and applied to parts.
- Repair mapping: Repair needs are not properly defined, leading to items that are missed or additional operations completed that are not part of the job.
- Parts management: Wrong parts painted, parts arriving at different times and painted in different cycles, parts

damaged before or after refinish causing more work.

With these areas in mind, let's share some strategies that address issues upstream that create redos and lead to bottlenecks in the refinish department. These items work in conjunction with a defined damage analysis and parts management process.

**Damage analysis and parts management process**

The following, suggested items do not take more time when a process is put in action, but may happen at a different time in the repair process than how your team presently implements them. The goal is to be proactive in preventing issues and allowing recovery time in the rare case an issue happens. If you notice below, we recommend that these areas all be addressed before an R.O. enters a booth (in fact many happen before the R.O. enters the refinish department.)

**THE BIGGER PICTURE: OVERALL SHOP DESIGN**

BY JUDY LYNCH

*Individual department focus is always important, but overall facility layout and design are vital to overall operations. Collision repair facilities typically have manpower, material and equipment in a layout that fosters a lot of walking, material movement and back-and-forth actions. Technicians work in their bays, which creates waste and adds cost.*

*A change to your shop design can address waste by physically changing the manner in which people interact with material, equipment, information and each other.*

*The philosophy is to develop lean principles, eliminate waste and improve production flow and quality. The key purpose of the lean design effort is to ensure that the resources or flow come together in the right place, in the right quantity and at the right time. People, workstations, parts bins and equipment should be arranged to optimize flow, minimize waste and boost productivity. Here are a few factors to consider when designing the layout of a facility so that you achieve maximum effectiveness: 1.) Does the design and layout allow for growth or change?; 2.) Is the process flow smooth?; 3.) Are materials being handled efficiently?; 4.) Does the facility layout contribute to meeting production needs?; 5.) Does the layout lend itself to all procedures within the process? A 'no' answer to any one of these questions means your present – or planned – space will not be 100 percent effective.*

Read more at [ABRN.com/Layout](http://ABRN.com/Layout).

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## Color identification

The best practice in damage analysis is to have the assigned refinish technician come to the vehicle. In doing so, they should have the needed tools to verify an actual color for the vehicle.

- Verify the type of finish (Single-, Two- or Three-Stage).
- Verify color code and vehicle VIN code.
- Identify an actual match to vehicle. This involves verifying chips or spray outs to the actual vehicle. Complete the spray out or letdown panel if needed.
- Do you need to blend color?
- Identify clear coat that will be utilized and the actual color cost.
- If vehicle is being driven until parts arrive, then look for the opportunity to get a sample to match.

## Refinish repair mapping in damage analysis

The refinish technician is the most experienced person to map the refinish process.

- Verify the repair needed. Panel paint, blend and how far it needs to be blended.
- What parts need to be removed?
- Define borders of repair area on repaired panels.
- Correct hours reflected on R.O. This is the best time to discuss: What dents, chips and scratches in blend panels will be fixed? And any other customer commitments related to refinish.

## Parts management

Errors in parts management are huge contributors to refinish bottlenecks.

- Parts verified for correctness before entering refinish. Labeled on back with R.O. number.
- Order of parts needed to be refinished complete before entering refinish.
- Damaged panels repaired properly and verified before entering refinish.
- Prep quality verified before refinish.
- Repair of used parts correctly reflected on R.O.
- Parts placed on correct refinish stands for refinish.
- Parts refinished off car sprayed in the same orientation they will be installed.
- Refinished panels are staged in a way that they don't get damaged before reinstallation.

While this is not a complete list, it should get you started in the right path of being proactive in addressing restrictions in your refinish process. A defined process that allows you to be proactive in addressing the areas above will then allow the paint department to move their focus on to other areas of process improvement inside their own department.

For optimum success, involve the technicians in discussing additional time-wasting operations. ☺



**TED WILLIAMS**  
CONTRIBUTING  
EDITOR

Ted Williams is a second generation collision repairer and former Skills USA/VICA Collision Repair Champion. He has 27 years' experience in the collision repair industry and developed Sherwin-Williams' Secrets of Material Profitability Revealed curriculum.





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# SHOP PROFILE

A snapshot of one of the industry's leading shops

**FRADELLA'S COLLISION CENTERS / GREATER NEW ORLEANS, LA**



## Rising from the ravages

New Orleans-based chain rebuilds after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina

BY **JAMES E. GUYETTE** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

It was August 2005 when the costliest natural disaster in US history roared through the Big Easy, bringing death, destruction and seemingly insurmountable hardships to so many, including the owners and staff of Fradella's Collision Centers.

Not only was the business able to rally and recover, but in the ensuing decade owners David Fradella, Mike Fradella and Al Waller Jr. have expanded the operation to encompass three thriving locations throughout the New Orleans area.

"Our community was ground zero for Hurricane Katrina," reports Waller, referring to the company's original shop in Chalmette, La. The storm and its immediate aftermath claimed nearly 300 lives in the town. Pre-Katrina there were 26,000 dwellings in Chalmette; all but 200 flooded and 68,000 residents were displaced, amounting to 100 percent of Fradella's customer base and all of its employees.

"The fact that we were affected by this disaster is not newsworthy. There are thousands just like us," Waller points out. "The way we reacted and our families and employees reacted – that is something special. We could have given up, and at times the outlook seemed hopeless and we wanted to give up, but we didn't. With our families and a great team we fought through to survive and prosper."

As the Chalmette location sat in ruin,

a neighboring shop-oriented structure was unoccupied and available. "It had 18 inches of water and the roof needed some repairs, but it had utilities," he recounts. A shower stall was a most-welcome amenity while a barbeque pit provided cooking facilities. The break room was repurposed as a bunkhouse and others camped out in a parking-lot trailer. Work alternated between getting the shop going and repairing everyone's respective homes.

Displaced staffers shared rides in from Texas as rebuilding progressed. Then Hurricane Rita arrived, resulting in a re-evacuation of all the equipment and a disheartening start-over of the renovation process.

"It was amazing what people were willing to do. We can truly look back on that time and only see the good in people and how our team came together," said Waller.

### Removing friction

Throughout the disaster, the shop owners did all they could to take care of employees who returned and make sure their benefit packages never lapsed.

### AT A GLANCE

#### Fradella's Collision Centers

Name of shop

#### Greater New Orleans area

Location

#### David and Mike Fradella, Al

#### Waller, Jr.

Owners

**3**

No. of shops

**33**

Years in business

**37**

No. of employees

**3**

No. of DRPs

**2.8 days**

Average cycle time

**\$2,200**

Average repair order

**60**

Average vehicles per week

**\$115,000**

Average weekly volume

**\$6 million**

Annual gross revenue for all locations combined

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"There is nothing more important than making sure that we as a company take care of the people we work with," says Vice President and General Manager Al Waller Jr.

Those same attitudes of excellence and good will are also applied to serving the customers. "We let every customer know that we are not going to disappear after they pick up their vehicle. We stress to the customer that if they are concerned about anything after they get back on the road call us immediately. No questions asked," Waller says. "We want them to feel 100 percent comfortable with putting themselves and their families back in their vehicle and back on the road."

"We will also do anything we can to accommodate customers who do not have rental. We have brought customers to the airport, work, home, and even the mall if the repair is something that will take only an hour or so. We will deliver a vehicle to the customer's home or work," Waller says.

"Whatever we can do to make the process easier we will do," he continues. "By doing small things like this, we can alle-

violate unnecessary stress and anxiety for the customer. This creates a sense of trust between us and the customer, so it allows us to do our jobs better."

### Honoring requests

A full mechanical facility is located at the Chalmette shop. Waller goes on to tell about a now-repeat customer who had been turned away by several competing shops. "It wasn't the most sought after repair, but we told him we would see if we could help. Long story short, we have done multiple repairs for him. We then started noticing referrals coming in from a local business that does small mechanical repairs. It ended up being this customer, who does mechanical work," Waller says.

"That's why we always tell our CSRs (customer service representatives) and estimators that you never know who you are talking to on the phone," he notes. "Treat everyone with kindness and give people the respect they deserve. You never know who could turn into your biggest cheerleader."

Maintaining open lines of communication with insurance companies is another emphasized company policy. "We honor their requests, and if we can't we communicate it to them. Keeping the customer happy and doing quality repairs is one of the biggest factors in a good relationship with insurers," says Waller.

Within the past two years Fradella's has been placing enhanced attention on its online presence by partnering with a digital marketing company and leveraging Chelsey's interest and skills.

