

# Reduce friction, boost efficiency in preproduction

Your step-by-step guide to building a production compliance model

**O**ver the next several months, I will detail the process of building a production compliance model for collision repair facilities. I will focus on the steps necessary to identify who, what, where, when and how things need to be accomplished within the repair facility to maximize customer service and production efficiency. There is a process that improves performance across the board and builds accountability through clearly defining expectations and performance requirements.

Last month, in “Building a production compliance model,” we began our discussion on how to create a step-by-step process in your preproduction area. So what steps are required to take place to get the vehicle into production?

1. Schedule the vehicle for the estimate, or if not mobile, bring it into the bay for disassembly.
2. Repair authorizations and data acquisition authorizations need to be signed by the vehicle owner and in the hard file.
3. Properly identify all options to establish the “estimating” requirements by vehicle construction and design, including the testing protocols necessary to establish pre- and post-accident safety system readiness.
4. Conduct a data search to identify any repair scenarios specific to platform requirements, e.g., steels, plastics, other build data.
5. Establish the condition of the vehicle to ensure proper measures are taken to restore it to its prior condition in accordance with the payer’s obligation to the vehicle owner.
6. Save all electronic pre-sets electronically or manually.
7. Have vehicle owner initial parts requirements and save in the hard file relative to aftermarket or other non-OEM parts.
8. The estimator/blue-printer has to cycle the ignition whenever possible to conduct the “seven-second burn” to check for dashboard-indicated fault codes for vehicle safety systems.
9. Begin disassembly processes.
10. Identify parts to be saved and those that will be replaced.
11. Establish repair times for the damaged repairable non-structural areas of the vehicle.



**THE MORE THOROUGH AND COMPLETE THE DOCUMENTATION, THE NARROWER THE FOCUS OF THE DISCUSSION BECOMES.**

12. Establish repair times for repairable structural areas of the vehicle.

13. Determine removal and replacement requirements for glass including adequate dry/cure times for adhesives used in replacement.

14. Identify refinish requirements for undamaged adjacent panels where applicable.

15. Identify undamaged part removal and replacement requirements to accommodate blending procedures as necessary.

16. Determine length of time to obtain parts.

17. Determine the length of time for repairs (this is start of repair to conclusion of repair).

18. Contact vendor(s) to place parts order(s).

19. Receive parts; validate part order list against parts received to verify part numbers and types.

20. Mirror match parts against parts that have been identified for replacement.

21. Create second parts order for corrections if needed, including accounting requirements.

22. Identify billable hours for vehicle and day/date for production processing.

23. Place vehicle into production rotation.

24. During production create supplemental billing when needed and accompanying parts orders or labor add orders.

25. Contact customer and insurer, as needed, to validate supplemental billing for review, verification or approval.

26. Update file documentation.

This can be seen as an example, as all the individual tasks associated with getting the car into production may or may not have been listed. There may be subset tasks to be identified as well. This will depend on the level of detail that each individual store owner prefers.

Estimating and blueprinting have the most instances of subjective decisions; however, subjectivity can be reduced significantly with documentation. The more thorough and complete the documentation, the narrower the focus of the discussion becomes.

As we develop processes and procedures, the long-term strategy is identifying the tasks associated with the planning

and execution of repairing a vehicle. This allows the store owner to build a more predictive production model, which helps forecast what their daily, weekly and monthly performance metrics should be.

Task lists are the starting point. Job descriptions are then created that tell employees exactly what their roles are in the execution of the tasks, including time-frames and performance requirements, which are more clearly defined in the standard operating procedure (SOP) and accountability measurements. The SOP then provides the step-by-step instructions in the execution of the tasks.

Some key takeaways would be:

1. Have all the required steps and tasks been identified?
2. Does the job description being created for this process provide the detail necessary for the employee to be able to complete the process as expected?

3. If not, what training will be required to improve their competency to the necessary level.

4. Should that additional training be internal or external, and what is the cost and potential return on investment (ROI) for the training activity?

5. Do the SOPs clearly define all steps, performance requirements and time-frames necessary to meet production requirements?

6. If followed, will the task lists, job descriptions and SOPs provide a more efficient production flow resulting in improved efficiency and profitability?

7. If not, what additional steps need to be considered to make the SOP adequate for the production needs?

8. Are the steps, if followed, adequate for the staff to perform to their individual performance expectations?

9. What review process has been

established so that the process can be audited for compliance and corrective action as needed?

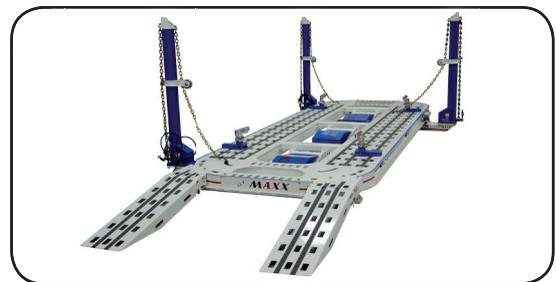
As we move to the next segment of this article, these nine takeaways will be looked at individually. "Pros and cons" lists can be developed, which will help in identifying if the takeaway requirements have been met and if not, what the next steps should be. There will also be additional opportunities to look at other processes within the store to help identify the steps necessary for building a production compliance model for them individually using the same steps illustrated in this first installment. Upcoming installments will include Front Office, Preproduction, Production and Final Billing. 

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