

OEM

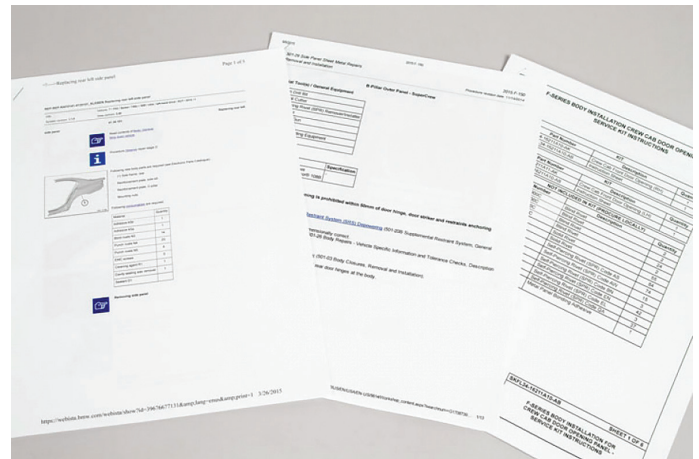
Position Statements

Here at I-CAR NZ, we get questions daily. Many of these questions have to do with what the OEM says on a particular subject. Often, these questions can be quickly answered by an OEM position statement. Let's find out how OEM position statements can help you.

You may ask, what is a position statement? The simple answer is, that the position statement is what is provided by the OEM, stating what the OEM allows or disallows, in general, across their model lineup. Position statements can help provide awareness of a subject and lead you to an informed decision based on data instead of guesses, and with less research in the vehicle service information. Many position statements are available for free from OEMs.

When you visit the I-CAR NZ online site just look under the "Technical Info" heading and you will find the "OEM Position Statement" information. This will show the different OEM statements/bulletins that you can read or links to other information. Check them out even if you currently don't have a question, just to be informed about what information is available. Position statements, along with OEM repair information will allow a complete, safe, and quality repair.

We also often receive inquiries asking: "What does I-CAR recommend?" Many times these questions are in regards to sectioning, straightening, or part replacement/attachment methods. Our first response is always: **"Follow the vehicle maker procedures."**



Always Follow Vehicle Maker Procedures

It is important to note that the procedures provided by the vehicle maker are service specifications, not recommendations. Think of these procedures as no different than service information for transmission or engine repair, where specific procedures must be followed in the proper order.

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Following the OEM procedures is the best way to achieve complete, safe, quality repairs. This could include vehicle-specific repair information or general vehicle maker information. Deciding on the best approach may have a few steps:

1. First and foremost, always refer to the body repair manual for the year/make/model/part in question and OEM-specific published position statements.
2. If the information doesn't exist, the next step would be to refer to OEM-specific general procedures.
3. If there is no vehicle-specific repair information and no OEM-published position statement or general procedure, the last step would be to look for I-CAR-published best practices. Published I-CAR best practices are inter-industry developed and vetted guidelines.

Let's look at a couple of scenarios. First, let's look at sectioning an outer uniside of a 2015 Honda Accord. Honda offers information on complete part replacement of parts of the uniside but does NOT have a specific sectioning cut location. Does this mean you can't section the uniside of this vehicle? Not necessarily... according to a *Honda Body Repair Manual Welding & Sectioning Guideline Revisions Body Repair News* publication. Honda allows for sectioning of outer body panels, provided the part meets all of the guidelines that Honda has included in the document.

So, why not just publish a sectioning procedure? Because Honda cannot account for every type of collision, they allow some leeway for repairs. Additionally, according to the Honda document, while "replacement of steel parts at factory seams and matching the replacement part configuration remain the preferred repair methods...these methods are not always practical nor cost-effective in all body repair situations." Other vehicle makers offer similar positions that don't always appear in the vehicle-specific body repair manual. Other vehicle makers, however, specifically state that a part should not be sectioned unless a procedure is available.

It's imperative to do thorough research for each vehicle being repaired.

Some position statements call attention to information that has been updated and is retroactive, these types of position statements may be the only place to find the information on older models. Many position statements are meant to call attention to the content that already exists in the service information or training. Often, position statements give you high-level awareness to make a particular topic better known. You need to access the repair information and training to find out if there are more details behind the position statement. These details will often call out specific parts, special warnings, or explain how parts or systems are designed to operate.

But what if there isn't a procedure or OEM-specific published position statement or general procedure? Then, and only then, you can look to industry-vetted and I-CAR-published best practices. In this scenario, let's look at a repair vs. replace situation for a structural part that we've identified as ultra-high-strength steel (UHSS). After researching vehicle- and OEM-specific information, yielding no results, the next step would be to research I-CAR published documentation. Because the damaged part in this scenario is UHSS (over 600 MPa) and there is an inter-industry vetted and I-CAR published best practice that says damage to parts over 600 MPa should NOT be straightened, part replacement would be the only option.

Developing the best repair plan requires thorough research that should always start with the vehicle maker's procedures.

Editor note, this article was first published as an I-CAR USA new article and Neil Pritchard from I-CAR NZ would like to add ***"that for Ford, Holden, Honda, Toyota / Lexus and Suzuki you can take out some of the guesswork and ensure you get ALL the relevant information (including position statements) by using the I-CAR NZ TIR service"***



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