"When we started we were buried on the second and third pages of internet searches. Today we are at the top of the first page," Waller reports.

"We also constantly strive to wow our customers to the point that we get them to refer us. We use a third-party company that contacts our customers post-repair. With the permission of the customer the company posts the reviews online. Good or bad, they are posted," he adds.

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Shop damage incurred from Hurricane Katrina.

on online reputation, we cannot afford to give poor service, because this is one of the main ways we attract new customers."

"We also re-designed our website and added an online estimate portal. This has been a great way for us to create a touch-point with new customers."

Social media sites have been utilized with considerable benefits as well. "Facebook has really been a positive marketing outlet for us," according to Waller. "The biggest success was when we started doing a throwback Thursday picture: Chelsey started posting old photos of Mike,

Dave and I. People loved it, especially since so many of the people from our community have relocated after the hurricane."

Free touch-up kits are provided along with key chains, pens and other branded advertising specialties. "We order the kit and also offer a free touch-up whenever they notice a chip. Pass by the shop on a sunny, dry day and we would be more than happy to do a touch-up. So far we have gotten a really positive response and we are considering making it permanent," Waller says.

"We have also wrapped two vehicles with our logo, locations and website," he

adds. "Since we have team members driving to different shops daily it has been an excellent rolling billboard. We also drove one of the vehicles in a parade, and it was a great way for us to get out in the community and get our name in front of people."

### Wages on the sly

While the 33-year old partnership between the Fradellas and Waller was established in 1982, Fradella's roots began taking hold several years earlier in a tale of two Al Wallers. The late Al Waller Sr. – known as "Big Al" while Al Waller Jr. is called "Little Al" – was the vice principal Chalmette High School who established a vocational education program in cooperation with an area body shop. Mike Fradella and his cousin Dave Fradella both took part in the endeavor, eventually going into business together.

As Little Al entered high school, Big Al was concerned that his son had little desire to go to college. It would have been a conflict of interest for Little Al to participate in the training program his dad developed, so Big Al approached his former students – Mike and Dave – and asked if Little Al could work at their shop while Big Al paid his son's wages on the sly.

"My dad continued to pay my paycheck the entire time I worked there," Little Al recounts. "He would pay Mike, and Mike would pay me. I don't think he ever knew that I knew he did that – Mike told me years later." ☞



**JAMES E. GUYETTE**  
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# Are you lying to your staff?

Address issues head on to avoid major conflicts

BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**H**ave you ever been blasted by your significant other when you thought you were doing nothing wrong? Odds are, you did in fact do something wrong days ago, but they didn't share it with you. They just let it build up inside them.

ATI coach Geoff Berman offered advice to help a collision shop owner avoid the same mistake with his staff.

Often, something will bother you in the shop, but you ignore it, rather than confront the employee. This happens several times until finally you lose your temper. The employee is bewildered by your reaction and doesn't know its cause. To you, your reaction makes sense, because you have been dealing with the issue internally for quite some time. To the employee, your response seems to come out of nowhere. A better approach is to tell the truth from the beginning. You would have avoided this messy conflict and could have dealt with the situation in a more professional manner. Here are the three most important steps to follow to avoid this costly mistake.

**Make it clear**

If you are one of the few who has set clear expectations, are they in writing? This is where most of us fail. People tend to find out what you expect when it is too late, when you tell them (or yell it to them) after the fact. Start your relationship with your staff on the right foot. It is not enough to say to me as an employee "this is how we do it here" and expect that I remember it immediately. That's why you put it in writing. The written expectation is used to help train and counsel the employee.

**Measure it**

It isn't enough to set a clear expectation. You also need to pay attention to how it is being carried out. How can you ever know whether what you want is being done, if you don't pay attention? Things will get missed, forgotten and just plain fouled up. A month later, you happen to notice I'm not doing something correctly; and that is when you lose your temper. You can avoid these situations if you measure the process and work on course corrections as you go.

**Stop holding me accountable**

All human beings need to be held accountable. I would ask you to consider something slightly different, though. If you say you're going to hold me accountable, it sounds negative. Instead of thinking of it as accountability, I want you to look at it as providing regular feedback. Sometimes this is good feedback, sometimes it is not. The bad things tend to easily find their way to the surface. It takes a bit more effort to find the good and inspire me to press on.

**Another way you lie**

We have been taught as leaders that we need to find the good in people. That's true. I think too many times, though, we manufacture things to say that are not true, because we want to say something positive. We might say "great job today" to an employee, knowing very well that they did

not have a great day. Leaving something unsaid and ignoring it is bad enough, but to tell me I did well when I did not is clearly not true. What is the message we are sending here? How will you ever expect me to grow and change if you do not provide me the truth about my performance?

A very simple way to improve this with a new employee would be to take my temperature weekly. See how I am feeling about my new position and your company. Point out the things you like about what I bring to the organization and what I need to work on. Make sure that I have goals and that your conversations are about achieving those goals each week.

It is important for you to always have weekly one-on-one meetings with your management staff; but for the rest of the established employees, a weekly one-on-one meeting may be a bit much. You will find a meeting once a month to be adequate. This shows your commitment to them and to their success, and helps foster the positive outlook you're striving for. If they know you have their best interests at heart, they will do whatever you ask.

So whether you are training a new employee or changing the habits of one you currently have, it is important for you to recognize that your job as leader is to inspire your staff to greatness. If you follow these three steps of setting a clear expectation, measuring it and providing regular feedback, your staff will be happier; your customers will be happier; you will be happier; and you will likely be more honest with how you feel. If you would like a simple checklist to fill out before you meet with your employees, go to [www.ationlinetraining.com/abrn1507](http://www.ationlinetraining.com/abrn1507). It is a new ATI coaching form called "How to Help an Employee Change Their Behavior," and we will include a short video to show you how easy it is to do. ☑

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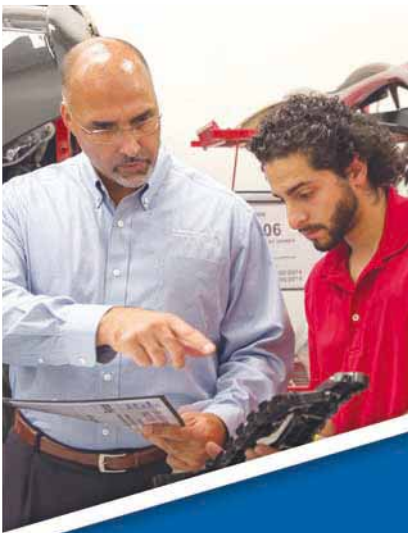
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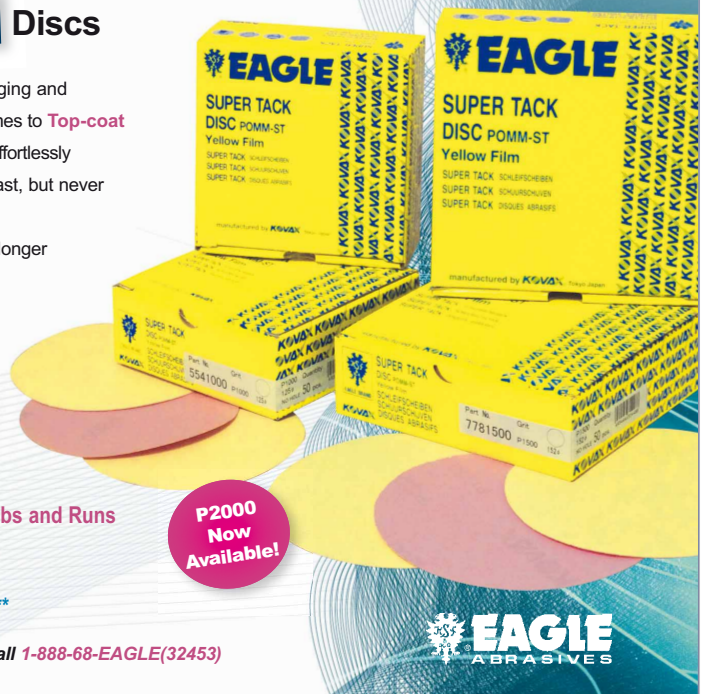
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TRAINING  IN FOCUS

# ALUMINUM PAINTING PROCEDURES



**\*\*Note:** We used a steel vehicle as an example because of lack of inventory in the shop at the time of this article, but this is the same procedure that would be performed on an aluminum vehicle. This BMW is red and the inner panels will be refinished in red and clear coated after installation. The above photo is a BMW left rear-floor extension, in E-Coat.

