

The Cost of Safety

Collision repair on ADAS-equipped vehicles can pack a punch, especially when fleets are self-insured.

— **KRYSTYNA LAGOWSKI**

While today's Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) are keeping drivers safer than ever, the collision repair bills on this technology can pack a punch.

Costs can skyrocket up to \$3,000 for minor repairs when wheel alignment or calibration is involved. Some fleet managers may wonder, is it worth it?

"Preventing an accident is always going to outweigh costs," says Darlene Spriel, Director of Fleet Solutions, Foss National Leasing. "If all vehicles have safety features, accidents should be reduced."

She believes it's a case of educating drivers to let them know that if they have these systems, they need to be aware. "Fleet drivers need to know that even if they just graze the bumper, it's going to be a couple of thousand dollars to fix," Spriel says. "That bumper has all kinds of cameras and sensors. If it's not fixed properly, it can get dangerous."

More sensor technologies

In one instance, Spriel recalls the results of a windshield that was not replaced properly. "It was pulling the driver over

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Darlene Spriel, Director, Fleet Solutions, Foss National Leasing

the line when the repair was done," she says. "They didn't realign the technology to work exactly as it did when it came out of the factory."

She predicts this will become a bigger issue in the future as more sensor technologies are in place. "Driver training is part of the answer," Spriel says. "There are different venues. Every time a driver gets into an accident, was it preventable?

What kind of coaching can we give them? We can take their abstract history and their accident history, and offer training solutions online or behind the wheel."

According to Sandeep Kar, Chief Strategy Officer at Fleet Complete, getting vehicles with ADAS serviced at the proper location is crucial. "Service and maintenance will be dispensed at dealership locations," he says. "It's the OE who has the responsibility. This is very delicate equipment that needs to be handled by technicians who are trained by the OEM."

In the event that there is damage, the repair and maintenance will be expensive. "The insurance industry, the repair and maintenance industry, and the fleet itself should be prepared for those kinds of instances," says Kar. "The cost will typically be higher."

Budgeting for damage

Fleet managers should be aware of these costs and work them into their budgets. It's also a matter of making sure the right type of insurance plan is implemented, so no one is caught short-handed.

But the benefit of having the safety systems outweighs the cost factor of the repair. "It's in the fleet's best interest to service and maintain these vehicles so that they do not get into an accident," advises Kar. "That's both the responsibility of the driver and the fleet manager."

He agrees that driver education is key. "Any new technology has a knowledge curve," says Kar. "Drivers are trained at commercial driving schools on new technologies. OEMs provide vehicle manuals. Education is a big piece of this." 🌀



ADAS equipment must be properly fixed and calibrated in order to function as designed by the OE.