

ABAC NEWS

**MAY - JUNE
2013**

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The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut



IMPLEMENTING A PLAN (Part 2)

So you followed the steps outlined in Part 1, but you were still not paid in full. Here is what I would recommend doing next. First, you need to inform your customer that there is an outstanding balance – which is your customer’s responsibility to pay pursuant to the REPAIR CONTRACT. Your customer may refuse to pay those charges on the grounds that the charges should be paid by their insurance company or the at-fault party. Not an unlikely reaction. At this point, you could advise your customers of a second option: to assign you his or her rights to collect the deficiency. This is called an ASSIGNMENT OF PROCEEDS and the form is on the ABAC website. The Assignment of Proceeds allows you to step in your customer’s shoes to collect the monies owed to you. With the rights assigned by your customer, you can then proceed to small claims court. Small Claims court is designed for claims of less than \$5,000.

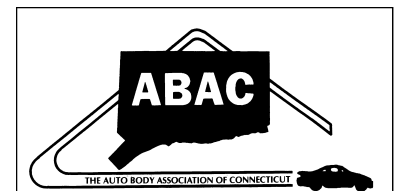
At this point, you may want to consult an attorney. I found that utilizing my attorney for the first several cases was helpful so that I gained an understanding of the pleadings and process. Now, I go to court on my own. And you could too. Taking your case to Small Claims court is not a guarantee for payment, but repairers who have sued are winning most of the time and there are quite a few of us out there doing this. Don’t let the insurance industry intimidate you or attempt to take away your rights to go to court. It’s not uncommon for a small claims judge to look at the insurance company’s attorney with disdain for how they treat our industry. We all know what the insurers are doing to us. Take your case to court. Let the judges know. It’s relatively quick and inexpensive, and sends a message to the insurance industry that we are aware of our rights and willing to defend them in court.

To assist you with this process, the ABAC website (abaconn.com) will post all documents that you need to bring a case. We will also be posting Small Claims court decisions on similar cases and information about the class action verdict

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against the Hartford – all of which can help you in court.

I trust that you will find bringing cases like this worthwhile. And, when you do go to court, let us know how you do so we can share that information with the membership.

Tony

Tony Ferraiolo - ABAC President

SCRS Says Insurer-Mandated Parts Programs Still Failing to Show Benefits to Collision Repairers

The Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) is stating that neither State Farm nor PartsTrader has provided a "well-constructed explanation" of how their parts procurement program provides benefits to collision repairers more than one year after mandating the use of the program in certain U.S. cities.

"While PartsTrader has made various software updates to address the plentiful concerns expressed by their end users, correcting and enhancing software issues is a necessary function of being in a technology business, and the industry still expects that technology companies should be able to provide a better value proposition for why we should be using their product than, 'Because we got the insurance company to tell you to'," said SCRS Chairman Ron Reichen. "Perhaps the best question to ask PartsTrader and other companies similarly positioning their products through insurer-mandated programs is, 'If your platforms can benefit the market enough, could or would they grow organically without insurer influence over the end user?'"

Other similarly mandated programs have begun to receive more attention as well, as insurers involved continue to require the use of programs despite what SCRS states is a recognition that there is "growing frustration from shops that are obligated to change their internal business practices to accommodate the changing rules of the DRP relationships." SCRS cites one email from an American Family field adjuster to a group of repair businesses on the program that said, "I've received lots of feedback from almost everyone about APU [Solutions]. There is some good with it, and then there is some very frustrating/difficult stuff to deal with. One of the major concerns I'm hearing about right now is APU recommending all these little outlying suppliers that are requiring credit cards before you can order a part. Shops are not set up to be dealing with credit cards all over the country, and truly local suppliers such as Keystone don't require them. Another concern is freight and, more specifically, how returns are handled. None of these are making things easier for you, and that's frustrating for everyone."

According to SCRS, another concern mentioned was APU recommending parts located in multiple different states, or from multiple vendors. SCRS states that if there are 15 parts on an estimate, a repair facility could potentially be expected to purchase parts from 15 different vendors in 15 different states based solely on APU's recommendations.