## USE DUE DILIGENCE AND FOLLOW PAINT MANUFACTURER, OEM REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE CORRECT PROCESSES

BY **LARRY MONTANEZ** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Socrates said, "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new." Change is inevitable in our industry. Enamel gave way to lacquer, which gave way to multiple versions of urethane-based paints and now of course waterborne paints. Resistance is not the answer to the destiny you must endure; embrace it and learn to move forward.

Aluminum vehicles have been around for decades with exotic and race vehicles and also in production vehicles. Since 1995, aluminum has been used by many European OEMs to construct their vehicles either with closure panels, hybrid construction or intensively. Now the US market is finally start-

ing to catch on and the masses are realizing there is going to be change. Aluminum repair is only difficult, or in some cases, impossible, because it is different from repairs performed on steel and plastics. For some reason, no one in the industry argues that plastic or composite components can't be repaired like steel, and vice versa. Therefore, why is it that all these so-called experts try to say aluminum can be repaired like steel, when obviously it cannot? There are similar procedures, but very different techniques; this is why aluminum repair will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for most. This brings us to the topic of this article — refinishing differences for aluminum components. Please keep in mind that this article is directed at damage assessors or estimators and not refinish technicians, as they will get training from their specific paint manufacturer.

Procedures for new replacement aluminum components and repaired components does differ slightly because of the need to prevent cross contamination, which could cause contact corrosion and eventually lead to galvanic corrosion, which in some cases could be catastrophic. You will always need to follow what your paint manufacturer states in their manual on product use and preparation procedures; but in





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some cases, you may need to refer to the OEM repair manual, as they may have specific refinish procedures for their vehicles. Here is a general example from multiple paint manufacturers on aluminum refinishing procedures.

**Sample: Aluminum refinishing procedures**

**\*\*Note –** It is required that separate tools and sandpaper are used on aluminum components to avoid cross contamination and potential galvanic corrosion issues.

Clean the repair area prior to any sanding or grinding. Use the recommended product to remove wax, grease and other contaminants. Soak a cloth with cleaner and wipe the area thoroughly. Use a clean, dry cloth to dry the area. Do not allow cleaner to dry on surface prior to wiping with dry cloth.

**General repair requiring body filler procedures**

Remove paint using a DA sander with 80 grit to bare metal. Vacuum dust and clean area with a dry cloth. Feather-edge the area stepping from 80 to 180 grit DA paper.

Re-wipe the area with the recommended cleaner. Apply with a soaked cloth and dry with a clean, dry cloth. Do not allow cleaner to dry on surface prior to wiping with dry cloth.

Most recommend an epoxy primer-sealer, and generally require a medium wet coat over the bare metal area. Bake the primer-sealer at 140°F metal temperature for 20 minutes using IR or conventional booth or allow to air dry for 16 hours and allow to cool. Once again, this is just a general explanation; please check with your paint manufacturer for specific procedures.

Apply body filler over primed area to fill the imperfection. After body filler has hardened, sand with 80 grit followed by 100, 120, 150 and 180 grits until damaged area is leveled.

When body filler process is finished, featheredge the repaired area working from 80, 100, 120, 150, 180, 220 to 240 grit DA sandpaper to ensure a proper featheredge.

Prime bare metal areas with an epoxy primer-sealer. Apply one medium wet coat and allow to flash 30-45 minutes prior to applying primer-filler.

Apply a urethane primer-filler per



**BMW left rear-floor extension, E-Coat primed grey**



**BMW rear body panel, in E-Coat**



**BMW rear body panel, E-Coat primed grey**



**BMW left rear quarter panel, in E-Coat**



**BMW left rear quarter panel, E-Coat primed grey**

label directions. Allow primer to dry and sand as necessary.

Proceed with balance of refinishing process.

**General repair without body filler procedures**

Featheredge repair area stepping down

from 80, 100, 120, 150, 180, 220, 240 to 320 grit DA sandpaper, dependent on the depth of repair. Use finest grit possible. Vacuum dust and wipe with a clean cloth. If bare aluminum is present, a pre-treatment type primer is generally required. Wipe the area with the required cleaner. Apply with a soaked cloth and dry with a clean, dry cloth. Do not allow cleaner to dry on surface prior to wiping with dry cloth.

Most paint manufacturers require a self-etching primer and to apply one medium coat over the bare metal area and allow to flash dull. After the self etch has flashed 30 minutes, apply a urethane-fill primer.

A urethane primer-filler is generally applied using an outside-in technique. Allow each coat to flash before applying the next coat. Allow primer to dry thoroughly and sand as necessary and then proceed with balance of refinishing process.

### Additional procedures

Like with steel panels, time must be added for the masking and application of chip guard. Many times you will have to check with the OEM repair information on where chip guard is applied. Most applications are smooth and you either need the OEM location of applications, or you will need to measure the film thickness. Generally the database providers allow for 0.5 hrs refinish for the first panel and 0.3 hrs refinish for each additional panel, and texture matching set up is not included.

Typically, chip guard is found on the leading edge of the hood panel, around the windshield posts, leading edge of the roof panel and to the lower areas of the fenders, doors, rocker panels and quarter panel dog-leg areas.

Many OEMs and paint manufacturers require full backside refinishing to help protect the backsides from debris buildup that can cause contact corrosion and eventually lead to galvanic corrosion and panel failure, such as refinishing and clear coating the backside of fenders and door assemblies. Additionally, much like steel quarter panels, the backsides of aluminum quarter panels must be refinished. Backside refinishing is not included in any of the three major database providers and must be manually added to the estimate. Time must be added for the

preparation and application of primers, base coats and clear coats.

Another important procedure that is not included is the feather edge, prime, and block sand (FPB) procedure. This must be calculated by the damage assessor and is based on a percentage of the repair time to the component. Contrary to some articles we have read, some paint manufacturers do require self-etch primer on aluminum components. Some OEMs require epoxy primer be applied to the panel prior to applications of body filler. Additionally, there are some paint manufacturers that may require higher grades of sandpaper grit to finish off the bare aluminum to prevent sand scratches. It is imperative that the refinish technician reads the paint manufacturer and OEM repair protocols prior to any applications of material. There are many articles on calculations for the FPB process. Both Mike Anderson, another ABRN contributor, and myself have written articles on the process and calculations.

Lastly, although not common with OEM steel components, many new OEM aluminum components come with either a shipping primer or no primer at all. You will need to refer to the OEM repair procedures and/or paint manufacturers' procedures for the preparation to refinish those types of components.

One important thing to remember is that aluminum repair is somewhat similar to steel repair, but there are some very different procedures, equipment and techniques. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. ☎



**LARRY MONTANEZ**  
TECHNICAL  
EDITOR

Montanez is co-owner of P&L Consultant, which works with collision shops on estimating, production and proper repair procedures. He is also a certified technician for multiple OEM collision repair programs.

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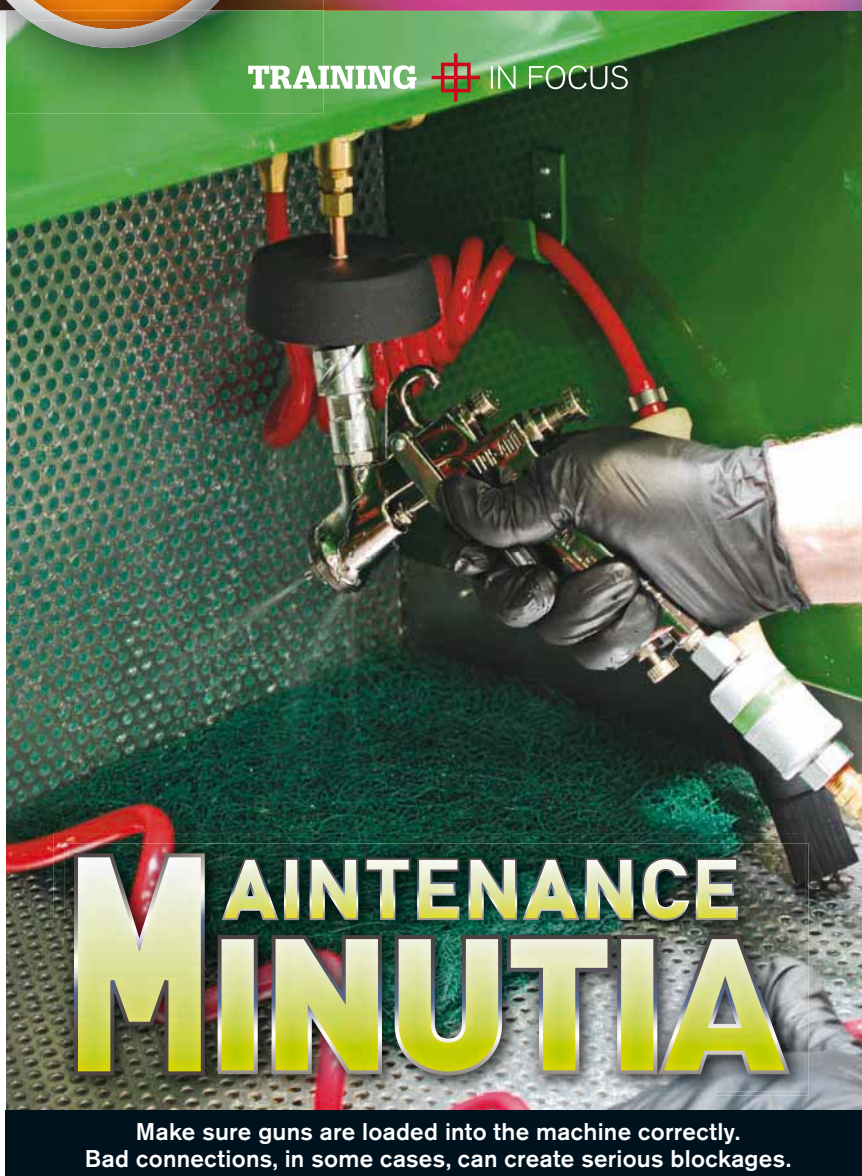
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TRAINING  IN FOCUS

