Auto Body Work Meeting Kit



Auto body work includes both maintenance and repair. Not limited to post-accident repairs only, auto body includes both mechanical and structural assessments and repairs.

Repairing auto body damage requires sanding, grinding, and sometimes welding to repair the vehicle before it can be refinished. Know the techniques and tools to complete bodywork. Review the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for the chemicals to identify the personal protective equipment (PPE) to wear and how to mix and use materials properly.

HAZARDS

Body shop professionals routinely work with fillers, solvents, paints, primers, and polishes while prepping and painting a car's exterior. Repair jobs also require a lot of sanding and metal grinding. All these processes produce dust, vapors, and fumes that contain harmful chemicals, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), that can damage a technician's lungs, skin and eyes. As a result, the painting and finishing are done in special spray booths that meet strict ventilation standards. Technicians also wear protective clothing to shield their eyes and skin and use oxygen-supplied respirators, so they won't breathe the airborne chemicals produced during surface preparation and painting.

Drills, orbital sanders, buffers, sand and bead-blasters, and air compressor nozzles can eject or throw metal or soft objects into the eyes of the worker. Orbital sanders and wire wheels can throw high-speed objects into the face or the body, causing eye injury or blindness. Approved safety goggles negate this hazard.

Stainless steel welding gives off toxic fumes, resulting from residual cleaning chemicals and surface paint chemicals, including primers, and oxidized-heated metals. Such dispersed chemicals include chromium, nickel, manganese, iron and arsenic. The heavy metals in particular cause nerve and body organ damage over long exposure periods and, in some cases, immediate harm if the exposure is heavy and concentrated.

PREVENTION

Workplace Noise: Grinders, sanders, lifts, sprayers, compressors and other tools of the trade are constantly in use, generating loud noises that put auto body professionals at risk for hearing loss. To protect their ears technicians are required to don earplugs or earmuffs while out in the shop area.

Slip and Fall Injuries: According to OSHA, roughly 30 percent of all workplace accidents in the U.S. are related to slips and falls. Within a body shop setting, spilled grease, paint and other liquids on the floor create potential hazards, along with tools that were not properly put away after use. Technicians know that a tidy work area is a safer one, and are instructed to clean up spills immediately, stow away their tools when not in use, and to also wear shoes with non-slip soles for added traction.

Mechanical Injuries: Auto body and glass technicians routinely work with compressors, sprayers, winches, pulling chains, lifts and other types of heavy equipment. Most contain movable parts like gears, sprockets, and belts which can result in bodily harm if the proper safety precautions are not followed. When accidents strike it’s easy for a collision repair professional to sustain cuts, crushed hands and feet, broken digits, burns and other injuries from the mechanical tools they’re using. As a precaution, prudent shops require their technicians to wear protective clothing, shoes, gloves, and headgear to safeguard their bodies from mechanical injuries.

Eye Injuries: Always wear eye protection when you are grinding, sanding, welding, and painting. Safety eyeglasses, goggles, and/or shields can protect your eyes from flying particles, sparks, and splashes. Grinding and sanding the paint off sheet metal may expose you to dusts that contain chemical particles and toxic metals such as lead, cadmium, or chromium. Work in well-ventilated areas. Use vacuum-equipped grinders and sanders to keep the dusts away from your face. Wear a dust mask or respirator to protect your lungs.

WORKER´S RIGHTS

Auto body shop workers have the right to a safe workplace. The law requires employers to provide their employees with working conditions that are free of known dangers. The OSHA law also prohibits employers from retaliating against employees for exercising their rights under the law if the auto body worker wants to file a complaint, raise a health and safety concern, or report an injury. Agencies like OSHA are responsible for protecting the safety of auto body workers and have implemented numerous standards over the years to protect those workers.

FINAL WORD

At some point, many motorists will make an appointment with a body shop for vehicle repair. Having competent and trustworthy auto body repair shops are a valuable function in the vehicle segment of our society.