

Vehicle Rebuilder's Guide

2025 EDITION



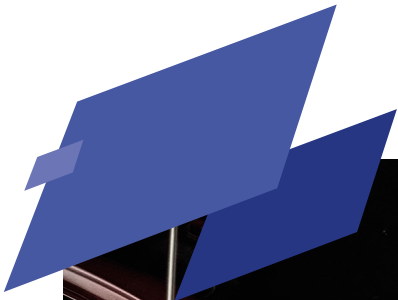


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Introduction

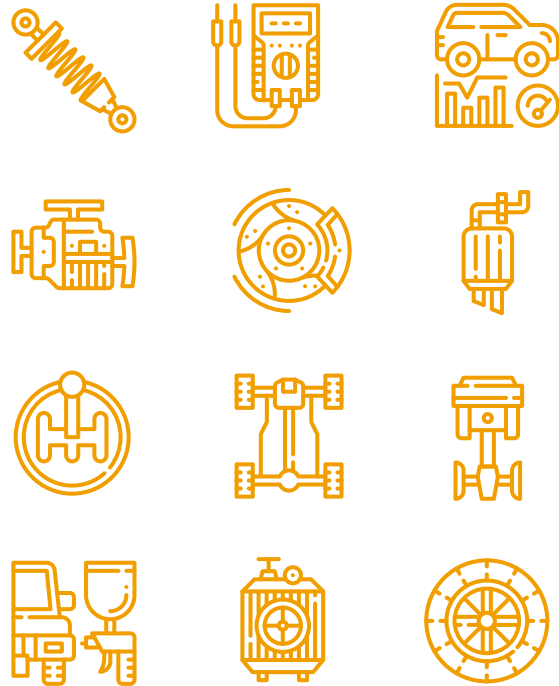
This guide, put together by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), aims to accompany you at each step in the vehicle rebuilding process, so that you can rebuild the vehicle safely and in compliance with the regulations in effect. Following this procedure will also help you compile a rebuilding record that includes all of the required documentation, which will make the technical appraisal easier.



Requirements set out in the *Regulation respecting safety standards for road vehicles*

- An accident-damaged road vehicle must be repaired in such a way as to provide the occupants protection that is comparable to the protection existing when the vehicle was manufactured.
- The damaged structural parts must be repaired and reassembled using methods that do not change the mechanical or physical properties of the materials and in compliance with the manufacturer's standards.
- The assembly points of the body shall be in the places determined by the manufacturer in the vehicle repair instructions.
- Those assembly points must be accessible and clearly visible when the technical appraisal is carried out. If the assembly points are inside the structure and not clearly visible during the technical appraisal, photos demonstrating the work done must also be provided.

Given the complexity of modern vehicle manufacturing, manufacturers develop repair methods specific to each vehicle. That way, they can ensure that the repaired vehicle is as structurally sound as the original. Only the repair method tested by the manufacturer will ensure that the vehicle provides the same protection in the event of another accident. It is in your best interest as a rebuilder to develop your skills, obtain the proper equipment and carefully choose the vehicles to rebuild.



Developing skills

Vehicles have evolved tremendously in recent years. Repairing vehicles has become more and more complex and requires continuous learning. We highly recommend that you undergo training every year to keep your repair techniques up to date.

Equipment

You will need the proper equipment to repair accident-damaged vehicles. You should expect to invest tens of thousands of dollars in equipment, including a spot welder that meets manufacturers' welding specifications (time, amperage, clamping force).



Choosing a vehicle to rebuild

Vehicle reconstruction requirements vary widely from one manufacturer to another. For example, some manufacturers may allow a type of welding that others prohibit. This is why it is important to carefully read the repair instructions. The rebuilder can, for example, verify whether cold straightening is authorized or if the entire component must be replaced because the manufacturer prohibits its repair. Generally, manufacturers authorize the repair and straightening of low-strength steel components. However, the rebuilder must always check the instructions that are available for each component. Each vehicle has unique and specific repair restrictions; there are no universal guidelines. These restrictions are necessary to ensure that the repaired vehicle is just as safe as it was prior to the accident.