# MAINTENANCE MINUTIA

Make sure guns are loaded into the machine correctly.  
Bad connections, in some cases, can create serious blockages.

Photo: Becca Inc.

## PROPER CARE OF SPRAY GUNS IN YOUR SHOP CAN MEAN SUPERIOR FINISHES AND ALSO LOWER COSTS

BY **TIM SRAMCIK** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

When it comes to your paint department, little things really do mean a lot. Dust, poorly measured formulas, dirty spray booth filters, technicians not wearing their suits and hoods and poor spraying technique can wreak havoc on your work —producing poor, flawed finishes whose follow-up repairs diminish efficiency and cut profits.

Consider then the potential problems caused when your most important painting tool — the spray gun — isn't functioning properly. Faulty guns produce these same poor finishes, often to a worse degree.

Yet, many shops overlook the proper care of this crucial tool, often until it meets an early demise and needs replaced. By then, the shop has two expensive issues to address — a string of jobs that need costly re-dos and investment in a new gun (which typically prices out at \$600).

All this can be avoided by investing a few extra minutes daily and weekly spent cleaning and caring for spray guns according to manufacturer specifications. Use these general recommendations as a guide.

### Stock the right items

The keys to proper cleaning start with having the proper tools and products on hand for the job. Despite being durable, spray guns are also fairly delicate. They can be easily damaged when being cleaned if repairers use unapproved products and tools.

Avoid this by stocking only those cleaning solutions permitted by the gun and paint manufacturer. The basic rules are: Guns used for waterborne products should be cleaned only with pH-neutral solutions. Avoid chlorinated hydrocarbon solvents, which can corrode aluminum and galvanized parts for solvent-based paints.

Consider investing in tools that reduce the possibility of damage. Repairers sometimes resort to using wire brushes, key files or paper clips for cleaning simply because they're available in a shop. These items can wreck the delicate passages in a gun and permanently ruin the spray pattern. Clear these items out of the paint department and instead stock spray gun cleaning tool sets. These sets typically include cleaning brushes in various sizes (large, medium and double-sided), nozzle cleaning needles and a high-performance lubricant.

Consider as well investing in a sealed, automatic spray gun cleaner. These units provide safer, quicker, more thorough cleanings than those performed manually and use less cleaning solution. Because they're sealed, they cut the release of VOCs.

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**Manual cleaning**

If your shop manually cleans its guns, use the following steps, after putting on goggles and Nitrile gloves:

1.) Dismantle the gun by first removing the paint needle, followed by the cap, and then unscrew the fluid tip. Note: If these parts don't remove easily, never resort to using excess force such as striking the gun with a hammer or other tool. Apply a lubricant and gradually work the parts loose.

Many times you can go online to your gun manufacturer's website and download a build and component sheet and even other troubleshooting tips.

2.) Clean the material passage with the recommended solution and then the gun body.

Use the recommended brushes to remove paint residues stuck to the drill holes. Utilize the needles included in the cleaning kit for cleaning out the smaller drill holes. Never push paint residue back into the openings.

Make sure that no cleaning fluid or dirt particles end up in the air passages (air intake or the paint nozzle drill holes) of the gun body. Some manufacturers recommend leaving the spray gun connected to the airline with the air rate reduced to the minimum flow.

Finish by drying with a blowgun.

3.) Use the brushes to clean the nozzle set.



**A poorly maintained spray gun costs a shop twice — in poor finishes that must be redone and in reduced service life.**

Photo: Sherwin-Williams

zle set. Be careful that none of the metal on the brushes touches the nozzle.

If the nozzle is damaged or needs replaced, always perform a complete re-installation of the nozzle set, which includes the air cap, paint nozzle and paint pin. Strictly follow the installation regulations of the gun or nozzle manufacturer.

4.) Reassemble the gun. Brush a thin coat of silicon and acid free, non-resin-ing special grease or oil on the needle spring, paint pin and all sliding parts

and bearings. Re-install the parts in the reverse order.

Note: Some shops soak their guns in buckets or vats of thinner to help clean them. This practice actually can cause blockages. If the thinner has been used or is dirty, residual dirt and paint can soak into and clog drill holes and passages in a gun. Even if the thinner is clean, paint and contaminants that are loosened or removed can move onto and clog a different passage.

Additionally, some of the packing in



**A spray gun cleaning kit contains all the tools necessary for a proper cleaning and prevents employees from using unauthorized tools that can damage a gun.**

Photo: Anest-Iwata



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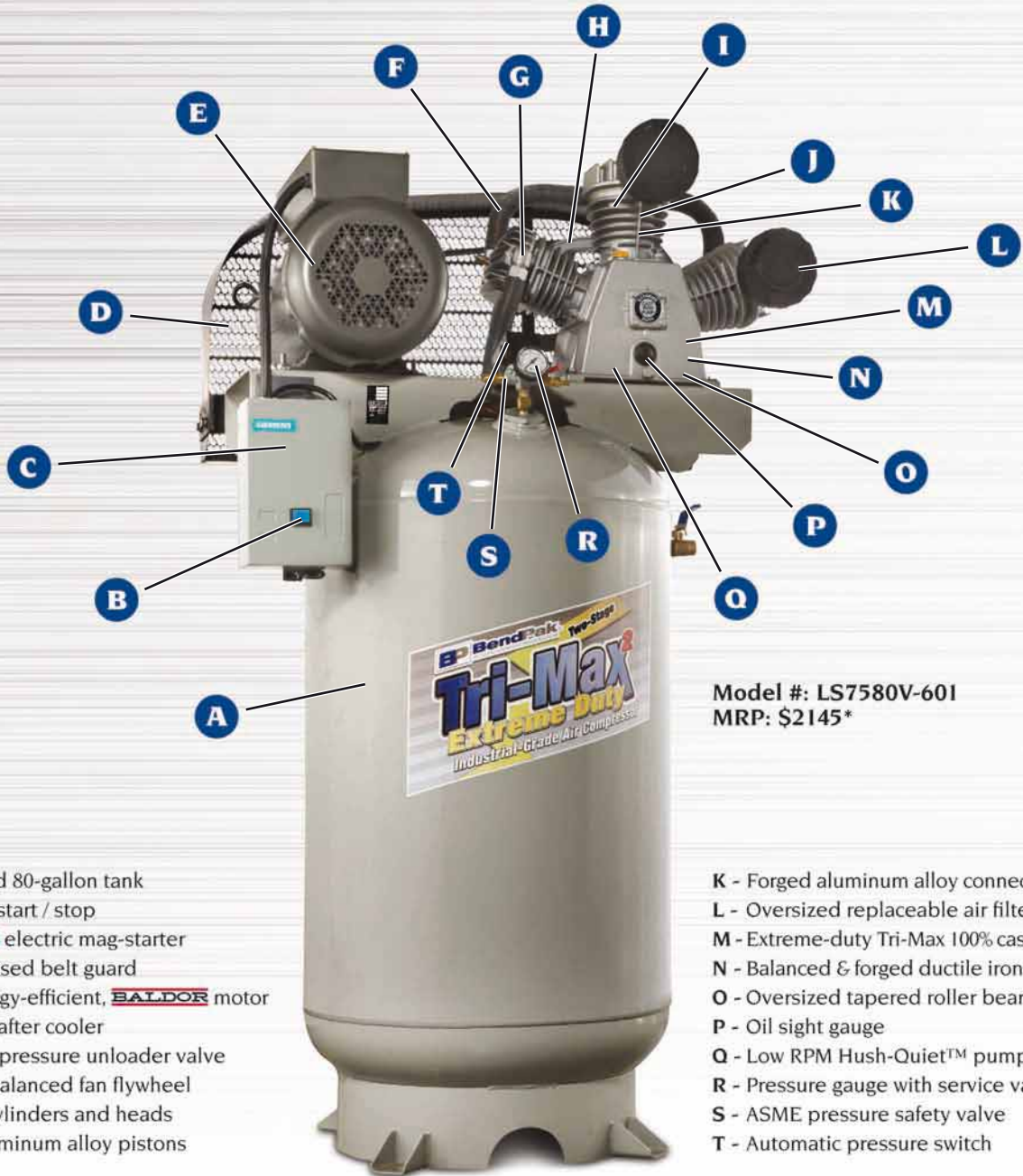
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the gun can become damaged by absorbing the thinner due to prolonged soaking, which will cause improper operation of the gun.

