

Gold Class Professionals—the sign to look for

When you've been involved in a collision, you want someone who is reliable—someone you can trust to repair your vehicle quickly and properly. You want a Gold Class Professionals business. Why? Gold Class Professionals have the most up-to-date training in collision repair and are trained to properly repair your vehicle.



I-CAR, the Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair, is an international not-for-profit organization which specializes in collision repair training. Today's vehicles are complex. Therefore, signs of training, like the I-CAR Gold Class Professionals symbol, are important to look for when your vehicle needs collision repair. If your vehicle is not repaired correctly, it may not look and drive the way it did before the collision. Or, it may not protect you and your family if you're involved in another collision.

Who are Gold Class Professionals?

Gold Class Professionals are collision repair businesses, insurance companies, glass businesses, recyclers, suppliers and distributors, and other collision industry businesses that have achieved the highest level of recognition for training in the collision repair industry. They are businesses dedicated to training their employees on the latest collision repair technology to provide you the best collision repair service possible.

How does a Gold Class Professionals business benefit me?

Gold Class Professionals have the knowledge and understanding to effectively communicate and work with one another when it comes to your repair. As an example, Gold Class insurance companies and Gold Class collision repair businesses work hand in hand to keep each other informed of everything that needs to be done to your vehicle. They know when parts of your vehicle can be repaired, or when they have to be replaced. This eliminates surprises when the repair bill comes, and it means better service for you with less hassle!

How do I find a Gold Class Professionals business?

A directory of Gold Class businesses, with an easy-to-use search function, is available via the Internet at www.i-car.com. This makes it easy to find a Gold Class business near you!

A wealth of other information is available on the I-CAR web site to help consumers understand the collision repair process and know how to choose a collision repair business. More information about I-CAR is also available on the site.

Or, ask your insurance agent to recommend a Gold Class Professionals business near you.



3701 Algonquin Rd., Suite 400
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
Phone: 847.590.1191
Phone: 800.422.7872
Fax: 800.590.1215
www.i-car.com

For other consumer vehicle safety and maintenance information, contact the following organizations:

Automotive Service Association (ASA)
817.283.6205
800.ASA.SHOP
www.asashop.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
888.327.4236
www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)
703.247.1500
www.carsafety.org

Car Care Council
www.carcarecouncil.org

Motorist Assurance Program (MAP)
800.295.5783
www.motorist.org

National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)
703.669.6600
877.ASE.TECH
www.asecert.org

A Consumer's Guide to Collision Repair

Navigate Your Way To A Gold Class Shop!



You've been involved in a collision...

The first steps to take:

Call the police to the scene of the collision. If you're injured, it's important you get treatment immediately. Even if there doesn't appear to be any damage to your vehicle, a police report will verify that you and other parties were involved in a collision. This will help your claim in case hidden damage is discovered later.

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible after the collision (some policies require notice within 24 hours). They're there to help you deal with the other parties involved in the collision. Your claims adjuster can also refer you to a Gold Class Professionals® collision repair business in your area to inspect your vehicle for damage.

After taking care of personal injuries, the next thing to take care of are the injuries to your vehicle. You want to know how much damage was done, how much the repairs are going to cost, how long you'll be without your vehicle, and most importantly – will your vehicle look and drive the same after it has been repaired. Being involved in a collision can be an unpleasant experience; choosing a qualified collision repair shop can help minimize the stress.

The estimate:

How accurately the damage to your vehicle is analyzed can affect the quality of your repair. That's why it is important your vehicle is inspected by an I-CAR® Gold Class Professionals business. A Gold

Class business can detect any damage to your vehicle and will ensure that the proper repair procedures are followed during the repair process. After your vehicle estimate is complete, be sure to get a copy of the damage report. This becomes the "blueprint" for repairing your vehicle. Ask the estimator to explain, in detail, what damage was done to your vehicle and how it will be repaired.

Choosing a collision repair shop:

Your vehicle may be the second-largest investment you make in your lifetime. Asking the right questions, and taking a shop tour can help you decide whether your investment will be in the best hands. If you feel comfortable after your visit with the collision repair business, chances are you will be satisfied with their service also.

Next to the Gold Class Professionals designation, the most important things to look for are:

- Modern equipment
- Current technical reference materials
- Cleanliness
- Warranty program

Modern equipment and current technical reference materials show a business is up to date with technology and can repair your vehicle properly. The shop will need a three-dimensional measuring system to measure the height, width and length of your vehicle's structure. Because this structure supports all steering and suspension parts, these points of your vehicle must be properly repaired to factory measurements. This, in most cases, is as strict as three millimeters – the thickness of three dimes. Some vehicles today require a tolerance no greater than one millimeter.

Cleanliness and atmosphere can say a lot about the business and technicians' attitudes. The business should be willing to give you a shop tour and show you their facility and equipment.

Most professional shops also offer a warranty on their repairs. This is to protect you if something does not work properly after the repair is complete.

The after-repair inspection:

Before you take your newly repaired vehicle home, look it over carefully. Check all the electronic accessories, and pay attention to details such as making sure the doors, hood and deck lid open and close smoothly. In daylight, examine freshly painted areas for a good color match. While driving home, listen for any unusual noises and test the handling. The collision repair shop should provide you with a complete breakdown of the repairs completed and what parts were replaced, if any.

If you're not satisfied, report it to the repair facility immediately. If you feel they're not cooperating fully, report your dissatisfaction to your insurance company. Remember, you're not in this alone. Your insurance company and the various collision repair trade associations are in business for your protection.

The unibody revolution:

If you drive a late-model vehicle, chances are you're driving a unibody. Vehicle makers adopted the lightweight unibody construction after the rise in gas prices during the 1970s. While today's vehicles are lighter and more fuel efficient, they're also more difficult to repair.

Unibody vehicles are made of high-strength steel, welded into a single unit. Therefore, repairing collision damage requires specialized skills, combined with the proper training and equipment, to ensure there is no loss in handling, performance, durability or appearance.

With a unibody, it's also more difficult to judge the extent of damage. What appears good on the surface can in fact be damaged underneath, where only a trained eye can detect it. An improperly repaired vehicle can cause even more problems such as suspension and handling problems, increased tire wear, and reduced durability or operation of key safety systems and structural parts.

It's important that your vehicle is inspected and repaired by a Gold Class Professionals business because they have the most up-to-date training to repair your vehicle properly. They will ensure your vehicle looks and drives as well as it did before the collision. More importantly, it will be safe for you and your family to drive.

If you've been involved in a collision, look for this sign:



I-CAR® is an ASE-certified training provider.