



**Department of Business Regulation  
Commercial Licensing Division**

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# AUTO BODY BULLETIN NUMBER 2026-01

## 2026 Department of Business Regulation Best Practices and Enforcement Trends

This Bulletin is applicable to all Department of Business Regulation (“Department”) Licensees, and those individuals and/or entities pursuing licensure, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-38-1 et seq. and 230-RICR-30-05-02, Motor Vehicle Body and Salvage Vehicle Repair (the “Regulation”). This Bulletin is informational only and is being disseminated to assist licensees with the professionalization of their business practices and improvement of regulatory compliance.

In reviewing enforcement and other disciplinary inquiries that have come before the Department and the Board in calendar year 2024, several trends in consumer interactions have become apparent. The Board and the Division regard the following enforcement subjects as educational for the automotive collision repair industry at large, to the extent that these scenarios are useful in constructing more robust business practices and in avoiding future regulatory non-compliance.

### A. Best Practices

- The 2025 licensing cycle includes well-publicized changes to classes accepted for technicians’ certifications necessary for renewal and licensure.

*Recommendation 1:* Proactively engage in technician training throughout the year, including but not limited to the timely updating of rosters to ensure all role representatives are compliant.

**“Train for the repair, not the license.”**

*Recommendation 2:* Have a “champion” for your location(s) for licensing compliance to avoid potential year-end issues.

- The Division and the Board are aware that vehicular safety systems have evolved to the point where repair and replacement of certain automotive parts that were typically outside the purview of safety systems for proper past repairs are now in need of specific post-repair calibrations in order to work safely and effectively.

*Recommendation:* Licensees should pursue inter-industry education and training on Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (“ADAS”) understanding and theory, including hands-on and in-person instruction.



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- The technological advancements and safety requirements for electric and hybrid-electric vehicles are changing rapidly.

*Recommendation:* Licensees should familiarize themselves with *Auto Body Bulletin Number 2024-1* on Hybrid/EV safety for storage and repairs [2024-01 Auto Body Bulletin - EVs.pdf](#) and should seek out additional education regarding the evolution of repairs in the rapidly evolving area of alternative fuel vehicles.

- The Division and the Board are aware that automobile manufacturers have unique and specific approaches to repairs, the use of which is necessary when Original Equipment Manufactured (“OEM”) parts are required in a repair.

*Recommendation:* Licensees should prepare Standard Operating Procedures (“SOPs”) to use when OEM parts and procedures are required and recommended in a repair, specifically including procedures for employees’ research and implementation of repairs as dictated by any particular automobile manufacturer.

- **Documentation Of Repair(s):** The Department has become increasingly aware of a variety of Licensees who are not documenting repairs appropriately but could be through a number of mechanisms that can assist them in preserving the details of the repair.

*Recommendation:* Licensees should document repairs on all vehicles through the following actions:

- Photo Documentation
- Pre-Repair Diagnostic Scan
- Post-Repair Diagnostic Scan
- Recording Of Vehicle Measurement(s)
- Suspension (Alignment)
- OEM Documentation

### B. Enforcement Trends

The subject matters addressed in this section pertain to complaints filed with the Division in 2024, and the respective strategy the Division and the Board recommend to avoid prospective complaints and future discipline.

- **Final repair bills.** Though final repair bills are documents that licensees are required to keep for a minimum of two years pursuant to the § 2.17(A) and (B) of 230-RICR-30-05-02, *Motor Vehicle Body and Salvage Vehicle Repair* (the “Regulations”), the Division and the Board continue to see that licensees are not able to produce a final repair bill upon request by the Division, and are not in the habit of providing a final repair bill to the consumer.



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*Recommendation:* Licensees should provide a copy of the final repair bill to the customer and retain a copy for their records, including but not limited to any and all agreements between the licensee and the customer. This is especially important in scenarios where the Licensee and the customer have agreed to repairs different than that which has already been written for in the most recent estimate.

- **Risk of “saving” a total loss.** Many well-intentioned licensees attempt to “save” a vehicle from being declared a total loss (and/or “save” a customer his/her deductible) because the customer is in financial distress and/or asks for help regarding payment for necessary repairs. The outcome of such an arrangement often results in incomplete repairs and/or a disgruntled customer.

*Recommendation:* Licensees should not attempt to “save” the customer his/her deductible and should not attempt to “save” the vehicle from being financially “totaled” for insurance purposes or otherwise

**Liability of a proper repair.** The repairer may be responsible for all repair costs that exceed the insurance estimate for the vehicle when restoring it to its pre-accident condition.

Please direct any questions you may have to the Department via email at [DBR.CommLicInquiry@dbr.ri.gov](mailto:DBR.CommLicInquiry@dbr.ri.gov).

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