### Cleaning machines

Spray gun cleaning machines are relatively simply to use. The instructions for each manufacturer differs, but most utilize a system that pushes cleaning solution at high pressure through the gun. Care needs to be taken when inserting the gun into these systems. If the gun is not set up correctly, the system actually can create serious blockages.

Note that some manufacturers recommend that the gun body be cleaned first to ensure the most thorough cleaning possible.

### Set a maintenance schedule

Properly maintaining a spray gun involves more than just keeping it cleaned. Guns also need to be lubricated regularly and examined for wear and damage. While this may seem like a lot of extra work, it actually can be completed fairly quickly and provides significant benefits that (1) ensure the gun is working properly all the time and (2) remains in service during its expected life span.

Note the following maintenance schedule recommended by DeVilbiss.

### Every shift duties

1.) Check the front air cap face and all air cap holes for damage. Replace if necessary.

2.) Check the fluid tip external profile for damage. Replace if necessary.

3.) Make sure the fluid needle is seated correctly in the fluid head, allowing no seepage. If necessary, replace or lap in.

4.) Turn off the pressure tank fluid cock and/or compressed air supply to the gun. Trigger the gun. Apply one drop of spray gun lubricant to the needle shaft immediately behind the fluid needle packing screw. Release the trigger. Repeatedly pull and release the trigger to work lubricant into fluid needle packing.

5.) Make sure the trigger operates smoothly and the fluid needle does not stick or bind up during movement due to damage or paint build up.

6.) Apply a single drop of lubricant to each side of the trigger pivot screw. Re-

peatedly pull and release trigger to work lubricant into trigger pivot.

7.) Apply a single drop of lubricant to the air valve stem. Repeatedly pull and release the trigger to work lubricant into air valve packing seal.

8.) Make sure the air valve operates smoothly and without sticking. Replace the valve stem if necessary.

9.) Check the needle packing for fluid leakage. If required, tighten the needle packing by rotating the packing screw until the needle starts to bind, then loosen the packing nut just enough so that the needle moves freely. If the screw bottoms without eliminating the fluid leak, replace packing with a new item.

### Additional end of week maintenance checks

1.) Check to see if the air cap retaining ring and gun air baffle threads are free from damage (a smear of petroleum jelly on the threads will help prevent binding).

2.) Check to ensure the air baffle seal is not leaking air badly or is visibly damaged. If necessary, replace.

3.) Apply petroleum jelly to the needle shaft front end for smooth operation.

4.) Apply petroleum jelly to the needle shaft rear end and needle spring to aid resistance to corrosion and contamination.

5.) Check to see if the horn control valve can freely rotate with no stiff spots. If necessary, lubricate or replace the O-ring.

6.) If the Check Air control valve is fitted, make sure it rotates freely with no stiff spots. If necessary, replace or lubricate the O-ring.

7.) Check for air leaks from the air cap when the gun is not triggered. If necessary, clean or replace the air valve stem or seat.

8.) Determine if the trigger retaining screw is tight.

9.) Make sure the fluid and air inlet connectors are tight and sealed. Tighten if necessary.

### Additional bi-weekly maintenance checks

1.) Check for air leakage from the air valve body when trigger is pulled. Replace the air valve seal if necessary.

2.) Check to ensure the fluid needle shaft is not badly worn and needle end profile and point are undamaged.



Gun cleaning machines provide quicker and more thorough cleaning of spray guns than manual cleaning, along with reducing the release of VOCs.

Photo: Becca Inc.

3.) Apply a smear of petroleum jelly to all air O-rings to aid fitting and easy rotation.

4.) Check the gun body for damage, particularly around the air inlet connector port.

5.) If the stainless steel head fluid insert is fitted, check for damage to the fluid tip seat, swaging or leaks caused by rotation. This item is not removable or replaceable. A new gun body will be necessary.

6.) Check for damage to the air baffle chimney. Replace the air baffle assembly if necessary.

7.) Apply petroleum jelly to the air valve spring to aid resistance to corrosion and contamination.

To ensure adhesion to these schedules, create a checklist that employees can sign and date. It's one more simple step to a spray gun cleaning and care regimen that will pay off handsomely in a better product and reduced expenses. ☞



**TIM SRAMCIK**  
CONTRIBUTING  
EDITOR

Tim Sramcik has written for *ABRN*, *Motor Age* and *After-market Business World* for more than a decade. He has produced numerous news, technical and feature articles covering every aspect of the collision repair market. In 2004, he was recognized for his work by the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

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TRAINING  IN FOCUS

# PREPARATION PERFECTION

WORK WITH YOUR PAINT COMPANY TO  
BUILD A PREP PROGRAM

BY **TIM SRAMCIK** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR



Set up standard procedures to determine whether body or paint techs will repair deep scratches.

Even in an era when vendors are churning out fantastic finishes, along with mixing and measuring technology that essentially guarantees an exact color match, many shops still lose all of these benefits and cost savings because of the re-dos and other problems caused by poor prep work.

Fortunately, prep work — along with spraying technique, training and spray booth use, among others — is an area where vendors can provide assistance. Refer to the following steps, submitted by paint companies, to help your shop build a prep program that consistently provides the right preparation for top notch finishes.

## Step 1: Prepare for the prepping

Many of the most vital steps that create a great finish are performed well before the finish is laid. The same can be said for prepping, where many of the most important steps are made before the prep work starts.

William Warner, Technical and Training Manager for Matrix and Prospray, says shops should start by making sure they allot sufficient time, space and planning to properly perform the entire repair job.

"In the front office, preparation begins in the estimate

and selling phase. If each step isn't properly accounted for, it has a snowball effect," Warner says. "I've seen this scenario many times. The body work gets delayed and then the paint job gets rushed to meet the delivery date."

Warner notes that some of the costliest mistakes are made well before a technician or painter even touches a job. He explains, "Overselling the job, by not setting realistic expectations, excluding a process (like blending) or promising the car too soon can put the shop and staff at a disadvantage."

Axalta Account Manager Ben Sampson similarly points out that the entire repair first needs to be addressed to build efficiency during the paint prep stage. Mapping a repair, he says, ensures there are "no surprises or extra repairs that can create unnecessary color match problems, for example, because a shop had to take care of damage at the end of a blend panel."

Sampson says shops need to address some prep issues at the front end of a repair instead of waiting until the vehicle is ready to be painted. Specifically, he says shops should perform color verification while a vehicle is still in the body department. "We teach our shops to check to see if a special toner is needed at the time of writing the initial estimate,"

Photo: Sherwin-Williams

he says. "That way they can adjust the estimate as needed and get product ordered so as not to delay the repair."

Sampson notes that shops also need to put SOPs in place that prevent substandard repairs from being pushed into the prep and paint departments where they can cause significant problems. For example, he explains that paint departments sometimes receive vehicles with deep scratches or pinholes and prep workers make the mistake of addressing these flaws with primer/surfacers. "Primer is designed to isolate the repair and create a uniform substrate, not to compensate for poor bodywork," says Sampson.

Sampson believes shops should institute an SOP that requires techs to repair these flaws using polyester glazing putty and powder guide coat. Shops need to determine who will do this work and stick to that program.