Added SCRS Immediate Past Chairman Aaron Clark, "Despite the obvious recognition of the hardships these mandates are potentially creating, and despite the rapidly evolving marketplace where it appears more and more online parts procurement solutions are entering into the marketplace, it is baffling why carriers continue to dictate process, rather than seeking a results-driven relationship with repairers. It certainly leaves the impression that there is more to gain for the insurance industry than the desire for increasingly informed selection of parts choices from reasonable vendors and more efficient processing."

Source: www.bodyshopbusiness.com



Dreams of a Cotton Candy Machine in Every Lobby....

At the time of writing this, I'm told that your Board of Directors has contemplated a new idea to give members and opportunity to ask me questions, which I will address in a responsive article to be published in the upcoming edition of the ABAC News. I think this is a great idea, no doubt hatched from a collective weariness after reading my last few submissions. So as I contemplate my last unhindered submission, I think I'll take an unconventional approach.

Last week, when the rest of you were languishing through your work week, I was basking in the brilliance of Walt Disney World. And by "basking", I mean of course, chasing my two insane kids around farcically crowded theme parks in oppressive heat while getting relentlessly chastised by my wife. Yes, that's the "Magic of Disney". With that said, Disney World is amazing. And the story of Walt Disney is equally amazing. Walt Disney, a simple cartoonist, took his gift, some good luck, some gutsy business decisions and an unbelievable imagination, and developed a business that in 2010 alone produced \$36 Billion in revenue. Driving through the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, consisting of roughly 47 square miles of theme parks, hotels and recreational property, really highlights how amazing the place is. Walt had a vision. He mortgaged everything he had several times throughout his life to finance incredulous projects that many thought were likely to fail.

This entrepreneurial spirit and gumption ultimately rewarded Walt Disney with amazing success. Fortunately for Walt Disney, however, he did not have to deal with the likes of Liberty Mutual or Progressive. But he undoubtedly had his share of hurdles and he took some big risks. No one in the 1950s could have envisioned Disney World. It was unfathomable that someone would develop 47 square miles of Florida swamp land for vacation resorts. Just as Walt had a vision, and a long-term strategy for implementing his vision, so too must this industry dream – and dream big. The industry needs to think long-term, and employ unconventional strategies. And, it can't be afraid to fail. For from our failures, we learn the most.

I join my forward thinking friends in this industry who dream of an auto body repair market free of the corrupting influences of insurance; a market driven by quality and fair competition. A market where repairers work directly for consumers; and consumers are told the truth about their rights and responsibilities. I dream of a world where every body shop has a water slide leading to the paint booth and cotton candy machines in every lobby.

Okay, so maybe this analogy is failing me a bit. But, the principle remains. The auto body repair market has changed dramatically over the past twenty years. It's changed for the worst. Many consumers think the insurance company actually fix cars or determine how to fix cars. We may not be able to predict what the industry is going to look like in the next twenty years, but if the passion and gumption of the industry leaders I've worked with is any indicator, I suspect the market is going to look much better. That will serve to benefit your children, many of whom may be looking to take over your business.

In the meantime, keep fighting the inappropriate influences of the insurance industry. Let your customers know their rights. And, consider taking your family to Disney World this summer. That is, if you're in the mood to test the limits your family is willing to go before killing one another.

John Parese

Buckley & Wynne - Attorneys at Law

OEM's Keep The Information Pipeline Flowing

Mopar Division of Chrysler Presents at ABAC Annual Meeting

With over 110 collision and repair shop owners, managers and employees in attendance, ABAC President Tony Ferraiolo opened the ABAC's Annual Meeting this past May 14th at the Chowder Pot restaurant in Hartford by thanking everyone for attending another of important events in education.

Ferraiolo then gave us updated information on the status of the Hartford lawsuit and the appeal process and then touched upon the pending Progressive lawsuit.