When you are selecting an accident-damaged vehicle to rebuild, you must have access to the estimate of damages. This estimate must be included in the rebuilding record and show the extent of damage and work to be done.

Before purchasing a vehicle to rebuild, it is essential to take the vehicle manufacturer's repair methods into consideration. For example, if you wish to obtain a vehicle for which the instructions require assembly using a spot welder, only this type of equipment can be used to repair the vehicle. If you do not have this type of welder, you must subcontract a business that owns this type of equipment to carry out the repairs. Repair costs will therefore not be the same.

Currently, three situations exist regarding the availability of repair instructions:

1. The repair instructions are publicly available

The rebuilder has access to the repair instructions on the manufacturer's website or on reference websites. It is important to carefully read and understand the manufacturer's repair instructions. The repairs must be done respecting the requirements indicated in the instructions, especially with regard to joint placement and assembly methods. During the technical appraisal, the documents used and photographs of all the repaired joints must be submitted.

2. The repair instructions are only made available to certified shops

Structural repairs must be done at a shop that has been certified by the manufacturer. During the technical appraisal, you will have to provide the invoice from the certified shop confirming that the repairs were made in accordance with the manufacturer's standards, in addition to the details of the repairs made as well as photographs of all the repaired joints.

3. No repair instructions exist (exceptional situation)

When a manufacturer does not publish any repair instructions, any damaged structural parts must be replaced in their entirety and assembled exactly as originally manufactured. During the technical appraisal, photographs of all the joints must be presented and the assembly methods must be specified.

IMPORTANT

The manufacturer's instructions must always be followed to the letter. Repairs that do not meet the manufacturer's requirements will be refused, and the vehicle will retain its status of "severely damaged".

Rebuilding record

To make the rebuilding record easier to analyze, the rebuilder must provide as much information as possible regarding the repairs carried out on the vehicle. It may therefore be necessary to take a good number of photos to allow the inspection agent to understand each step of the rebuilding and compare the repairs with the manufacturer's instructions. The inspection agent can then be sure that the repairs are compliant.

TO SUM UP



At this step, rebuilders must print the [Demande de certification de véhicule reconstruit](#) (DCVR) form (in French only) on 8 ½ x 14 paper from the SAAQ's website. Printing from the SAAQ's website ensures you have the most recent version of this form. Previous versions of the form will not be accepted during the technical appraisal.

The rebuilder must also carefully read the instructions on the DCVR form. To begin, you must identify the owner and the rebuilder, then enter information regarding the vehicle and insurer. You must gather and keep all supporting documents for which proof is required. This proof will be requested during the technical appraisal.

Receiving the vehicle

Upon receiving the vehicle, you must take photos **before** starting any repairs. These photos, **and all photos that are taken for the rebuilding record**, must be in colour, and a sign with the date and the last eight characters of the vehicle identification number (VIN) (all handwritten) must be clearly visible in each photo. You must also ensure that the lighting and angle of each photo allow the extent of damage to be seen. It is important to pay extra attention when photographing dark-coloured vehicles, which require brighter lighting.

Example of a properly identified photo:



TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- take properly identified photos clearly showing the four sides of the vehicle;
- take more specific photos (with proper identification) of the damaged areas;
- ensure that the sign displaying the date and VIN does not hide any part of the vehicle that may be damaged.



Preparing for rebuilding

You must take into account all the repairs mentioned in the estimate of damages and then compare the estimate with the actual damage to the vehicle.

You must obtain the manufacturer's most recent repair instructions for all elements that require repair, read the instructions and be sure to understand them before starting the repairs.

NOTE

Manufacturers are using increasingly resistant steel to manufacture vehicles. As a result, it is increasingly common for manufacturers to prohibit the repair of certain parts, even of the entire vehicle. In such cases, the parts must be replaced, even if you believe that they can be repaired.