The task of preventing substandard repairs from making it to the paint department in the first place is a team effort between all departments, says Charlie Whitaker, Quality First Technical Advisor with Valspar Automotive. "Communication is not limited to the current workflow within the facility. We can take a proactive approach and work with and train the appropriate department personnel so that everyone has a clear understanding of the steps needed in order for that department to perform a repair that meets the shop's standard level of quality," he says. "They must work together as a team and be willing to acknowledge reviews and constructive criticism from their peers."

Proper preparation is essential for

a quality outcome, says Brian Calmer, product manager with Martin Senour Automotive Finishes. "Following recommended preparation guidelines can directly impact the overall project duration, paint adhesion to the substrate, coating durability and the overall finish — just to name a few," he says.

**Step 2: Setting prep standards**

SOPs also should be created for the prepping itself. AkzoNobel Technical Manager Fitz Moles recommends shops focus on building a "documented process that provides high quality, predictable results." This process should include easy-to-follow visual instructions for employees to use, paired with images of the right and wrong ways of completing prep work.

Once prepping SOPs are put in place, Moles says shops need to continually train employees and review their standards, along with instituting quality inspections before a vehicle moves to the prep stage and then again before the finish is applied.

Paint companies are well suited to offer terrific advice when creating prep SOPs since they know the procedures and products that work best with their particular finishes.

**Step 3: Clean and orderly**

One of the first prep SOPs shops create, according to these companies, involves proper cleaning of the vehicle and the orderly removal and storage of parts. Paul Evans, Zone Manager of Refinish Business Development Centers for PPG, recommends using a high-pressure washer with soap to thor-



**Clean vehicles twice before they are painted — first when they enter the shop and again at the beginning of the prep work.**

Photo: Matrix and Prospray

oughly clean every vehicle (including the undercarriage) before it enters a shop. Doing so makes damage analysis more productive and removes many of the contaminants that can damage fresh paint.

After repairs are completed, prep employees should wash the vehicle again to remove any contaminants that may have been picked up in the shop. Damir Banusic, Global Product Manager for Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes, says shops also need to clean out the door jamba to make sure no dirt and dust remains. "Pulling the trigger on the spray gun and seeing all the dirt land on top of the repair is not a sight any painter wants," says Banusic.

Pete Mahoney, National Technical Manager for ChemSpec, reminds repairers to apply wax and grease removers, along with the appropriate pre-cleaner. Mahoney explains that any wax left on a panel ends up being ground into the surface during sanding, resulting in blistering and paint delaminating.

Evans notes that all cleaning should be done with clean, lint-free rags to avoid re-contaminating the surface. For best results, he says cleaning solvent should be wiped in one direction until dry and not be allowed to evaporate on the panel.



**A well ordered, clean shop is one of the keys to top-notch prep work.**

Photo: Car Crafters

Most of the vendors *ABRN* spoke with named insufficient cleaning as the most common, most expensive prep mistake shops make. Along with creating flaws such as fish eyes, delaminating and contour mapping (that must go through costly re-dos), poor cleaning leads to over application of materials, including sealers, color finishes and clears. Clean surfaces save product and money.

Vendors also point out that running an extra-clean shop goes a long way in providing uncontaminated surfaces. Warner says repairers could help themselves in the prep department and elsewhere by running cleaner, more organized operations. That means reducing clutter, storing materials and maintaining equipment — especially compressors, air lines, filters and lighting.

**Step 4: Superior sanding**

Following poor cleaning, vendors said the second most common prep mistake shops make is sanding with the wrong grit. Sampson says repairers often sand through E-coat on a new panel, then fail to correctly treat the bare metal. The result is paint blistering followed by rust.

Hans Kempf, North American Training Manager for BASF, says many repairers are still using 36 or 40 grit to remove paint from damaged areas when a gentler grade, like 80 grit, would do. Repairers turn to rougher grits to speed their work but risk seriously damaging the non-ferrous substrate used on newer, lighter-weight panels.

**Step 5: Improved products**

One of the best ways to deal with sanding issues is to make recommended grits part of your shop's prep SOPs. Next,



An assortment of new sanding disks are available to handle OEM finishes.

Photo: Sherwin-Williams



As part of prep cleaning, clean out all door jams and frames.

Photo: Leifer Collision and Glass

make sure these grades are always part of your available inventory.

From there, repairers should begin examining the array of new abrasives and other prepping products constantly coming to market designed to make this work easier and less costly.


Sampson recommends new, flexible abrasive films that can offer improved sanding consistency. He also points to new blending discs that can produce a fast and uniform surfacing without removing the OEM peel from the clear. New ceramic clearcoat discs, he says, now can handle OEM scratch resistant and matte clears.

Sampson also recommends masking tapes designed specifically for waterborne finishes to prevent the edges from bleeding through.

Helping reduce the number of necessary prep supplies, Sherwin-Williams offers primers that include a guide coat, allowing repairers to see un-sanded areas and reducing the need to use a dry guide coat. ChemSpec offers fleet shops a new high solids epoxy for freshly sandblasted panels that eliminates the need for dual-action sanding after a single coat. AkzoNobel and PPG provide water-based, low-VOC surface cleaners designed to clean better than solvent-based solutions with no residue. Aerosol plastic surface degreaser and etch wipes are available

from Martin-Senour, along with a spray gun and surface cleaner.

Notable here is that many vendors say customers sometimes aren't aware of these products, typically because repairers haven't taken the time to speak with them or because managers and owners don't communicate enough with their paint departments. That's a shame, vendors say, because just a few extra moments spent on these discussions can pay off substantially in efficiency and reduced costs.

Indeed, extra moments like these — combined with the same kind of attention your shop gives estimating, body work and painting — translate into flawless, efficient prep work. Your paint vendor wants to help take your shop to this level. Prepare now to begin working with them to make this happen. 



Tim Sramcik has written for *ABRN*, *Motor Age* and *After-market Business World* for more than a decade. He has produced numerous news, technical and feature articles covering every aspect of the collision repair market. In 2004, he was recognized for his work by the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

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## 2015 AUTOMECHANIKA CHICAGO EXHIBITOR PROFILES



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Photos: Messe Frankfurt

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

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#### Axalta is more than an ordinary paint manufacturer

Axalta Coating Systems goes beyond the role of the standard paint manufacturer. They are a leader in paint technology, and Axalta also has the tools, services and training to help jobbers and body shops succeed in a challenging market.

Axalta showcased its range of product and service offerings at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26, and was focused on communicating to attendees how they work with their jobber and body shop customers to help them succeed.

Axalta partnered with Global Finishing

Solutions to give live demonstrations of the company's latest product technologies and the newest repair techniques in a fully functioning paint booth on the show floor. Axalta trainers worked side by side with show attendees, who were able to suit up and have hands-on experience working with the Standox Standoblue, Cromax Pro, Cromax Mosaic and Spies Hecker Permahyd Hi-TEC product lines.

Quickly and accurately selecting the right color formula is vital to paint shop efficiency, and Axalta brought its portfolio of industry-leading color tools to the show. Attendees were able to work with Color Proofing, Acquire RX, Acquire Plus EFX and VINDicator color tools to see the systems in action, which enable faster formula selection and faster finish.

Axalta also demonstrated its commitment to supporting the collision repair industry by launching its new e-learning program called the Axalta Learning Campus at the show. The Axalta Learning Campus offers refinish technicians the

ability to register for traditional, in-person training center classes and web-based training content that can be accessed and tracked anytime, anywhere.

Also a participant in Automechanika Frankfurt in Germany, Axalta was drawn to have presence in Automechanika's inaugural US event because the brand has the right pedigree, partners and drive to spur continued growth in the US. Automechanika's training focus also fits with Axalta's philosophy of making sure its jobbers and body shops have the right tools and knowledge to get the job done correctly, the first time.



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**BASF**

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## BASF helps to drive successful, sustainable business models

BASF solutions are on the cutting edge of collision shop technology, offering customers the opportunity to improve efficiency and profits.

Supported by technical training programs, advanced color information systems and business management seminars, BASF highlighted its Glasurit and R-M refinish paint lines and the benefits these products can bring to shop businesses at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26.

Live demonstrations highlighted SmartTrak paint management software and its impact to the bottom line, and

also the VisionPLUS Online benchmark software, which can be used to identify opportunities for shops so they are able to get the most out of their business.

