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Auto Physical Damage

The New Standard for Proper and Safe Repairs

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9 MIN READ

Quick—which has the most complicated computer systems: a space shuttle, a fighter plane or a 2019 SUV?

Well, if you guessed “SUV,” you are correct. Today's high-tech automobiles need more than 100 million lines of code to operate the hundreds of safety and convenience features that consumers demand and expect. That is 200 times the amount of code needed for the space shuttle!

Take a look at this chart that compares lines of code for different devices:

- Average iPhone App—30,000
- Space Shuttle—400,000
- F-35 Jet Fighter—25,000,000
- Hadron Collider—50,000,000
- Mac OS X—85,000,000
- Modern High-End Car—100,000,000

With today's advanced vehicle technology, there is no such thing as a routine fender bender. A gentle nudge from an impatient car at a stop light can result in one or more computerized systems being knocked off-line or off-kilter, potentially dramatically impacting vehicle safety. For example, misalignment of cameras behind the windshield can actually cause the vehicle to swerve into another lane.

Fixing damaged vehicles today almost feels like rocket science. If the vehicle is not repaired properly, the results can possibly lead to further accidents.

Stakeholders in the automotive industry may be faced with varying challenges when repairing a vehicle. These challenges include:

- The loyalty of the owner to the vehicle's brand and the brand's reputation may potentially be impacted
- Current methods of repair may no longer be sufficient to properly repair damage on all vehicles
- Staying up-to-date on constant technology developments and the ensuing repair requirements can be expensive

Fortunately, technicians now have access to technology that is easy to adopt, seamless to operate, and documents compliance with required standards to help deliver proper and safe repairs for today's sophisticated vehicles.

Mitchell: Our Commitment

Mitchell is committed to providing the industry with the knowledge and the tools to help consumers get the best repair and claims experience. After any kind of accident, consumers expect their vehicles to be restored to their pre-accident, fully functional condition. Failure to do so may put safety at risk. Claims professionals and collision specialists should deliver on that expectation.

Mitchell's industry knowledge and vehicle data are the foundation of the interconnected automated tools that give collision repair facilities and claims managers improved confidence that estimates are written correctly.

Six Ways Mitchell Products Can Help Facilitate Proper and Safe Repairs

At the heart of proper and safe repairs are consumers. As such, when components involved in repairs of vehicles are connected to each other, the consumer is that much more likely to be protected from any oversight in the repair process that could potentially compromise safety.

To illustrate a technological ecosystem that can link components of the repair process, we'll describe six pieces in the repair of a modern-day automobile and the technology that can connect and help accomplish each:

1. First Notice of Loss

The journey to completing a proper and safe repair usually starts with first notice of loss, when the collision or damage is first reported. Typically, this notification occurs in the form of a call to the insurance company, but can also occur when drivers bring their cars into a repair facility for an estimate and then notify the insurer. Additionally, more and more insurers are encouraging claimants to share photos of the damage as quickly as they can.

Mitchell's Consumer Self-Service offerings make it easy for vehicle owners to provide details on the incident and images of the vehicles right from their smartphones. Mitchell's mobile First Notice of Loss empowers customers to report facts of loss and identify vehicle damage online in a timely manner using easy-to-follow prompts. With earlier access to detailed information, carriers can now write more accurate estimates.

2. Network and Certification Assignments

With information about the vehicle and its damage in hand, choosing the right repair facility for the job needs to be done. In order to achieve a proper and safe repair, it is imperative to select a repair facility that is qualified to do the necessary work. This selection must consider the repair needs of the damaged vehicle and the expertise, certifications, equipment and special materials capabilities of the repair facility. With these qualifications, the repair facility will likely have access to Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) recommended repair procedures, the right tools and equipment for the repair, and the required training to accommodate repair operations and vehicle systems involved.

Mitchell's triage and dispatch process support making this key decision correctly, quickly and easily by:

- Decoding the vehicle identification number (VIN)
- Identifying the vehicle damage and point of impact through images

- Matching the repair facility capabilities to vehicle type and damage
- Referencing the repair facilities' DRP program participation and OEM credentials

When this data has been collected, Mitchell's software can properly assign the vehicle to the appropriate facility. While consumers can choose their own repair facilities, surfacing information on the best choices will spare them the burden of finding a capable repair facility on their own and encourage them to choose one that has the necessary qualifications.

3. Repairer Connectivity and Workflow

Once the right repair facility is selected, the roadmap for proper and safe repairs shifts to the technology that can measure and monitor the repair journey. Until now, there were multiple means of communication between the insurance carrier and the repair facility including phone calls, fax, paper estimates and emails, which often presented challenges in terms of documentation and efficiency.

