

## **AUTO BODY REPAIR COMPLIANCE INFORMATION CENTRE: HELPING SMALL BUSINESS THROUGH OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

The McGuinty government is making it easier for Ontario's small businesses to understand and manage their regulatory responsibilities through a new and innovative pilot project.

The Auto Body Repair Compliance Information Centre (CIC) is an online pilot project designed to increase awareness and understanding of government requirements in the auto body repair industry through outreach and education. The overall goal is to make it easier for small businesses to understand and meet their regulatory responsibilities.

The CIC website was developed with input from the auto body repair industry, including the Collision Industry Action Group (CIAG), the Hamilton District Autobody Repair Association (HARA) and auto body repair shop owners. ServiceOntario worked with regulatory ministries to develop the site as part of the government's commitment to providing easier, more streamlined and better-integrated services for people and businesses across the province. ServiceOntario is the fast and convenient place to obtain government information and services, online, in person and over the phone.

With more than 2,800 shops, most of which employ fewer than five workers, the auto body repair industry is representative of many of Ontario's small business owners. However, to protect public safety, the industry is subject to extensive regulation from provincial, municipal and federal governments. Based on discussions with stakeholders, the industry has expressed a desire to work with government to improve compliance performance, beginning with a better understanding and awareness of its regulatory responsibilities.

### **Improving Outreach and Education**

The CIC will provide regulatory information in a whole new way. Traditionally, information has been provided in a government-focused format, requiring multiple searches on individual ministry websites. The CIC aims to provide "one-stop shopping" for shop owners by compiling regulatory requirements from multiple ministries in an organized, business-friendly format. The website, at [www.serviceontario.ca/autobody](http://www.serviceontario.ca/autobody), was created in conjunction with stakeholders from the auto body repair industry, with an emphasis on making it user-friendly and easy to understand. The CIC is also available at [www.serviceontario.ca](http://www.serviceontario.ca), a government site dedicated to making it easier for Ontarians to do business with the province by providing information and services online, in person and over the phone.

## **Changing the Way We Do Business**

The Auto Body Repair Compliance Information Centre (CIC) is one part of a broader modernization strategy to improve and modernize the government's regulatory activities in Ontario. The other components of the modernization plan include:

- The Regulatory Modernization Act, 2006, introduced in February 2006, that would, if passed, play a major role in improving public protection by allowing ministries to make more efficient use of government resources, while also reducing duplication in compliance activities
- A performance-based strategy that would recognize companies with exceptional records of compliance – while targeting businesses that consistently and repeatedly contravene Ontario's laws.

## **Consultation**

The overall plan was developed as a result of consultation with a number of stakeholders, including the Collision Industry Action Group (CIAG), Hamilton District Autobody Repair Association (HARA), small business owners and regulatory ministries. Our stakeholders consistently identified common areas for improvement including:

- The need for a single portal of information for regulatory requirements
- Creating a website that is easy to navigate and provides clear information on legislation specifically applicable to the auto body repair industry
- The development of a combined information centre that includes provincial, federal and municipal regulatory requirements
- Focusing enforcement efforts where they most matter, to better protect the public and promote a level playing field for compliant businesses.

## **Next Steps**

The CIC is an ongoing project that will be continually developed and refined to even better reflect the operations of an auto body shop owner. Future plans include working to incorporate regulatory requirements from municipal and federal government partners, to truly represent a “one-stop shop” for business.

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