

SCANNING:

The collision repair industry has now firmly entered into a new phase when it comes to technology. If you are in this business, then you are also in the business of diagnostics and repair procedure research. For now, we will only center on the diagnostic aspect of collision repair.

First of all, let us address the issue of repair liability and why it is imperative that you perform these scans. As you should all be aware, there was a major lawsuit that involved the “non-OEM approved” repair procedure that was done by a Texas repair shop on a 2010 Honda Fit. The courts found that the collision repair shop was liable for 31.5 million dollars in damaged due to their negligence. Remember, it is the Shop that performs the repairs that is held liable. You cannot assume that a vehicle is safe to be returned to service just because the dash board is not displaying warning lights. You can and will be, held responsible for the repairs that you perform! Deliver a vehicle without doing a post scan, and you may be returning a vehicle back into service with issues that could put your customer in harm’s way. You could also do damage to your business reputation.

Steve Lauro from Color Systems had some valuable advice to share with us on the scanning. Color Systems has not only been selling and servicing a popular scan device, but also they have been a good resource for help that their customers can rely upon regarding scanning issues.

Steve first suggested that you should have your customer sign a scan authorization form that contains some key elements. Color Systems has developed such a form that includes a data privacy disclaimer. This would let your customer know that the scanning process could harvest vehicle information that could include, but may not be limited to the date, time and mileage of when a DTC was created. Such information would be helpful in determining if a problem is accident related or pre-existing. This is the reason why you should have received authorization to provide this information to an insurance company representative, as is could be the basis used to determine if a problem is or is not accident related.

OEM Scanning Position Statements

[OEM 1 STOP](#) and [OEM POSITION STATEMENTS](#) are great places to research OEM position statements on scanning (not to mention other important position statements). There are some car manufacturers that do not yet have a position statement regarding scans, but this does not mean that it would be OK to perform repairs without doing them. (To access these sites just CLICK on the above links)

Don Cushing the Wholesale Manager from Bald Hill Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep and Kia let **ABARI** know that KIA just recently posted a Position Statement on Pre and Post Scanning. Kia included the following statement that we think everyone all can appreciate: *“The scanning procedure should not be considered an option, but rather as an essential task both during the pre-repair collision estimating phase and after the repairs are completed.”*

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE KIA POSITION STATEMENT](#)

OEM vs. AFTERMARKET Scan Tools

Independent repair shops do not always have the luxury to have access to the OEM scan tools. Instead they depend upon an aftermarket scan tool. Aftermarket scan tool developers and manufacturers depend upon data and information that originates from the OEM's. Some OEM's supply such information in an affordable and business friendly manner; however, not all OEM's follow this same pattern. This does hamper the Aftermarket sector to design and manufacture scanners with timely software updates that give results comparable to the OEM scan devices. For the vast majority of collision repair shops the universal aftermarket scanner is the tool of choice. If there is an issue then shops have to defer to alternate choices, and that may involve a visit to the OEM dealership.

Scan tool with “printable” results

First and foremost, you need a scan tool or device that is capable of producing a printable scan report. This serves two purposes. First, it provides you with a document that can be made part of your permanent work-file. Second, depending upon the scanner, it can serve as a “scan invoice”. This would be a printed scan in invoice format that can be presented to an appraiser so that it could be included in the repair costs. Steve told us that the LAUNCH Scan tool Model # LAU-S431PBE is one such scanner that they have been selling to their customers. The purchase price is about \$1,900.00. When purchased through Color Systems the price includes software, setup, training, and support. Steve cautioned that the LAU-S431PBE is also available on-line but to be careful if you go that route, as you could be purchasing just the tablet without software.

Insurance companies have been accepting and paying invoice formatted scans, but we are hearing that some of the insurance companies are now reluctant to pay for scans presented in a dollar amount. Reports are that certain insurance companies are reverting to using an arbitrary time multiplied by their “prevailing labor rate” to calculate the amount that they want to pay.

AFTERMARKET devices that give OEM Scan Results

AsTech™ (<https://astech.com/>) is one such service that offers a device that allows for a remote OEM diagnostic scan. These scans are supported by their remote master technicians. There is an upfront cost for the device, and from there it is pay as you go. The down side of this is that there is a cost involved with each and every scan, so your profit margin is far less that if you were to provide and bill the service yourself. The upside of this is that you may avoid the cost of having the vehicle towed to and from an OEM dealer, and your cycle time may also improve. Subaru is one OEM manufacturer that actually recommends in their scan position statement that the **asTech™** tool be used if the OEM scanner is not available.

Diagnostic and Calibration Scans

Steve let us know that there are diagnostic and calibration scans that may be needed. These scan operations are not as well-known as the pre and post scans but they are equally important, and you should be being paid for them if they are required. The Diagnostic scans deal with the fault codes that you uncovered during your preliminary scan. For the Diagnostic scans there may be no set cost such as the pre and post scans. This is because you never know how much time you may be spending diagnosing what parts and labor may be required to correct each fault code. It is suggested that on your estimate that you make a line item entry labeled DIAGNOSTIC SCAN with the specific Fault Code, and the corrective action taken or needed in order to clear the code.

The Calibration scan deal with resetting or calibrating any system or component that may have lost connection or memory if replaced, unplugged, or if power is interrupted. Examples include but are not limited to: Adaptive Cruise Control, Collision Mitigations Braking Systems, Forward Collision Avoidance, Land Departure Warning Systems, Blind Spot Monitors, Camera Systems, SRS Components, Mirrors, Windows, ABS, Radio, or Wheel Angle Sensor.

For these types of calibration scan you would also make a line item entry on your estimate and Label it CALIBRATION SCAN and identify what component or system you have calibrated. Be sure to check also to see if any drive cycles (test drives) are required. Test drives are a billable "P-page" operation.

TELEMATICS

A word of caution on telematics: Systems such as OnStar, Delphi, and HUM communicate directly with the vehicle owner. This is important to be aware of as the vehicle in your shop may have already sent specific diagnostic information directly to the vehicle owner! If, during the repair process, you disconnect certain components such as the SRS the vehicle could also be sending a warning message to the owner. Letting your customer know ahead of time that during the repair process the vehicle may communicate changes in the vehicle operational status to the customer is important. You now have to adapt to the new technology and understand that the vehicle has a voice to be heard.

> UPDATE on Consumer Protection Legislation <

The passage of legislation currently pending that would provide that insurance companies may not mandate the use of aftermarket parts without the owner's consent on motor vehicles less than 48 months beyond manufacture date took a step closer to becoming law when the House on June 12th recommended passage of H-8013 (SUB-A). The Senate on May 15th had also recommended passage of their companion Bill S-2679 (SUB-A)

These Bills are getting National Attention!