Now, simplified workflow and communications across Mitchell's single platform automates and helps to document every step of the repair. No matter what repair facility is chosen or what estimating system they use, Mitchell Connect enables insurers to collaborate with that facility. That's because Mitchell is compatible with the three industry-leading estimating systems, providing an easy communication tool for insurers to collaborate with repair facilities, independent appraisers, and field staff. Workflows are also designed to support both OEM network and non-network systems, eliminating the extra steps a repair facility must take to alternate between network and non-network claims. With simplified communications, Connect users can now collaborate on estimates and supplements, stay updated on repair statuses, access documentation, vehicle images, diagnostic reports and more, all in one place.

4. Diagnostic Scanning

Just five years ago, the need to perform diagnostic scans on vehicles as part of the collision workflow was almost unheard of. Given today's computerized systems, sensors and broad functionality, it is widely recognized that late model vehicles should be pre- and post-scanned as part of the collision repair process.

Traditionally, a scan tool was designed for mechanical repair. It would be a stand-alone unit with a flat file output and cryptic report output that was hard to decipher. Today, however, diagnostic scan tools have become more sophisticated and are able to generate intuitive and easy-to-understand reports. Additionally, these advanced scan tools are able to wirelessly send scan reports to claims management and collision repair systems, making it easier to manage all aspects of the claim in one place.

Mitchell has developed the first comprehensive and connected diagnostic system designed specifically for the collision repair industry. Powered by Bosch, Mitchell Diagnostics delivers OEM level scanning at a fraction of the cost of other options. Its pre-scan capabilities provide a deeper look into the complex vehicle and support a thorough inspection for all major makes and models. Post-scan capabilities verify that repairs have returned key systems to proper function. Finally, Mitchell Diagnostics integrates with the Mitchell Connect and WorkCenter platforms for seamless communication and exchange of information. The system documents technician comments and produces easy-to-understand reports with images, estimates and repair status all in one place.

5. Cloud Estimating

A key aspect of completing a proper and safe repair begins with an accurate estimate, but with increasing vehicle complexity, this is becoming a much more difficult task. However, that estimate is the first step to prepping a

facility for the repair of a vehicle and ensures technicians have the correct repair procedures, parts and pricing information from the very beginning.

Mitchell Cloud Estimating delivers these capabilities for today's complex vehicles, and gives the freedom to write estimates anywhere, anytime on any device. Its functionalities streamline processes, eliminate errors and provide accurate safety information for each step. The system equips appraisers with all the tools they need to write an accurate estimate, such as:

- Ability to scan and automatically decode a vehicle identification number
- Access to up-to-date VIN specific safety and recall notifications
- Easily look up OEM repair procedures
- Integrated parts look-up capabilities across multiple vendors

As the estimating process becomes more challenging, compliance management solutions are becoming more important to help ensure appraisers are writing estimates that align with the carrier's requirements. Mitchell's cloud-based compliance management solution, Estimate Advisor, does just that by guiding appraisers to follow defined rules before the estimate is uploaded and entered into the work stream. If the estimate is not compliant, the appraiser will receive flagged alerts identifying the line item on the estimate, the severity of the compliance issue, the actual value, the guideline value, and receive reminders of actionable items. As a result, less time and resources are spent producing supplements, and cycle time is also reduced.

6. Repair Management

Today's collision repairs, include not only body and mechanical repairs, but also the restoration and recalibration of the vehicle's electronic and safety systems. Due to the increase in complexity, each repair requires more attention to detail and additional quality assurance stages before returning the vehicle to the owner.

With Mitchell Cloud Repair QA, not only will technicians have access to procedures for each repair line, but they will be able to sign off for quality assurance purposes. Each repair comes with a full report detailing the procedures used and the technicians involved. Ultimately, this saves technicians time that is typically spent on research and provides peace of mind that the correct repair procedures were used during the repair process.

Clearly, there can be no information silos when repairing today's vehicles. The process is too complicated, and the stakes are too high to approach this responsibility with anything other than the most comprehensive technology that connects all parties, helps ensure compliance and facilitates making the proper and safe decision every step of the way.

These precise, connected and automated workflow tools are extremely valuable in the quest to complete a proper and safe repair. They provide comprehensive information on aspects of today's complex vehicles that must be considered in collision repair, as well as make it easier to document that the right choices were made, and the right actions taken to get the driver back on the road safely.

Collision repair facilities now have a clearer roadmap to making the best decisions, validating compliance and avoiding errors and oversights that can lead to unsafe repair results.

OEMs can be confident that their brand and reputation will be better protected and, most importantly, that the customers who trusted them by purchasing their vehicles now have access to resources that will help facilitate safe and proper repairs.

Claims managers have access to information that was previously unavailable to them, through connected technology that makes all processes transparent and accessible. They also have the assurance that their selected repair facility has the tools to complete proper and safe repairs on today's complex vehicles, and documentation that all parties have met their responsibilities to the ultimate end-users—the vehicle's owner, drivers and passengers.

These automated, connected systems are available today and don't require a rocket scientist to operate them, but they deliver enhanced capabilities that are more often than not, required to repair today's high-tech vehicles properly and safely. Ultimately, they provide peace-of-mind to everyone involved.

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