

# IN-HOUSE FLEET MAINTENANCE

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What it takes to get your shop ready.



**Moving your fleet maintenance in-house can potentially bring some big benefits for your company, like lowered costs and faster turnaround.** After all, you have your own best interests in mind. Every decision in the shop—from prioritizing collision repairs to the preventive maintenance schedule—can serve your company. And whether you're still in the evaluation mode or are ready to get started, it's smart to know what you're getting into. To help you prepare, this ebook will explore what you'll need to consider when it comes to:

- **Shop capacity**
- **Training and staffing**
- **Equipment and parts**



# Volume Capacity

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This is one of the first things you'll need to assess. When you accurately judge how much work you'll be able to take on in your shop, you'll have a good idea of just how much your facility will need to grow. If you're already handling some jobs, are you equipped to take on double the amount (or more)?

**Let's look at what you'll need to evaluate.**

## Bay Spaces

For starters, take stock of how many bays you have, and then think about how many jobs those bays can realistically process in a day or week. Will you need to add more to handle the volume of work required from your fleet? If so, how will you add those bays? You may be able to take advantage of unused floor space or reconfigure and squeeze more in. Or you might need to think about new construction. If you're on the fence about taking more maintenance in-house, estimates for the cost of adding on will help you realistically weigh expenses against potential savings.

## What Can the Lifts in Those Bays Handle?

The next step is to assess what kinds of jobs you're currently equipped to handle. Do you have the right kinds of lifts in the available spaces? Looking at numbers from previous months or years, estimate how often you'll need to work on each type of vehicle in your fleet. If you'll be taking heavy duty repairs in-house, do you have lifts and frame machines that will be able to safely heft and pull those vehicles?

If you're currently relying on creepers for mechanical work on larger trucks, it's wise to invest in some heavy duty lifts. Rolling under a vehicle brings a host of safety risks, from burns to inadequate lighting. And without the proper pulling equipment, you won't be able to get those dents back in shape.

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## Spotlight: Mobile Column Lifts

Looking to lift a lot in a little space? [Rotary Lift's Mach Series Mobile Columns](#) are a great option. Columns can be stored in one spot and then quickly and easily rolled into place when they're needed. And techs can control them from any column, making it a snap to safely lift the trucks in your fleet.

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# Technicians and Trainings



When you handle fleet repairs in-house, you take on the responsibility of having the right staff and making sure they have the proper training.

**Here's what to consider.**



## The Right Techs for the Job

Just like a commercial shop has to hire the right personnel to handle the needs of their customers, you'll be responsible for finding the right mix of technicians for your shop. Your facility will likely see many different types of repairs and maintenance, so your employees will need to be diverse too. For example, you'll need someone on the team who is comfortable handling newer diagnostic tools, techs who know the ins and outs of HD collision repair, and a group ready and willing to handle more routine tasks like oil changes. The goal is to find the combination that will keep your team challenged but not overwhelmed. And with the current technician shortage, you may not be able to cherry pick a ready-made team out of the available candidates. That leads to our next point.

## Training

When you handle fleet maintenance in-house, it's smart to make training a part of your regular budget. When you do, your techs will be prepared to keep up with the latest tools and techniques. Plus, when you know this is an expected cost, you won't have to spin your wheels finding the one technician who already has the skills you need. If you look for smart candidates with a great work ethic and then train them well, you'll be able to build a solid team.

### For training, look to:

- Local schools that offer continuing education classes
- Dealer training options in your area
- National professional training associations
- Collision repair courses like those offered through [Chief University](#)

# Tools and Parts Inventory

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Along with making sure you have the right lifts for the job, you'll also need to stock up on the right tools and create a system for keeping the necessary parts on hand.

## Getting the Right Tools

You want your technicians to be able to repair the vehicles in your fleet quickly and correctly. To do that, you need to set them up with the proper tools. Along with diagnostic machines and basic repair tools, also consider any specialty equipment. For example, if you have refrigerated trucks in your fleet, will you be looking to your team to handle those repairs? There are likely specific items you'll need. Take stock of what you have and then make plans to round out your setup with anything that's missing.

From a collision repair perspective, make sure you have the right heavy duty equipment for the job. **You'll need:**

- Heavy duty measuring equipment
- Frame Racks that can stand up to the toughest jobs
- Essentials like [welders](#), an [HD rivet gun](#) and a [debonding unit](#)

## Keeping Parts On Hand

In some ways, in-house operations need to act as their own commercial shops. That means keeping an inventory of the parts your "customers" will need, so they don't have to wait around while you order specific parts for each individual job. Invest money in inventory upfront and you'll have the necessary pieces ready when you need them. You'll also need a system or software to help you track your inventory so you're always staying one step ahead of the requirements of your fleet.

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## Don't Forget: Logistics

Along with finding a way to track your parts, also find a system to track your fleet. Software programs built specifically for this task help you keep tabs on costs, uptime and more.

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## The In-House Advantage

Managing fleet maintenance inside your own walls isn't a small task, but it can have big rewards. After all, you understand the needs of your company better than anyone. When you take responsibility for this aspect of your business, you have the opportunity to make sure it's handled in the best way possible.

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**Need a hand making sure your shop is up to the task?**

**Get in touch with:**

[Rotary Lift](#) for help getting the right lifts in your shop

[Chief Automotive](#) for information about heavy duty collision repair