Custom designers and builders Mike and Jim Ring — better known as the Ringbrothers — were on-hand at the BASF booth to sign autographs and answer questions about their award-winning builds while showcasing their 1966 Chevrolet Chevelle, "Recoil." Painted with Sand Storm from BASF's Glasurit 90 Line, Recoil earned multiple awards at the 2014 SEMA Show, including the prestigious "Best in Show" by General

Motors, the Goodguys GOLD Award and a Mothers Choice Award.

Automechanika's strong global presence attracts exhibitors and attendees from around the world, and BASF welcomed the opportunity to participate during the brand's first venture into the US market and showcase how its products and services can help customers to build and sustain a successful business.

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**BLOWTHERM USA**

[www.blowtherm-usa.com](http://www.blowtherm-usa.com)

## Blowtherm educates and creates customer solutions

More than just a high-quality spray booth manufacturer, Blowtherm USA has become an industry leader with its focus on engineering, reliability, performance and energy-efficient systems.

Blowtherm USA introduced the new WORLD 8000 Spray Booth at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26 at McCormick Place West in Chicago. Blowtherm also showcased its entire line of Extra spray booths, Genius prep stations, mixing rooms and much more. Anyone new to the Blowtherm spray booth experience had the opportunity to hear what existing customers have

to say about these world-class systems in the Customer Testimonial area of the Blowtherm booth.

National and regional sales and distribution experts were on hand at the three-day event to brainstorm business solutions and prepare real-time quotations, right on the show floor, for Automechanika Chicago attendees.

Blowtherm always encourages learning more about products through hands-on experience and research before purchasing, and Automechanika Chicago offered the perfect opportunity.

According to Mark Miller, National Sales Manager — Blowtherm USA, "Automechanika Chicago combined three very important factors for Blowtherm — the opportunity for personal engagement with customers/prospects; worldwide event awareness of our product, company name and brands; and a fantastic regional location — Chicago."

Miller continues, "The Automechanika brand is known worldwide as the premiere

event to achieve these goals and more.

Because the inaugural U.S. show took place in one of the most commonly visited cities in the country, at the esteemed McCormick Place Convention Center — this was a 'must participate' event for our company."

Blowtherm USA knows Automechanika Chicago will grow exponentially over the years; and they are committed to growing side by side with the show.



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## CAR-O-LINER

[www.car-o-liner.com](http://www.car-o-liner.com)

### Integrated Car-O-Liner solutions are the quality choice

CHICAGO — Car-O-Liner is the quality choice for shops who need a total solutions product offering — innovative tools and equipment, technical development, training and customer support.

At Automechanika Chicago in April, Car-O-Liner showcased its technician-friendly equipment, which boasts widespread OEM approvals and allows for the completion of proper repairs with

enhanced efficiency and accuracy.

For more than 40 years, Car-O-Liner has been known for its high quality, advanced technology and ergonomic design. By integrating Car-O-Liner solutions with each other, shops not only get a flexible, universal collision repair system, but also are able to support the entire vehicle repair process, thereby reducing cycle times and increasing profits.

Car-O-Liner aims to have continued engagement with technicians and shop owners. Industry events across the country, like Automechanika Chicago, offer Car-O-Liner an opportunity to meet with customers face to face, not only to showcase new equipment options and answer questions, but also to have a platform to listen to the requirements, challenges and successes they've

encountered in their business.

Car-O-Liner also maintains communication with both its customers and the industry through its robust social media efforts. Utilizing platforms including Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest, Car-O-Liner efficiently shares product, technical training and event updates while also staying active in ongoing conversations with both their customers and the industry as a whole.



## CAR-O-LINER®

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## CHIEF AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

[www.chiefautomotive.com](http://www.chiefautomotive.com)

### Chief's expanded product line to streamline supply chain for shops

Body shops can make just one stop for their collision repair equipment needs — Chief Automotive Technologies.

Automechanika Chicago served as the platform to launch Chief's new products, including a rivet gun and fume extractor, as well as its new Fusion line of spot and MIG/MAG welders, previously marketed under the Elektron brand.

The new rivet gun featured a self-piercing design for all common riveting applications, including efficiently bonding aluminum and steel panels. Its pneumatic-hydraulic power unit offers improved

consistency over battery-operated riveting systems, which lose power throughout the repair. Consistent performance from the first rivet to the last helps technicians properly complete repairs in record time.

Chief's new fume extractor collects weld fumes at their source, protecting technicians against breathing harmful airborne particulates. Its heavy-duty powder-coated aluminum arm helps prevent wear and breakage in even the most demanding shop settings. The fume extractor comes equipped with a ProTura® Nanofiber cartridge that offers high efficiency, low operating cost and long filter life.

The new products complement Chief's existing frame racks, measuring systems, vehicle anchoring equipment and specification data.

"The expanded product line will make it easy for customers to get all the equipment they need from the Chief distributors they have long relied on for unmatched service and support," said Bob Holland, director of collision in North and South

America for Chief parent company Vehicle Service Group (VSG).

Chief also took an active role in technician training by presenting "Steel vs. Aluminum: Fact and Fiction" at Automechanika Chicago on Friday and Saturday. This course draws from the curriculum of the new Chief University "Aluminum Damage Analysis and Repair Technology" class.

## CHIEF®

automotive technologies

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## GARMAT

[www.garmat.com](http://www.garmat.com)

### Garmat offers products and solutions to show attendees

Garmat used its presence at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26, to show attendees that it is not only a paint booth manufacturer, but also a partner in helping to improve shop throughput.

Garmat offers solutions from full turn-key projects down to smaller upgrades, such as mechanical replacements or retrofitting booths for waterborne.

At Automechanika Chicago, Garmat booth visitors were able to see many of the company's new and existing product

lines, all combined in a demo booth that featured elements of an aluminum station and paint booth. The company's Aluminum Repair Station side featured roll-up door options, pull-back curtains and also highlighted the AlumaSAFE 50 Max ceiling options with LED upgraded light fixtures.

The paint booth side of the booth allows visitors to see the solid construction of a Garmat booth and also the possibilities of being able to showcase their brand through customer headers and logo-engraved doors.

The highlight of the paint booth is Garmat's new touch screen controls. This control panel is designed with a user-friendly interface, featuring switches and a touch screen to operate the major modes. In addition, the touch screen provides self-diagnostic maintenance screens and stores paint recipes. Garmat also demonstrated the WIFI feature of the touch screen, which allows technicians to run or monitor the paint booth with WIFI-enabled devices, such

as a PC, smartphone or tablet.

Garmat also showcased their patented accele-cure system and several blower configurations, which offer waterborne solutions that are retrofittable to other paint booth brands. In addition, several paint booth accessories, such as the hose trolley and lighting options, were featured.



#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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## GLOBAL FINISHING SOLUTIONS

[www.globalfinishing.com](http://www.globalfinishing.com)

### New curing methods, paint booth technology showcased by GFS

Some of the most talked about industry issues — aluminum repair, paint department efficiency and reduced cycle times — were tackled by Global Finishing Solutions at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26.

During the show, Global Finishing Solutions showcased its line of finishing equipment, including paint booths, prep environments, aluminum repair stations, paint mix rooms and accessories.

Global Finishing Solutions capitalized on its presence at Automechanika Chicago to help booth visitors learn more about company products and capabilities. They also used the opportunity to educate customers about alternative curing methods — REVO infrared technology, the AdvanceCure system and SmartCure controls — for collision repair.

The REVO infrared drying systems, designed to significantly decrease repair cycle times, were highlighted at the show, and



attendees were able to see all four REVO products — from the semi-automatic, in-booth system to the small, handheld model — and see first hand the improved efficiency and reduced cycle time benefits the system can offer to the shop.

Global Finishing Solutions also partnered with Axalta Coating Systems to offer live demonstrations of the newest paint booth and coating technologies and techniques. The featured Semi-Downdraft Ultra XD paint booth featured 11 windows, allowing visitors to watch training presentations on waterborne and primer applications. Attendees then suited up to try the products themselves and were able to experience the AdvanceCure system, a High-Performance Airflow ceiling and integrated hip-style ceiling lights, all inside the booth. It was also equipped with a Logic 3 panel, which provides controls for the flash and curing modes, along with blower and filter settings.



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## PARTSTRADER

[partstrader.us.com](http://partstrader.us.com)

### How PartsTrader integrations are adding value for your business

Attendees at Automechanika Chicago saw firsthand how PartsTrader continues to set the pace in adding value through integration and product enhancements that save time, reduce costs and improve efficiencies in the parts procurement process.

