

My Career in Vehicle Body Repairs



With a *Certificate in Vehicle Body Repairs Studies*, graduates may have the possible *career options* of the following:

- Collision Repair Technician/Body Repair Technician/Mechanic
- Aircraft Body repairer
- Bodyman or Spray painter

NB: Although the job titles may vary, the tasks executed are very similar from one title to another and hence combined.

Autobody/Collision Repair/AircraftbodyTechnician/Mechanic

The job descriptions and job specifications for these careers are as follows:

Career Overview

Repair and refinish automotive vehicle bodies and straighten vehicle frames.

Typical Duties:

- Review damage reports, prepare or review repair costs, estimates and plan work to be performed.
- Sand body area to be painted and cover bumpers, windows, and trim with masking tape or paper to protect them from paint, spray paint vehicles. May mix paints to correct colour specification.
- Inspect repaired vehicle for proper functioning, completion of work, dimensional accuracy, and overall appearance of paint job, and test drive vehicle to ensure proper alignment and handling.
- Fit and weld replacement parts into place, using wrenches and welding equipment, and grind down welds to smooth them, using power grinder and other tools.
- Prime and paint repaired surfaces, using paint spray-guns and motorized sanders.
- Remove damaged sections of vehicle using metal-cutting guns, air grinders and wrenches, and install replacement parts using wrenches or welding equipment.
- Chain and clamp frames and sections to alignment machines that use hydraulic pressure to align damaged components.
- Fill small dents that cannot be worked out with plastic or solder.
- File, grind, sand and smooth filled or repaired surfaces, using power tools and hand tools.

Typical Duties Cont'd:

- Remove upholstery, accessories, electrical window-and-seat-operating equipment, and trim to gain access to vehicle bodies and fenders
- Position dolly blocks against surfaces of dented areas and beat opposite surface areas.
- Mix polyester resins and hardeners to be used in restoring damaged areas.
- Adjust or align headlights, wheels and brake systems.
- Read specifications or confer with customers to determine the desired custom modifications for altering the appearance of the vehicle.
- Cut and tape plastic separating film to outside repair areas to avoid damaging surrounding surfaces during repair procedures, and remove tape and wash surfaces after repairs are complete.
- Remove small pits and dimples in body metal using pick hammers and punches.
- Fit and secure windows, vinyl roofs, and metal and cut material to size for roof installation, using rules, straightedges, and hand shears.
- Remove damaged panels, and identify the family and properties of the plastic used on a vehicle.
- Replace damaged glass on vehicles.
- Soak fiberglass matting in resin mixtures, and apply layers of matting over repair areas to specified thicknesses.
- Clean work areas, using air hoses, to remove damaged material and discarded fiberglass strips used in repair procedures
- Apply heat to plastic panels, using hot-air welding guns or immersion in hot water, and press the softened panels back into shape by hand.
- Cut openings in vehicle bodies for the installation of customized windows, using templates and power shears or chisels.

Working Environment

Work may be indoors in body repair shops which are often noisy. Work areas are usually well-ventilated so that dust and paint fumes can be dispersed. Work may sometime be in awkward and cramped positions. This type of work can be physically demanded. Working hour may be a standard 40-hour Monday – Friday work week, in some instances, working overtime or on the weekend may be required.

Qualifications and Licenses

On the job training may be provided. Experience in an apprenticeship is an advantage. However, for accelerated career positioning, a technical certification from the SJPP would be useful. No C/NVQs currently available.

Essential Qualities and Skills

- ❖ Ability to communicate effectively with vendors and customers
- ❖ Excellent customer servicing skills
- ❖ Awareness of health and safety regulations
- ❖ Knowledge of the various hand tools for the repairing purpose
- ❖ Ability to think critically with excellent technical skill
- ❖ Ability to pay attention to detail and above average physical fitness

References

Barbados Standard Occupational Classification, Minor Group 723 section 7231, page 166 – Government of Barbados, Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development (1990)
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/motorvehiclebodyrepairer.aspx> Retrieved February 2016
<http://www.careeroverview.com/auto-body-repair-careers.html> February 2016
<http://www.myplan.com/careers/automotive-body-and-related-repairers/description-49-3021.00.html> Retrieved February 2016
<http://www.snagajob.com/job-descriptions/auto-body-technician/> February 2016