HONDA CAR-O-LINER PRE-MEASURING

UNDERSTANDING "CERTIFICATION"

A LOOK AT OEM REPAIR PROGRAMS AND THE TRUE CONSIDERATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

LARRY MONTANEZ // Contributing Editor

What is "certified?" Certification refers to the confirmation of certain characteristics of a person, company or organization. This confirmation is generally provided by some form of external review, education, assessment or independent audit. Accreditation is a specific organization's process of certification, such as ASE. One of the most common types of certification in modern society is professional certification in which a person is certified as being able to competently complete a job or task, usually by the passing of an examination and/or the completion of a program of study. Some professional certifications also require that one obtain work experience in a related field before the certification can be awarded (i.e. ASE Certification Tests). Some professional certifications are valid for a lifetime upon completing all certification requirements, while others expire after a certain period of time and/or have to be re-tested/re-certified and/or maintained with further continuing education. Certification does not designate that a person has sufficient knowledge in a subject area — only that they passed the test.

ASE

In the collision repair industry, ASE certifies Damage Estimators (B6). For technicians, there is certification for Paint & Refinishing (B2); Non-Structural Analysis & Damage Repair (B3); Structural Analysis & Damage Repair (B4); and Mechanical & Electrical Components (B5). If a technician passes all four tests, then they will be classified as a Certified Collision Repair and Refinish Technician.

I-CAR

I-CAR does not certify anyone for anything in their live or online classes —

PHOTO: REPAIR UNIVERSITY

they train. Therefore, you are not I-CAR Certified; you are I-CAR trained. Individuals can obtain Platinum Individual Recognition, not Platinum Certified. Conversely, I-CAR welding tests now offer certification for aluminum and steel welding and steel sectioning, which is their Welding Training & Certification. A business can also achieve Gold Class Professional Business Recognition, not Gold Class Certified.

OEMs

OEMs have also created certified collision programs. Many are referred to as a Certified Collision Repair Facility (CCRF), which can range from just paying for certification and passing an inspection for certain requirements to an investment of $80,000 to upwards of $300,000 for just one program. Some OEMs have different levels within the program for

PHOTO: MID ISLAND COLLISION

BMW 2 CELETTE DEDICATED FIXTURE

PHOTO: ROJO COLLISION

CELETTE JIG FIXTURE MOUNTING

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF OEM CERTIFICATION

By **JEFF WILDMAN** // Contributing Editor

Our collision center customers often ask how they can grow their business to be more productive and to boost customer satisfaction and loyalty. And while there are several potential ways to achieve that, one of the most important these days is to be OEM certified. In fact, a recent survey found that more than 50 percent of drivers prefer to take their vehicles to collision centers approved by the manufacturer of their vehicle.

The goal of OEM certification of collision centers has always been to ensure that centers have the proper, current technology and training to consistently repair vehicles correctly and safely to pre-accident condition. But with today's cars being more complex than ever, the importance of safe repairs is further underscored and OEM certification reassures the consumer that their car has been properly repaired.

Due to the constant advancement in cars and the rise of complex electronics, semi-autonomous systems and the use of mixed materials used for lightweighting efforts, repair procedures are constantly changing. Collision centers need to stay up to date with training and equipment and to research the proper repair procedures for every vehicle they repair to ensure that the safety features and electronic systems operate properly.

As of today, there are not enough collision centers with the proper knowledge and equipment to safely and properly repair the new, complex vehicles that are on the road. This means there is plenty of room for growth of OEM-certified networks that are looking for collision centers willing to invest in training and equipment. OEMs, along with industry partners and suppliers such as BASF, support this growth by assessing collision center needs, helping to improve shop efficiency, assisting technicians in proper repair procedures, and offering certification courses throughout the year.

Suppliers further support the effort by ensuring that their product offerings meet OEM requirements to help make sure collision repair centers are getting the tools they need to meet specifications. For example, at BASF our Glasurit and R-M coatings meet OEM refinish requirements for more than 99 percent of the cars on the road. As a result, BASF refinish systems are used at Toyota training centers, the Ford Paint and Body Technology Center, the GM Tech Center bodyshop, OEM factories and ports of entry and several OEM design centers including BMW and Tesla.

Making OEM approved products, processes and training more accessible to collision shops is beneficial across the board. The more certified shops there are to meet the demand of repairing today's vehicles safely and correctly, the more customer loyalty and satisfaction will follow.