Tony then recognized the Sponsors for the evening:



ABAC President Tony Ferraiolo

Primary Sponsor:

- **Bald Hill Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep & Kia**
 - Don Cushing – Wholesale Manager
 - Cynthia Robinson – Sr. Accounts Manager

Co-Sponsors:

- **Enterprise Rental**
 - Lee J. Peters – Group Rental Manager
 - Melissa Plourde – Call Center Supervisor
- **Kent Automotive**
 - John D. Johnston – District Sales Manager
 - Tom Simpson – Sales Representative
 - Larry Rosetti – Strategic Accounts Manager

President Ferraiolo also recognized all of the ABAC News Supporting Advertisers whose financial contributions assist in making these events possible. Tony reminds everyone to **“Support Those Who Support YOU!”**



Lee Peters & Melissa Plourde from Enterprise Rentals

First up to the podium were **Lee Peters and Melissa Plourde from Enterprise** who gave us all a look at their new program, **(ARMS auto with texting notification)** that Enterprise is rolling out that helps make the communication between the shop and the customer seamless.

Following Enterprise was **Dan Thibault, Transportation Technology Intern for the Connecticut Technical High School Systems**. Dan presented Don Cushing with a recognition plaque from the Skills USA CT. Don and his company, the Bald Hill Motor Group has supported the Connecticut State Leadership & Skills USA Competition



Dan Thibault - CT Technical High School Systems

for many years with their generous donation of sheet metal for the participating students from the Tech schools. **“I have 3 students from the tech schools working right now in my shop”,** says Tony Ferraiolo. **“They’re doing a wonderful job. It’s nice to have kids that you can train and educate to do it your way without any bad habits. If you are looking to place students in your shop, please contact me at 203-269-2842 and I will contact Dan Thibault to assist you,”** he continued.

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After a brief break for dinner we were ready for our featured speaker and sponsor for the evening, **the Bald Hill Motor Group**. Returning to the podium, **Wholesale Manager Don Cushing** thanked the ABAC for the opportunity to sponsor the event and thanked all in attendance for their taking time from the schedule to see what Chrysler has to offer for education. Don then gave us a brief list of what Bald Hill Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep & Kia has to offer:

- 34 “parts only” employees
- 17 Delivery Vehicles servicing CT, RI and Ma
- \$1M+ Parts Inventory of the right parts that you need
- National Mopar Masters Network for locating those “back-ordered” parts that others have a difficult time finding
- 33+ years of servicing the Automotive Collision & Repair Industry
- Long time sponsors of Auto Associations in RI, CT and Ma



**Don Cushing—Wholesale Manager
Bald Hill Dodge-Chrysler-Jeep & Kia**

“We’re all about servicing our customers and building relationships with them”, says Cushing. “We want our customers for life. What sets us apart from others is our people. Our employees are dedicated to customer satisfaction. If you are currently using my company for your parts needs, I thank you. If you’re not, please allow us an opportunity to earn your business. Give us a call. We’re as close as your phone!” continued Cushing.

Don then introduced **Victor Rosario, Northeast Wholesale Manager for Mopar** and **Doug Craig, Service Engineering, Collision Repair Manager for the Mopar Brand**. Mr. Craig gave us a brief bio and then got right into the presentation. **Topics covered:**



**Doug Craig - Collision Repair
Manager - Chrysler/Mopar**

- New Dodge Dart platform
- Different variety of steels
- Collision Repair Bulletins (Position Statements)
- No use of heat
- Weld Bonding
- Air Bags
- Wheel Reconditioning
- ...and more

Where to find technical information:

- Oem1stop.com
- Moparrepairconnection.com
- Techauthority.com

If you are a current customer of Bald Hill Motor Group and if you encounter a fee for any of this information, just call one of their parts advisors at 800-822-3015 and they will assist you in getting this information at no charge!

Doug then covered Chrysler’s new Collision Shop Certification Program. This program is offered through Assured Performance and will allow your facility to be “Chrysler Certified”. Assured Performance is working with numerous OEMs and consumer-facing organizations to recognize and promote repairers that have the right tools, equipment,

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training and facilities – all that is needed to ensure the fit, finish, durability, safety, and value of vehicles being manufactured and driven today. By using one Certification process for multiple organizations, we are able to eliminate redundant costs and duplications between programs. The result is a highly affordable certification program that delivers exponential credibility and value to your brand and shop's reputation because you will be recognized and promoted by multiple entities. **Check it out at www.certifymyshop.com. "Certified Once, Recognized By Many!"**

Doug then fielded many questions on topics. All of this information, including Mr. Craig's presentation will be available soon on the ABAC's website: www.abaconn.com

Next up was **Larry Rosetti, Strategic Accounts Manager for Kent Automotive**. Larry discussed Kent's Cost Recovery Program. He then introduced **John Johnston, District Sales Manager**. John gave us all updated information on I-Car training. Any of Kent's I-Car programs are done at your shop at no charge. Several programs offered are Seam Sealer, Plastic Repair and Corrosion Protection.