Equipment

You must ensure that you have all the necessary equipment to repair and assemble the vehicle and its parts in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions. The necessary equipment may include:

- a straightening bench with attachments designed for the model of vehicle being repaired;
- an inverter-type spot welder;
- a pulse MIG/MAG welder for brazing and for aluminum;
- MIG/MAG welding wire for high-strength steel;
- a riveter for self-piercing rivets;
- a specialized tool to remove old rivets;
- a two-part adhesive applicator;
- rust-proofing spray (apply after appraisal only);
- assembly parts specified by the manufacturer (rivets, bolts, plates, reinforcements, etc.).

Disassembly

You must disassemble the vehicle to have access to the structure.

When disassembling the vehicle, if you notice that parts in the estimate of damages **are not damaged**, you must take enough photos to demonstrate their condition during the technical appraisal. You must also write the mention “tel quel” (“as is”) in the appropriate section of the DCVR form, indicating that no repairs have been carried out.

If some parts labeled as “à remplacer” (to be replaced) in the estimate of damages **can be repaired** while respecting the manufacturer’s instructions, you must take enough photos to be able to demonstrate their repairable condition during the technical appraisal. You must also write “réparé” (repaired) in the appropriate section of the DCVR form.

IMPORTANT

Even though a high-strength steel part may seem repairable, most manufacturers only authorize straightening in the case of slight bends, whereas others prohibit any repairs whatsoever. Kinked parts must never be straightened.

If you note any additional damage or damage that was not visible before the disassembly, you must take enough photos to enable you to show the inspection agent the extent of the damage and the repair techniques used during the technical appraisal.

You are responsible for providing sufficient supporting documents in order for the inspection agent to be able to make an informed decision. The inspection agent will refuse any vehicles that have not been repaired in compliance with the manufacturer’s instructions or for which they are unable to guarantee that the manufacturer’s standards have been respected.

Once the vehicle has been disassembled, you must take properly identified photos to demonstrate the condition and extent of any damage that was not visible prior to disassembly. Next, you must order the necessary parts for the repair. For each major part mentioned in the DCVR form, you must fill out the appropriate sections and keep the original receipts. These receipts must be presented during the technical appraisal.

TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- compare the estimate of damages with the actual damage to the vehicle;
- obtain the relevant repair instructions for the vehicle they wish to repair and thoroughly understand the instructions;
- make sure to have the necessary equipment to ensure that the rebuilding is compliant;
- start the disassembly and make sure to take properly identified photos of the damaged areas;
- understand that a repaired part that is still damaged will be refused during the technical appraisal.

Rebuilding the vehicle

Straightening

Some manufacturers require attachment systems for the straightening bench that are specific to each model of vehicle. Other manufacturers completely prohibit performing straightening procedures on their vehicles. Each case is unique, and the rebuilder must check and closely follow the repair instructions.

When straightening is authorized by the manufacturer, you can then install the vehicle on the straightening bench and secure it according to recommendations. You must then measure the deformations by comparing them with the measurement charts. You can then straighten the vehicle, in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements, and repair the deformations while ensuring that you obtain measurements within the manufacturer's tolerance ranges.

Also at this step, you must take photos of the work done on the straightening bench in order to demonstrate that the vehicle has been properly straightened.

TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- ensure that the vehicle can be straightened according to the manufacturer's standards;
- use the proper equipment to straighten the vehicle;
- take properly identified photos during the straightening if the straightening is allowed and was necessary.



Replacing parts and assembling the vehicle

If some parts could not be repaired in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions, they must be replaced.

In that case, you must use the assembly technique recommended by the manufacturer. The assembly points must be in the places determined by the manufacturer, based on the quantities allowed for, and must be assembled using the appropriate method (welding, rivets, adhesive, etc.).

You must take properly identified photos at each stage of replacing the parts so that the inspection agent can confirm that this step was carried out in accordance with the instructions.

TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- replace parts that cannot be repaired;
- take adequately identified photos of the repairs;
- reassemble the parts in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- provide the following information with regard to the assembly work:
 - welding certificate — one certificate per type of welding (consult [Bulletin n° 12 : Réparations et modifications des structures de véhicules](#) [in French only]),
 - receipts and photos of the assembly parts (rivets, screws, etc.),
 - receipts and photos of assembly products (adhesive, primer, etc.);
- take photos of the work done.

