

For more information:

Arthur Harris

302-423-0207

E-mail: admin@degweb.org

DEG Reports on “Raw Bumpers” in Estimating Systems

Raw Plastic Preparation

Anyone familiar with automotive refinishing will tell you that “it’s all in the preparation”, and that the specific procedures for pre-refinish surface preparation vary as a function of the material being refinished (eg. metal vs. plastic), as well as the condition of the surface of that material (eg. raw vs. pre-primed). There appears to be universal agreement that the proper preparation of raw plastic parts, as compared with primed plastic parts, involves additional labor and materials.

If refinishing a raw plastic part requires additional labor and materials, it logically follows that the repair estimate/invoice should ideally reflect this unique labor and materials. Until recently and for several reasons, this has been a difficult undertaking. First, there has been uncertainty as to which specific plastic parts are shipped raw and which are shipped primed. Second, until recently the estimating information providers did not provide logic enabling the automated calculation of this additional refinish labor. The result was that raw plastic preparation had to be determined on a case by case basis and then manually calculated, often resulting in ongoing friction between repairers and insurers.

The Database Task Force has been interacting with the information providers for several years now on this topic in pursuit of automation of Raw Plastic Prep within the estimating platforms. It thoroughly researched the subject in 2009 and published a matrix detailing the shipped condition of the majority of bumper covers. That information is readily available within the DEG website. At this time some of the information providers have addressed this issue within their estimating platforms. This article has the purpose of summarizing how each information provider presently addresses raw plastic preparation.

Audatex

The Audatex Database Reference Manual (DBRM) contains the following language:

Audatex refinish allowances start with priming a part. Due to the differences in the paint manufacturers’ procedures, OEM recommendations, and the unpredictable nature of parts, any preparation required for raw, unprimed bumper covers or other plastic parts is Not Included in Audatex labor allowances. This operation may be added manually, if required. The Audatex formula for preparation of a raw, unprimed Bumper Cover or Plastic Part is:

- 20% of the base refinish labor
-

Note: Audatex will begin to add a “Prep Raw Bumper Cover” operation to the Bumper Cover part choice box for new and update vehicles, beginning with Q1 2011. This will apply only to manufacturers known to supply raw, unprimed bumper covers. The Audatex formula for Prep Raw, Unprimed Bumper cover is 20% of the base refinish allowance, with a .3 minimum time.

At the time of this writing, the calculated result of the above formula is available in the Audatex “Part Choices” box for the following makes:

- Toyota
- Lexus
- Scion
- Mitsubishi
- Subaru
- Nissan
- Infiniti
- Hyundai
- Kia

The prompt reads as “*Prep Raw [Front/Rear] Bumper Cover*”. Audatex indicates that there is the possibility of coverage for unprimed non-bumper parts in the future.

CCC

CCC provides the following language within its Motor Guide to Estimating:

Unprimed Bumper Preparation

- *25% of the bumper’s base refinish time*
- *Maximum time allocation: 1.0 hours*

Included:

Removal of mold-release agents as outlined by manufacturer
Masking (if required)
Application of adhesion promoter

Does Not Include:

Correction of pre-existent surface imperfections
Material Costs

The labor value generated by the above formula is available as an automated calculation for the following makes by selecting “ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS” within the bumper section:

- Toyota
- Lexus
- Scion
- Nissan
- Infiniti
- Subaru
- Hyundai
- Volvo
- Mitsubishi
- Saturn – Astra and Aveo only
- GM – G8 and GTO only
- Kia – specific models only

When highlighting the part for bumpers that are known to always arrive UNPRIMED, the following footnote appears:

PARTS: Component comes unprimed from OEM. Preparation is required. See ADD IF REQUIRED operation.

When highlighting the part for bumpers that are known to sometimes arrive UNPRIMED, the following footnote appears:

PARTS: Component may come unprimed from OEM. Preparation may be required. See ADD IF REQUIRED operation.

Within "ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS", the available operation reads as "Prep Unprimed Bumper". CCC/Motor indicates that they are considering the feasibility of coverage for non-bumper parts in the future.

Mitchell

Mitchell presently provides no automated calculation of Raw Plastic Prep within their estimating platform. The Mitchell Collision Estimating Guide (CEG) contains the following language:

Raw Substrate Prep – Allow .2 per refinish hour (20%) for plastic components that come from the manufacturer in raw/unprimed state.

Mitchell estimating users seeking to capture Raw Plastic Prep labor/materials must continue to do so via a manual line entry.

Summary

An accurate repair document involving the refinish of plastic parts requires knowledge of both the shipped condition of the plastic part, as well as the specific process required to prepare that part for refinish. The good news is two of the three information providers now provide the capability of reflecting that unique labor and materials within the database via semi-automated prompts, eliminating the need to generate a manual calculation and to defend a manually entered line. It appears that of the three information providers, CCC presently has the most comprehensive coverage of makes/models where Raw Bumper Prep is warranted.

As repairers, your estimators need to be educated as to how these prompts are accessed within your CCC and Audatex estimating systems. You should also review the underlying formulas to determine if they reasonably match with your specific process in your repair facility, and to possibly adjust them if need be. Finally, yet to be addressed by the information providers are the many other plastic parts that may similarly ship in raw condition, such as rocker moldings and side claddings. The information provider solutions that we outline above will be of even greater value if and when they include these non-bumper plastic parts. In the meanwhile, raw bumper preparation for these non-bumper parts will have to be manually generated.

About the Database Enhancement Gateway

The DATABASE ENHANCEMENT GATEWAY is an initiative which enables those who use collision repair estimating databases to provide feedback to the Information Providers in an effort to promote data accuracy. DEG resources include an easy-to-use website and inquiry form, dedicated administration of inquiries, and a current database of both pending and resolved data inquiries for the major Information Providers. The DEG is created, equally funded and maintained by the Automotive Service Association (ASA), the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers (AASP) and the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS).

www.degweb.org

PO Box 615, Penfield, NY 14526