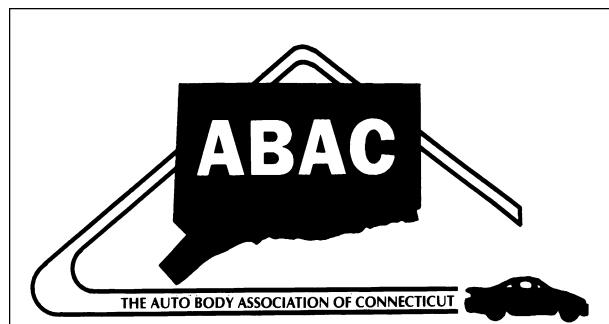
**Larry Rosetti
Kent Automotive**

Following the presentations was the ABAC Election of Officers. The results for the 2013-2014 slate were:

- **President - Tony Ferraiolo - A&R Body Specialty, Wallingford**
- **Vice President - Ed Lupinek - Eddie's Auto Body, East Haddam**
- **Secretary - Mark Wilkowski - Stanley's Auto Body, Waterbury**
- **Treasurer - Mike Wilkowski - Stanley's Auto Body, Waterbury**

The evening closed with a raffle of various prizes graciously donated by the Bald Hill Motor Group and the Balise Auto Group.

Another "sold out-packed house" for all shops to have an opportunity to learn and be more profitable, brought to you by the Auto Body Association of Connecticut!



Tech Feature

By Larry Montanez III, CDA and Jeff Lange, PE

The Politics of Collision Repair Information

A wake-up call for anyone who thinks OEM position statements are just “opinions.”

Over the past 20-plus years in the collision repair and accident investigation fields, we have attended countless training and continuing-education courses on accident reconstruction, fire investigation, electronic data recorders (black boxes), engineering, mathematics, general collision repair (I-CAR), etc. In the past eight to 10 years, we've attended just as many OEM-specific training courses. All of these courses offered something that was directly or indirectly beneficial to our careers. Additionally, there have always been some common denominators to these courses: Every attendee received the same information (and the same explanation of that information) and had the opportunity to discuss differences of opinion regarding the subject at hand. As with any training course, some retained and understood this training better than others, but the textbooks, student handouts and documentation provided in the courses were always there to provide evidentiary proof if there was a difference of opinion.

Unfortunately, there seems to be an ongoing difference of opinion over the past few years regarding the importance of OEM position statements and repair procedures and protocols. Specifically, the debate revolves around who wrote these standards, and how these documents are interpreted within the collision repair and insurance industries. The validity and importance of OEM procedures and protocols have often been questioned, and this article is intended to address these issues of validity and importance.

Motor vehicle technology is continually advancing and changing, especially in areas of vehicle construction. Like any industry professionals involved with advancing and changing technology, every collision repairer should pace these changes. To do so, the “modern” repairer must obtain and/or possess the following:

- Current and continuing education and training on vehicle construction, technology and repair procedures
- Modern, up-to-date equipment (resistance welders, electronic measuring and/or fixture measuring, riveting equipment, etc.), and proper training on each piece of equipment
- Access to (and the ability to properly utilize) OEM repair information, procedures and protocols for each and every repair

It is our position that, without the above, no repair facility can make a significant, proper repair to a late-model vehicle.

OEM repair information is probably the most important item of them all, as OEM documentation explains each procedural step and the equipment and materials required to perform those repairs. Over the past few years, many OEMs have published very specific opinions about what type of repair equipment and replacement components may be used on their vehicles. These opinions are commonly known as “position statements.” The following is a discussion of some of the things addressed in those statements.