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different types of vehicles, such as steel, hybrid construction/mixed material and aluminum. Some programs restrict the sale of aluminum structural weld-on components, while others will restrict all-aluminum structural components (bolt-on and structural), and a few will restrict the sale of all-aluminum components (structural and cosmetic). The chart on page 40 shows of OEM programs currently available at the time of this writing, and a general overview of requirements.

All programs require modern equipment, electronic measuring and/or fixtures (jigs), proper standard tooling, liability and shop insurance coverages, appearance requirements, handicap access, customer parking and customer signage, etc. Some require additional items, also denoted on the chart on page 40. Additionally, some programs require dealer sponsorship.

Overview of proper equipment

Repair equipment is another issue with the OEM programs. Facility owners need to do their homework to ensure they do not end up with duplicated or unused equipment. OEMs set equipment requirements that meet their standards. This can relate to pressure or force required to resistance weld a component, along with specific amperages and pressure requirements for compressing structural rivets. Rivet gun access to different areas may be another reason for one piece of equipment to be selected over another. Most OEMs approve two to four manufacturers for each piece of equipment; this means if you plan correctly, you will not need to duplicate equipment. Always do your homework and make an educated decision. Looking at all the program re-

MERCEDES-BENZ
Celette side portal gantry

RESISTANCE WELDERS, MAG/MIG brazing welders and MIG aluminum welders with VAS models included

PHOTOS: MID ISLAND COLLISION

quirements for equipment is important to ensure more efficient ROI and purchase power by investing in equipment with similar approvals.

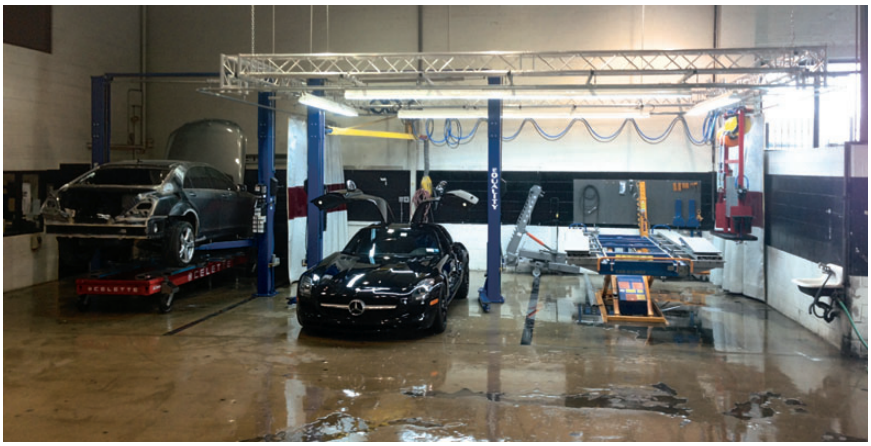
Training and welding requirements

Almost all of the CCRF programs require a specific list of I-CAR live classes and/or online classes. Some programs require I-CAR Individual Platinum — such as Porsche — and some require I-CAR Individual Platinum and Gold Class, such as Honda. The European OEMs and Tesla have their own training facilities in the US, and some have more than one location to limit travel time. However, JLR, Corvette, Nissan GT-R use the I-CAR Tech Centre in Appleton, Wis. Generally, you will be required to attend each vehicle model-specific training or a vehicle range of model training and will only be required to update that class when a model change occurs. Some OEMs require annual training online, live and/or both. For example, Mercedes-Benz requires annual online and live training for continuing education.

All of the aluminum programs that have aluminum welding requirements (some OEMs produce aluminum vehicles with no aluminum welding, such as Porsche) will have their own certified welding test. Ford and Cadillac only re-

