

Is That Vehicle Really Drivable?

I read an article recently in Society of Collision Repair Specialists ([SCRS](#)) Repairer Driven News about Length of Rental (LOR). In the article it showed that drivable vehicle LOR had increased, and non-drivable LOR had dropped. This article also posed some questions about what could have caused the increase in drivable LOR. While it had some merit, my thoughts went towards classification: how do you make a drivability decision?

I was curious, so I called around to check how shops were making their decisions. I heard things like, “The insurance company makes that call” to “The customer drove it in” with many similar comments in between. Throughout my travels I have seen vehicles come into insurance company drive-in stations at repair facilities with questionable drivability just because of the visible damage. Most often, those vehicles drove right back out which triggered my thought process (curiosity) again. I talked with an adjuster at an insurance drive-in and asked what they thought about damage to the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) and was told, “the shop would catch that on a supplement” and “I only write the visible damage.”

There lies the problem. A vehicle with minor *visible* damage should be classified as non-drivable if ADAS functionality is compromised. ADAS covers a myriad of components such as anti-lock brakes, supplemental restraint systems including seat belts and active head restraints, blind spot monitors and positioning cameras, active cruise control radar systems, automatic braking, and other automated electronic assistance systems. A check of the calibration procedures for ADAS in the area of damage would assist you in determining the drivability of the vehicle in your estimating bay. Odds are in strong favor that if the repair process would require a calibration after repair, the component is not currently calibrated because of the vehicle damage. Allowing a vehicle to leave your repair facility with compromised ADAS could open you up to liabilities.

Identifying ADAS calibrations can be challenging as many will not show up in routine scan procedures. As a quick check you can review the Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair (I-CAR) [Repairability Technical Support](#) section which will show systems that might be affected when compared to the area of vehicle damage. While somewhat time consuming, the OEM repair procedures offer the best information to validate calibration requirements. To help find other options I have been doing some research on a company called [adasThink](#). They have a validation process that I believe will speed up the research as well as identify the calibration steps necessary for damage appraisal documentation. This program allows you to upload an estimate to their system via PDF which then [scans the repair](#) to determine what calibrations would be required after the repairs are accomplished. I have watched the process work and believe this is something that should be accomplished in the estimating bay prior to releasing a customer with their vehicle.

If your research reveals that an ADAS calibration is necessary because of required repairs, the vehicle should be designated as a non-drivable vehicle. Calibrations cannot be performed until the repairs are completed which means the vehicle is technically not functioning up to OEM expectations in its current condition. As I mentioned earlier, if a vehicle repair would require a calibration to be performed, the affected system is probably not in calibration because of the vehicle damage. You should then rely on your sales processes to capture the keys and retain the vehicle for repairs.

Unfortunately, this is not a new concern, with ADAS becoming more and more prominent in vehicles today than their first appearance in vehicles 20 years ago. While not as complex and technical as the systems seen now, those still required calibration after repairs. This makes the “*we don't see many newer vehicles* statement” pretty much irrelevant. Scan requirements exist for most vehicles that are 12 years old and newer, which should raise a thought that if a scan is required, then a calibration likely is, too. If it is required, you should be fairly confident that the vehicle is non-drivable.

This article began discussing drivable vs non-drivable vehicles, and while I strayed a little, I did so to illustrate how ADAS plays an important role in making a drivability decision. I encourage you to review the drivable vehicles currently in your system awaiting their scheduled repair date. If you find some that you suspect need calibrations, this might be a good time to establish a process to prevent vehicles from leaving your facility with compromised ADAS. I have given you a couple of suggestions within this article, and which one you use will be dependent upon your individual operations. The process you select could quite possibly improve your closing ratio and have a positive impact on your sales.