Every single OEM with position statements has one about prohibiting the use of aftermarket and/or used replacement components, and one for the repairing of wheels. The use of aftermarket components and the subsequent effect on crash management, airbag timing and/or the overall safety of the occupants in a subsequent collision event has been brought into question. Many of the aftermarket components do not possess the same fit and finish as OEM; some are not made from the same substrate or even have the same strength as the comparable OEM component. Use of “used” components has a different set of issues. Although used components were originally produced by the OEM, these components may have been altered by either the collision, disassembly and/or how it was stored.

If the OEM does not have a position statement regarding the use of used components, some used bolt-on components may be a viable option. However, it is our opinion that weld-on components should never be re-used. Safety items such as airbags and some computer modules should never be re-used. Repair facilities should be cautious of using used radiators, as they may compromise the cooling system efficiency and may cause engine damage. Used suspension components should never be used, as the failure of one of those components could be disastrous and put the occupants in that vehicle (and the general driving public) at risk.

All OEMs with position statements have one that prohibits repairing wheels, whether alloy or steel. All repair facilities should adhere to this, as all of these statements basically say the same thing: No bending, welding, straightening,

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adding material to or removing material from wheels. Most only allow sanding and buffing, and some allow refinishing of the wheels. A repaired wheel that fails could cause a catastrophic event.

Some OEMs have very specific equipment requirements for structural repair. For example, Mercedes-Benz only allows Celette or Car Bench, while Audi only allows Celette, Car Bench or Car-OLiner. If those vehicles are repaired on any other type of structural repair equipment, it is considered an improper repair regardless of what you or the insurance company thinks.

Some other position statements cover composite component repair, wiring harness repair and aluminum parts restrictions. Although these documents are in black and white and appear to be pretty clear in their meaning, many people in the collision repair industry take the position that these statements are not important. In many I-CAR classes, instructors explain OEM position statements and repair procedures to attendees. In the majority of those classes, these audiences are comprised of both insurance personnel and collision repair professionals, with the instructors coming from either of those fields. I-CAR classes allow some personalization by the instructor, but there is no room for debate or alternate interpretation when I-CAR offers OEM documentation as examples.

You may ask how the attendees can interpret the same information in different ways, even if the material is presented in the same way to everyone. This is the basis of our discussion; many people assume that the OEM repair procedures and position statements are just suggestions and open to interpretation. This is incorrect, and we caution repairers that OEM position statements could greatly influence the outcome of a legal dispute.

For example, we've noted above that most OEMs have position statements prohibiting the bending, heating, plating and welding of rims, as well as adding or removing materials from these rims. This is for good reason, as the structural integrity of the rim may be altered by the above processes and could lead to a catastrophic failure of the rim and/or a wheel separation. In a 2011 case in California, a dealer, technician and wheel company were charged with gross negligence for selling a Nissan 350Z with factory rims that were chromed by an aftermarket company. Soon after leaving the lot, a wheel separation occurred – causing it to hit a police motorcycle on the other side of the highway. Two of the main documents used in the case by the plaintiffs were the NHTSA Action Number EA07005 (2008) and the Nissan Motor Corp. Service Bulletin WT92-003b/NTB92-123b (published in December, 1992).

The damages awarded came to \$2.75 million.

According to the 1992 Nissan Bulletin, the chroming process removes the original paint coating by “burning” or “chemical” methods, both of which may cause the heat treatment of the alloy to be changed. The application of chrome plating has to be controlled correctly, as the alloy can be harmed by a poorly-controlled process. Overall, aftermarket chroming may degrade durability and long-term appearance, and may affect safety and performance of the wheels. Accordingly, Nissan recommends that original equipment wheels not be chrome-plated.

You, as the repairer, are the one responsible for the repair of the vehicle – not the insurer, and certainly not the consumer. Having and utilizing OEM position statements can help you if repair-related issues arise after the vehicle is returned to service. If you do not have position statements, please feel free to email us and we will send them to you.