	OEM	DEALER SPONSORSHIP	I-CAR Training	I-CAR Welding	Special Equipment	OEM Specified Training	OEM Welding Certification	Notes or Additional Information
1	ACURA	X (NSX)	X GC P	X				NSX SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS
2	ALFA ROMEO	UD	UD	UD	UD	UD	UD	
3	ASTON MARTIN	X			X	X		RESTRICTED PARTS
4	AUDI	X	X	X S A	X	X	X	HYBRID LEVEL AND ALUMINUM WELDING CARBON FIBER LEVEL. RESTRICTED PARTS
5	BENTLEY	X	X	X S	X	X		AUDI RUN PROGRAM, INVITE ONLY
6	BMW	X	X		X	X		
7	BUGATTI	X	X	X S A	X	X	X	AUDI RUN PROGRAM, INVITE ONLY
8	GM (BUICK, CADILLAC, CHEVROLET)	X (CT-6)	X	X S		X (CT-6)	X (CT-6)	CADILLAC CT-6 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS, RESTRICTED PARTS
9	CHRYSLER, DODGE, JEEP, RAM		X GC P	X S				
10	FERRARI	X				X		INVITE ONLY
11	FIAT	UD	UD	UD	UD	UD	UD	
12	FORD, LINCOLN		X GC P	X S A	X (F150)	X (F150 I-CAR)		
13	GMC		X	X S				
14	HONDA	X	X GC P	X	X	X (I-CAR)		
15	HYUNDIA							
16	INFINITI	X	X GC P	X S		X (I-CAR)		
17	JAGUAR/LAND ROVER		X	X S A	X	X	X	RESTRICTED PARTS
18	KIA							
19	KOENIGSEGG				X	X		INVITE ONLY
20	LAMBORGHINI	X	X	X S A	X	X	X	AUDI RUN PROGRAM, INVITE ONLY, RESTRICTED PARTS
21	LEXUS	X	X	X S		X		
22	MASERATI	X	X	X S A	X	X	X	UNDER DEVELOPMENT
23	MAZDA							
24	McLAREN					X	X	INVITE ONLY
25	MERCEDES-BENZ	X		X	X	X	X	ELITE 1 AND ELITE 2 ALUMINUM, RESTRICTED ALUMINUM PARTS
26	MINI	X	X	X S	X	X		BMW RUN PROGRAM
27	MITSUBISHI							
28	NISSAN	X	X GC P	X S		X (I-CAR)		
29	PORSCHE	X	X P	X S	X	X		ASE REQUIRED, RESTRICTED PARTS
30	ROLLS ROYCE	X	X		X	X	X	BMW RUN PROGRAM INVITE ONLY, RESTRICTED PARTS
31	SAAB							
32	SCION	X	X	X S		X		
33	SUBARU							
34	TESLA	X			X	X	X	RESTRICTED PARTS
35	TOYOTA	X	X	X S		X		
36	VOLKSWAGEN	X	X	X S	X	X	X S, STRSW, BRONZE	
37	VOLVO	X	X	X	UD	UD	UD	UNDER DEVELOPMENT

OEM CERTIFIED COLLISION REPAIR FACILITY (CCRF) REQUIREMENTS



PHOTOS: ROJO COLLISION

CLEAN ROOM CURTAIN SYSTEM for Audi from Celette and Car-O-Liner

quire the I-CAR WCA03 Certification Test, while all the other programs use the ISO 9606-2 Standard for their Certification. Audi requires the I-CAR WCA03 Certification prior to attending their aluminum training program. The OEM-specific welding certification tests are a minimum of 40 hours and Mercedes-Benz initial certification is 80 hours. The I-CAR Welding Certification is valid for 5 years before retesting is required. Almost all of the other programs require retesting once every two years, although Mercedes-Benz requires retesting every six months. Initial testing can cost anywhere from $800 to upwards of $16,000. Outside of the I-CAR Welding Program, which is performed in the shop, all other programs require travel to the OEM's training center. Additional costs for testing and certification include flights, hotel, meals, rental vehicles and salary. Another thing to consider is the technician's loss of production while they are away at training. Now compound that with certification on multiple programs — how many times a year will the same technician or technicians be away at training, testing and retesting?

Do your homework, ask questions and do not pre-purchase equipment you think is approved for a particular program. Once you get approval for acceptance to a program, you will be mailed a packet of requirements, forms and equipment requirements. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

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CCRF Requirements Key

X — required
UD — Under Development
GC — Gold Class Required
P — Platinum Required
I-CAR Training — specific I-CAR classes are required
I-CAR Welding — S=Steel Test; A=Aluminum Test; SS=Steel Sectioning
Special Equipment — specific approved equipment only from specific manufacturers
OEM Specified Training — specific training at the OEM training facility center
OEM Welding — specific welding certification from the OEM