Finishing

You must finish installing bolted parts and paint the vehicle. No rubberized coating or rustproofing compound can be applied **prior** to the technical appraisal, as these substances may interfere with the inspection agent's work. In such a situation, the inspection agent will require the vehicle to be cleaned off. Once the appraisal is complete, the rustproofing compound must be applied in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions.

TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- assemble and paint the vehicle;
- apply rubberized coating and rustproofing compound **only after the technical appraisal has been carried out.**



Safety equipment (air bags, seat belts, modules, etc.)

All safety equipment must be replaced according to the manufacturer's specifications. In most cases, the following equipment must also be replaced in order to meet requirements:

- the sensor in the accident area;
- the clock spring, when the air bag on the driver's side has been deployed;
- the two parts of the seat belt on a seat occupied by a passenger during an impact where an air bag or a pretensioner has been deployed.

Currently, the inspection agent only verifies the replacement of the air bags, seat belts with pretensioners, and the command module, although manufacturers may have additional requirements.

Recycled air bags from the recycling program approved by the SAAQ may be used. At this time, air bags from the driver's side and passenger side as well as seat air bags can be recycled through the program.

Other air bags must be new, in compliance with regulations.

For the command module, you have three options:

- Have it replaced by a new module.
- Have the dealership reprogram the vehicle's original module, as long as its manufacturer authorizes the deletion of the codes generated when the air bag deployed. Important: scanning the error codes does not constitute a reprogramming.
- Have the vehicle's original module reprogrammed by a business recognized by the SAAQ.

You must not only fill out the appropriate sections of the DCVR form with regard to air bags and pretensioners, but also include the serial number or the VIN of their original vehicle if they are used. Receipts for these parts must be submitted at the time of the technical appraisal.



TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- fill out the appropriate boxes of the DCVR form;
- take photos of the identifiers appearing on the air bags and pretensioners;
- replace the vehicle's equipment.

Wheel alignment

A certificate confirming that the wheel alignment meets the manufacturer's standards must be included in the rebuilding record. This certificate must include the alignment report, which must demonstrate that the wheel alignment complies with the manufacturer's specifications. It must also be dated and signed by the mechanic who carried out the alignment and include the following information:

- the vehicle's year, make and model;
- the VIN;
- the manufacturer's standards;
- the wheel alignment results.

This information must not be handwritten, apart from the signature.

The alignment results must be within the measurement ranges specified by the manufacturer; otherwise, the report will be refused.

TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders must:

- provide a report demonstrating that the wheel alignment is compliant.

Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS)

Recalibration of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) is required when a vehicle equipped with these systems is damaged, and the damage or repairs may have affected them. Two related documents are required in the rebuilding record:

1. The report from the diagnostic tool, which must demonstrate that the systems have been successfully recalibrated and must include the following information:
 - the date and time of recalibration;
 - the year, make, model, serial number and odometer reading of the vehicle;
 - a list of the systems with which the vehicle is equipped and those that were recalibrated;
 - the results of the recalibration.
2. The recalibration invoice, which must indicate:
 - the name and address of the repair shop that recalibrated the vehicle's systems;
 - the year, make, model and serial number of the vehicle worked on;
 - the nature of the work done;
 - the date on which the work was done;
 - the signature of the technician who recalibrated the vehicle's systems.

All of the vehicle's electronic systems must be functional and not show any error codes during a complete scan. Even if no indicator lights are lit up on the dashboard, this does not mean that all systems are functional and error-free.

Examples of situations where recalibration is required:

- A sensor is disassembled to replace another part.
- A sensor is replaced.
- The structure is straightened in the area of the sensor.
- The windshield is replaced.

Refer to the manufacturer's instructions to find out in which situations a recalibration is required.

If a vehicle requires a dynamic recalibration on the road, you must go to a service outlet to obtain a temporary 12-hour registration certificate for the vehicle.

IMPORTANT

Inadequate calibration of the advanced driver assistance system will affect the vehicle's behaviour and the safety of its use.

