

# Make Every Repair Count: Estimating Checklist for Collision Shops



As vehicle volume dips during the summer months, the most successful collision shops don't just work harder – they work smarter. That starts with building thorough, accurate, and justifiable estimates that reflect the actual work performed. This checklist is your go-to guide for uncovering hidden revenue in the work you already do. It helps ensure you're not leaving money on the table—from overlooked procedures to compliance requirements and chargeable admin tasks. Use it during blueprinting, repair planning, or estimate reviews to justify your labor and material charges, capture OEM-required steps and documentation, and minimize delays with better planning.

## Body, Structural, & Mechanical

- ☐ **Pre- and Post-Repair Scans** – Document fault codes and vehicle condition
- ☐ **Full Safety Inspections** – Seatbelts, airbags, steering column, etc.
- ☐ **Sectioning Procedures** – Follow OEM guidelines. No arbitrary cuts!
- ☐ **One-Time Use Parts** – Identify and order early to avoid rework or delays
- ☐ **Consumables** – Identify and order adhesives, seam sealers, urethanes, etc.
- ☐ **Sublet Repairs** – Glass, alignments, suspension, etc. Don't forget markup
- ☐ **Wheel Alignment Checks** – May be needed even without visible damage
- ☐ **Mechanical R&I or Tear-Down Labor** – Especially for access-related components

## OEM Compliance

- ☐ **OEM Repair Procedure Documentation** – Attach printouts. Charge for research.
- ☐ **Weld Testing & Setup** – Required by many OEMs before structural welds
- ☐ **Seam Sealer Removal and Replacement**
- ☐ **Sound Deadening / NVH Materials** – Foam, mats, coatings, etc.

## Electrical & Tech Systems

- ☐ **Battery Disconnect / Reconnect Procedures** – Often with wait times and resets
- ☐ **Convenience Feature Relearns** – Settings, data wipes for total losses
- ☐ **System Initializations** – Windows, sunroofs, mirrors, sensors, etc.
- ☐ **ADAS Calibrations** – Cameras, radar, blind spot monitors, etc.
- ☐ **Test Drives** – Required for many dynamic calibrations

## Refinish-Related Items

- ☐ **Blend Panels** – Even if pushback comes from the insurer or customer
- ☐ **Tint / Color Matching Labor**
- ☐ **Clear Coat Extension to Adjacent Panels** – Needed for gloss or texture match
- ☐ **Corrosion Prevention** – Cavity wax, weld-thru primer, epoxy, etc.
- ☐ **Non-Exterior Refinish** – Edges, jams, bay panels, undersides

# Estimating Checklist for Collision Shops

## Administrative & Operational

- ☐ **Estimate Line for Repair Planning Time** - Often justified for complex repairs
- ☐ **Photo Documentation Labor** - Beyond basic insurance uploads
- ☐ **Tow-in or Storage Recovery** - If your shop covers it, you should charge it
- ☐ **Car Wash & Detailing** - Always expected, often missed

## Additional Considerations

- ☐ **Parts Documentation** - Document part types used and note any issues with fitment or delays
- ☐ **Hazmat & Recycling Fees** - Fluids, batteries, airbags, etc.
- ☐ **Document Customer Communication Time** - Explaining repair scope or delays - chargeable!
- ☐ **Supplement Processing Labor** - For re-approvals, reorders, and documentation updates



### Bonus Tip: Create a Tiered Review Process

Use this three-step review method to strengthen estimate accuracy and documentation:

- 1. Technician Review** - What's damaged? What's hard to reach? Identify physical realities of the job.
- 2. Estimator Review** - Are all procedures, materials, and compliance steps accounted for?
- 3. Repair Planner or Manager Review** - Does the file meet OEM, shop, and documentation standards? Are notes, photos, and documentation complete?



Ready to improve your shop's profitability through more accurate, compliant, and consistent estimating?



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