Many times, we hear complaints from collision repairers that some insurance adjusters will not pay for “this” or “that,” even though the repairer was taught to do those very things in a recent I-CAR class and/or the adjuster was the instructor and is still refusing to pay for something. Please remember that I-CAR only trains people; it does not certify or police the collision repair industry. Additionally, I-CAR cannot overrule what the adjuster's employer allows him or her to pay for. So what is a shop owner to do? Well, here are a few things:

- Always have the proper documentation from the OEM and, in some cases, the information provided to you in the I-CAR class that pertains to that issue.
- Try to negotiate without emotion and with the support of the OEM through position statements and documentation. Appeal to the adjuster's supervisor if necessary.
- Contact your state governing body (e.g., the Department of Insurance).
- Seek remedies in another venue (Court) by suing the consumer or using an Assignment of Proceeds.
- Repair the vehicle the way you believe (or better yet, can prove) is the best way for the customer. The economics of the job cannot outweigh the post-repair safety of the vehicle. Remember, you are fully responsible for how the repairs were attempted, what methodologies were utilized and what components were used. You cannot defend yourself in a court of law by saying, “That's all they paid me for, so that is how I repaired it.”

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Please remember that the repair information and processes provided in I-CAR classes can be general in some cases, but very specific in others. I-CAR does not make up the things they teach; I-CAR spends a lot of time researching and discussing the material provided in their programs with the OEMs. Both insurers and collision repair professionals must adhere to the information provided in I-CAR classes, as much of the information is provided and/or approved by the OEM. Those OEMs that do not utilize I-CAR for delivery of their information (such as BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Toyota, etc.) instead provide it on their repair websites. Remember that OEM repair information is the standard – not someone's opinion or an assumption based strictly on what everyone else is doing.

Take, for example, a vehicle that is close to being a total loss. If you have to replace a unirail, the car will total; if you section it, the car will not total. You and the insurance adjuster look at the estimating database and see there is no option for sectioning. You also check with the OEM, and they do not have a procedure. In this situation, we would suggest totaling the car to protect not only your liability, but the wellbeing of the vehicle owner.

The position statements are not just opinions; they are derived from the engineering analysis of damaged vehicles. The OEM knows the design and construction of their vehicles better than anyone. This is why the OEM (rightfully) sets the standards for their vehicles. Remember, just because GM allows something does not mean that Nissan or BMW will, and vice versa.

We hope this article has helped the industry to better understand the importance of collision repair information and documentation, and who actually sets the standard. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Larry Montanez, CDA is co-owner of P&L Consultants with Peter Pratti Jr. P&L Consultants works with collision repair shops on estimating, production and proper repair procedures. P&L conducts repair workshops on MIG & Resistance Welding, Measuring for Estimating and Advanced Estimating Skills. P&L also conducts investigations for insurers and repair shops for improper repairs, collision reparability and estimating issues. P&L can be reached by contacting Larry at (718) 891-4018 (office), (917) 860-3588 (cell), (718) 646-2733 (fax) or via email at info@PnLEstimolgy.com. The P&L website is www.PnLEstimology.com.

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Source: Hammer & Dolly Magazine - Reprinted with permission from Larry Montanez

Connecticut Senate Approves Counterfeit Airbag Bill

Connecticut is looking to crack down on counterfeit airbags. On May 14, the Senate passed Senate Bill 1040, making it a felony to manufacture, import, install or reinstall a counterfeit or non-functional airbag. Falsifying an auto's diagnostic system to report a working airbag when the vehicle has a counterfeit and non-functional airbag also would be a crime.

In a hearing before the Senate Transportation Committee, General Motors testified in support of the measure. LKQ Corporation testified against the measure in its original form. Ray Colas, government affairs for LKQ, asked the committee to revise the definition of 'substandard airbag' used in the original bill. Later amendments changed the term to 'nonfunctional airbag.'

SB 1040 has now been sent to the Connecticut House for debate.

The potential widespread availability of counterfeit airbags was a theme of a federal prosecutor's presentation at the annual meeting of the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud last December. U.S. Attorney William C. Killian from the Eastern District of Tennessee, described an effort by one Chinese manufacturer to flood the U.S. market with knockoff airbags and the federal investigation now in progress.

Dai Zhensong, a Chinese national who ran a factory in China, created cheap knockoffs of legitimate U.S. airbags and imported hundreds of thousands of them before being caught and recently sent to federal prison for 37 months.

Source: www.collisionweek.com

Rhode Island Bill Proposes Class Rating System for Shops

Insurers would be required to determine separate prevailing rates for each class.