TO SUM UP

At this step, rebuilders **must**:

- scan the vehicle and recalibrate the advanced driver assistance systems;
- obtain a diagnostic report and the recalibration invoice.

Undergoing the technical appraisal and obtaining “rebuilt” status

Once these steps have been completed, you can make an appointment for the technical appraisal with a road vehicle inspection agent that offers this service.

Before the appointment, you must ensure that your rebuilding record contains all necessary elements and that you have filled out the DCVR form.



Vehicle Rebuilder's Guide



Checklist*

This checklist will help you ensure that you have followed each step of the vehicle rebuilding process. That way, you can safely rebuild the vehicle while respecting the regulations in effect. Respecting this procedure will also help you compile a rebuilding record with all the necessary elements to make the technical appraisal easier and speed up the processing of your file.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE REBUILT VEHICLE

Year	Make	Model
Vehicle identification number (VIN)		

PREPARATION

• Choosing a vehicle to rebuild

- I have checked whether the repair instructions for the vehicle I wish to rebuild are available, and I have prepared for the rebuilding accordingly.
- I have checked that the necessary parts are available for the rebuilding.

REBUILDING

• Receiving the vehicle

- I have taken properly identified **photos** of all four sides of the vehicle.
- I have taken more specific **photos** (with proper identification) of all the vehicle's damaged areas and of all other parts requiring further information for the analysis of the record.

• Preparing to rebuild

- I have obtained the necessary repair instructions.
- I have printed and carefully read the [Demande de certification d'un véhicule reconstruit](#) (DCVR) form (8 ½ x 14 inch format) and I understand all of its instructions and requirements.
- I made sure to compile and keep all necessary supporting documentation for the rebuilding record.

• Equipment

- I have the proper equipment to repair the vehicle.

PHOTOS:



A sign with the date and the last 8 characters of the vehicle's VIN must appear in each photo. A sheet with this handwritten information must be clearly visible near the photographed part (see an example of an adequately identified photo on page 8 of the *Vehicle Rebuilder's Guide*).

- **Disassembly**

- I have taken apart the vehicle while taking **photos** of **all** damaged parts on the vehicle in order to demonstrate the extent of damage to the inspection agent during the technical appraisal.

- **Rebuilding the vehicle**

- I have repaired the vehicle while following the manufacturer's instructions to the letter.
- I understand that I am responsible for providing sufficient supporting documentation for the inspection agent to be able to make an informed decision; otherwise, the repairs may be refused.

- **Straightening**

- I have ensured that vehicle straightening is permitted in the repair instructions.
- I have used the proper techniques and equipment to straighten the vehicle (when permitted).

- **Replacing parts**

- I have used the assembly technique required by the manufacturer for replacing parts.
- I have ensured that the assembly points are in the places determined by the manufacturer, based on the quantities allowed for, and that they are assembled using the appropriate method (welding, rivets, adhesive, etc.).
- I have completed the welding certificate for each welded joint.

- **Finishing**

- I have ensured that **no** accessible joints have been covered with a rubberized coating or rustproofing compound prior to the technical appraisal. These substances **must** be applied after the appraisal.
- I have taken **photos** showing the joints **before** finishing a hidden joint.

- **Safety equipment**

- I have replaced all safety equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- I have noted and taken photos of the identifiers on the air bags and pretensioners requiring replacement.
- I have kept all receipts for the replaced safety equipment.

- **Wheel alignment**

- I have verified the alignment of the vehicle's wheels based on the manufacturer's specifications, while ensuring that the information required by the SAAQ appears on the alignment report.

- **Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS)**

- I have had the advanced driver assistance systems properly recalibrated and obtained the report from the diagnostic tool **and** the recalibration invoice containing all the information required by the SAAQ.

APPRAISAL

- **Technical appraisal and obtaining "rebuilt" status**

- I have reviewed the list of **all** documents necessary for the technical appraisal and ensured that the vehicle has been rebuilt in accordance with the manufacturer's standards.

*Document available at saaq.gouv.qc.ca/rebuilder.



**Société de l'assurance
automobile**

Québec 

Avec vous,
au cœur de votre sécurité