Booth visitors were able to preview PartsTrader 3.0, which features a revised Quote Selection Tool. This upgrade makes it even easier for repairers to weigh factors such as shop profitability, auto owner timeframes and insurance allowances to determine the parts purchase that best fits



the needs of the repair job. PartsTrader 3.0 is set for release later this quarter.

Members of the PartsTrader Customer Care team were on hand and able to meet face-to-face with clients they have been able to help over the phone. Customer satisfaction surveys have consistently ranked PartsTrader as paying impressive attention to customers' needs, providing knowledgeable service with a smile.

Two major integrations were also top of mind for PartsTrader at Automechanika Chicago, both of which enable prompt and more complete response to collision repair facility requests for quotes. The first is PartsTrader's integration with Hotlines' live inventory database, which will allow member recyclers to rapidly access real-time inventory data from within the PartsTrader quoting screen. Recyclers will be able to present options from their own inventory as well as their Hotlines trading partners in a matter of seconds.

The second partnership was PartsTrader's integration with Digital Motorworks, Inc. (DMI), which will help

OEM dealers to more efficiently respond to quotes. When a quote is requested, the PartsTrader application will be able to automatically present inventory information and pricing, direct from the dealers' own management system, speeding the response time and improving accuracy.

PartsTrader is always listening for enhancement and integration opportunities that support their commitment to delivering a fair, honest and transparent parts procurement process to repairers and suppliers.

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## PRO SPOT

[www.prospot.com](http://www.prospot.com)

### Pro Spot brings aluminum repair tools, education to Automechanika

Pro Spot connected with attendees at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26, to communicate their dedication to innovation, quality and easy-to-use equipment and training that can make shops more efficient.

Pro Spot equipment was on display,

and visitors were able to try out the products and learn more about their features and uses.

Pro Spot featured its aluminum repair line, including the Aluminum Weld Station and also educated attendees about the

needs for spot welders and the upcoming applications on new vehicles.

Larry Montanez with P&L Consultants and ABRN Technical Editor performed a welding demonstration with Pro Spot tools on the Automechanika Chicago show floor, showcasing the equipment and welding techniques.

A long-time proponent of the collision repair industry, Pro Spot offered its support to Automechanika Chicago and its training efforts and looks forward to the benefits the show can bring to the market.



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## SATA SPRAY EQUIPMENT/DAN-AM CO.

[www.satausa.com](http://www.satausa.com)

### SATA products boost efficiency, success for shops

SATA Spray Equipment took advantage of Automechanika Chicago to interact with and help its priority — the shop owners and technicians.

SATA showcased its latest offerings in equipment on the show floor, from the newest SATA spray gun, the SATAjet 5000 B, to SATA Filtration, SATA RPS cups and Dan-AM Air piping.

It is critical for SATA to get in front of

technicians to talk to them about ways to work much more efficiently, and to turn that into profitability for the shop owners as well, the company said.

SATA focused on communicating to shop owners and technicians the efficiency the company and its products can provide to their businesses, and the importance of clean, dry air with enough volume for overall shop success.

SATA in Germany has always been a large part of Automechanika's flagship show, Automechanika Frankfurt, which boasts strong industry participation and attendance. SATA attended Automechanika Chicago, looking for the show brand's calling card of exposure to and interaction with shop owners and technicians across the country who are looking for new products and solutions.



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## WEDGE CLAMP SYSTEMS, INC.

[www.wedgeclamp.com](http://www.wedgeclamp.com)

### US office location, new products introduced to Automechanika attendees

Wedge Clamp focused on brand awareness, contact with distributors and new product offerings at Automechanika Chicago, April 24-26.

Featured in the booth was the Stat-Gun, which is quickly gaining market recognition as a must-have piece of equipment for painters. Wedge Clamp's

first shipment has completely sold out; more information on the Stat-Gun can be found at [www.wedgeclamp.com/products/stat-gun/](http://www.wedgeclamp.com/products/stat-gun/).

Booth visitors were happy to hear that Wedge Clamp now has an office in Long Beach, Calif., and a new chief operating officer for the USA

— Peter Allan. The Wedge Clamp USA office is part of the 50,000 square-foot Craftsman Collision USA facility, formerly known as Estorga's Collision Repair Centre. This location will be offering training on all Wedge Clamp product lines, the company said.

At Automechanika Chicago, Wedge Clamp focused on improving industry

awareness of its US location and new products, like the Stat-Gun. The inaugural show offered a great opportunity for the company to gain brand and product exposure to potential customers in the Midwest and Eastern Canada.



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## THE LAST DETAIL [✓]

I was recently asked to conduct a post-repair inspection on a vehicle that had been repaired after an accident. I was appalled at the quality of repairs made to this Nissan vehicle. There were still buckles in the trunk floor. There were things the shop charged for but didn't do. And most specifically, I was appalled at the incorrect number, type and quality of welds used to attach the rear body panel.

I was looking at the "repaired" car before it had been disassembled for the inspection. My good friend Larry Montanez with P&L Consultants and *ABRN* Technical Editor inspected the same vehicle after it was disassembled. He was able to pop the welds loose simply by prying on them with a screwdriver. That's just scary.

As I said in a previous column (*Understand your liability*, April 2015), we have both a legal and moral obligation to put vehicles back together in a safe and proper way. The welds I saw on that Nissan were very concerning to me. It got me wondering just how many shops know how to perform welds according to the automakers' specifications for each vehicle.

You need to perform the correct type of weld. You need to use the correct type of welder, with the correct settings, the correct wire, the correct gas mixture. In some cases, components that were welded on at the factory are not to be welded on during repairs; in some cases, manufacturers don't want you to weld on the replacement but to use rivet bonding, using specific rivets and adhesive instead.

So it's important to research what the automakers say to do when it comes to welding. Many of them call for destructive weld testing prior to welding on the vehicle. This ensures you have the welder set up properly.

Check out the body repair manual for the 2011 Ford Mustang, for example (<http://tinyurl.com/Ford-test-weld>). Before the welding process begins on the vehicle, Ford calls for a welding sample.

"Place the welded sample in a vise and carry out destructive weld tests by peeling the scrap metal apart using large lock-type pliers," the Ford document states. "Measure the weld nugget to determine that the nugget meets Ford weld nugget requirements. If the weld nugget does not meet required size, adjust welder settings until the correct weld nugget size is achieved. When the correct weld nugget size is achieved, the service part can be weld-bonded."

Or check out I-CAR's "Uniform Procedures for Collision Repair" on squeeze-type resistance spot welding (<http://tinyurl.com/I-CAR-weld>). The first step is verifying the automaker recommends that type of welding for use at the repair location.

“Destructive weld tests prior to welding on the vehicle ensure you have the welder set up properly.”

# DESTRUCTIVE WELD TESTS: NECESSARY, NOT INCLUDED

## Tests ensure proper welder set up, but not compensation

And again, prior to welding on the vehicle, it calls for making "sample test welds on scrap pieces of the same type and thickness as the parts to be welded. Visually inspect and destructively test the sample welds to verify the welder settings and the weld quality," the I-CAR document states.

ALLDATA's welding precautions insist that, "A test weld should always be carried out on a test sample."

Toyota's collision repair bulletin No. 181 on welding specifications (<http://tinyurl.com/Toyota-weld>) states that, "Weld strength must be validated by tuning the welder and performing destructive testing. Tuning the welder and destructive tests must be performed on metal of the same thickness and composition as that of the component being replaced."

If your technicians are doing the required destructive weld tests, you should understand this crucial step is also a non-included operation. I'm not suggesting that anyone should or should not charge for "set up and perform destructive weld testing," and you obviously should never charge for something you don't do. I'm just saying you should be doing this procedure, it's a non-included operation, and it's up to you to determine how you need to be compensated for it.

I salute the automakers that have strict welding test requirements for certification, and I-CAR for its welding qualification program. When I owned my shops, I sent my techs to the Lincoln Electric Motorsports welding course (<http://tinyurl.com/pz8rs93>). My techs often said it was some of the best training – both theory and hands on – they'd had.

I don't want to keep seeing bad welding like I did on that Nissan. What we do can impact someone's life in the event of another accident. 🚗

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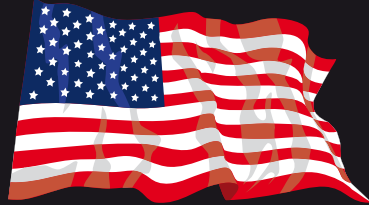
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**Mike Anderson**, a former shop owner, currently operates [COLLISIONADVICE.COM](http://COLLISIONADVICE.COM), a training and consulting firm.

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