A new bill introduced this week in Rhode Island proposes to create a legal definition for Class A collision repair facility and change the state's existing labor rate survey law to differentiate the Class A facilities from all of the rest.

House Bill 6140, introduced on May 21 by Representatives Stephen R. Ucci (D) and Arthur J. Corvese (D), would establish two classifications of full collision repair licensees in Rhode Island, Class A and Class B. To qualify as a Class A facility, the bill includes a long, detailed list of minimum requirements including technician certifications and shop capabilities such as "perform welding to manufacturer specifications for aluminum and high strength steel using equipment, including, but not limited to, an inverter resistance welder."

Under the proposal, the state would charge a \$300 fee to apply for a Class A license and any shop that does not apply will automatically be considered a Class B shop.

The distinction between the two classes becomes significant because the bill would also make changes to the state's labor rate surveys that insurers are currently required to perform under existing law. HB6140 would require each insurer to conduct a "separate and distinct" auto body labor rate survey for each classification of auto body shops in order to determine a "separate and distinct" prevailing auto body labor rate for fully licensed auto body repair facilities.

The bill goes further to allow that if a licensed auto body facility does not respond to an insurer's labor rate survey, the insurer may reimburse the non-responding shop at the prevailing rate for the lowest auto body shop classification.

Adding to the interest of this development in Rhode Island is the fact that another, separate bill was introduced earlier this year, and supported by the insurance industry, which would eliminate the state's labor rate survey law entirely (see related story below). A hearing was held on the measure, but no committee vote was taken.

The Class A shop bill has been assigned to the House Corporations committee but no hearing has yet been scheduled.

On Wednesday, May 29, the Auto Collision Repair Licensing Advisory Board in Rhode Island held a meeting to gather public comments on the new measure. The meeting will was held at 10:30 am in the John O Pastore Center Building on Pontiac Avenue in Cranston. Updates to follow.

Source: www.collisionweek.com



In The Headlights

This issue's ***"In the Headlights"*** features long time ABAC Member William Romaniello. Bill has served on the ABAC Board of Directors since 2004 and currently holds the position of Legislative Director. There is nothing that happens in our State of Connecticut that Bill is not aware of. He has a talented way of reading through the fluff and provides the association with the "meat and potatoes" of topic. Bill reads contacts and policies just for fun! He is a big advocate on educating repair shops on proper documentation and was instrumental in developing a standardized repair contract.

"I personally owe him a depth of gratitude for the success I have had in small claims court", says ABAC President Tony Ferraiolo. ***"He has led the way by not backing down and leveling the playing field with insurance giants. Bill has shown that when you follow the law and stick to the right plan, you can make a difference",*** continued Ferraiolo.

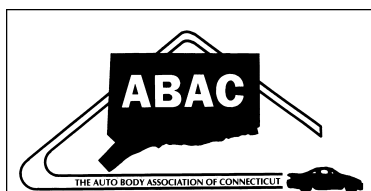


As far as his background, Romaniello has been in the automotive industry his whole life, growing up in a shop performing all aspects (mechanical, body, paint) of repairs by the time he was 16. He has watched the transition of the industry to what it is today and wants to right the wrongs that insurers have placed on the collision repair businesses. Bill has been often heard saying, ***"I'd love to put the insurers in their place and I get frustrated that many shop owners have chosen to let the insurers run their businesses."***

Romaniello has spent years training and studying especially on the concept of Lean Processing which he has a very strong belief in. He has applied it and seen both the time and financial benefit that lean methods bring!

Bill's hobbies include riding ATV's, racing, has spent a few years rebuilding and customizing Harleys (before kids we've been told!) He has also spent many years coaching all of the kids' sports like soccer, baseball, etc. and is now focused on softball training.

Thank you Bill, for all of your hard work and efforts put towards our industry; and especially for your dedication to the Auto Body Association of Connecticut. We are fortunate and proud to have you on board!



ABAC OFFICERS 2013

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BREAKING NEWS...

Despite all of our efforts, the DMV Bill SB6300 formally SB6495 has passed. Thanks to all that contacted their Senators and Representatives in opposition of this Bill. We all need to voice our concerns. The next time we need to voice our support or opposition of a legislative bill, I hope for the same and even MORE support.



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