

The Craft of Vehicle Body Repairs

Vehicle body repairers repair damage to the bodywork of motor vehicles. Their work may involve hammering out dents, repair and or realignment of new panels.

Central Aspects

Learning new practical skills

Using hand skills to shape metal

Working with vehicles

Learning and developing new craft-related skills, knowledge and competence

Secondary Aspects

Being physically active and on your feet

Attention to detail

Practical skills and theoretical knowledge

Other Aspects

Operating machines

Understanding technical drawings and diagrams

Being accurate with numbers in counting, measuring and arithmetic

Lifting or carrying heavy items

Working in a noisy environment

Taking responsibility for own learning, including the allocation of study time

Work activities

Vehicle body repairers repair damage to the bodywork of cars, trucks and coaches, ranging from scratches, dents and rust to major accident damage. This may involve hammering out dents or filling with body solder or plastic fillers. Vehicle body repairers also fit complete new panels supplied by the vehicle manufacturer. Sometimes they fabricate part panels and shape sheet metal on a workbench themselves before welding it into place.

In workshops where spray painting is not a separate job, they also prepare the new or repaired panels as per manufacturer's instructions. They then apply primers such as etch primer, filler primer and surface primers. The primers are then flattened using a wet or dry flattening system as per manufacturer's instructions. Paint is mixed as per vehicle paint code. Base coat and lacquer paint are applied and baked to cure. The paint finish is polished if required as per manufacturer's instructions.

The application of primers, lacquers etc. are carried out in special booths using extractor fans. Personal protection equipment (PPE) must be worn during all aspects of the repair.

Personal qualities and skills

Vehicle body repairers should be good with their hands. You must be patient and careful to achieve a perfectly smooth finish. You should be physically fit for lifting and bending and have a good eye for detail.

There is also an increasing emphasis on the development of communications and customer relations skills.

Pay and opportunities

A qualified and experienced vehicle body repairer earns in the range of €39,000 - €47,500 a year.

Vehicle body repairers work a 39-hour week. You may have to do shift work, overtime and weekend work.

During your apprenticeship you will be paid an apprentice rate. The actual rates paid may vary, depending on the occupation and employer. Generally, the rates will increase in a number of steps during the apprenticeship. You should seek details of rates of pay for apprentices from your prospective employer.

All apprentices are paid a training allowance by FÁS while attending off-the-job training phases 2, 4 and 6.

Opportunities arise from time-to-time for promotion to supervisor level. Many people use an apprenticeship as a first step in proceeding to such occupations as instructors, teachers, training advisers, motor insurance assessors, managers and owners of businesses.

Where apprentices and crafts persons have the necessary ability, initiative and basic qualifications, opportunities are available for advancement. These include advanced technological and management courses which are available in Institutes of Technology, schools of management, professional institutes, etc.

People anxious to advance themselves in their careers are advised to discover for themselves what opportunities are available.

Note: Wage and salary figures quoted under pay and opportunities are approximate and are for guideline purposes only. These may vary, depending on experience or economic and local circumstances. Any variances are outside the control of FÁS.

The craft is designated for apprenticeship training and as such is governed by the statutory apprenticeship rules that have been made by FÁS