

# Test your knowledge

By Mike Anderson

I'd like to ask some specific questions about what's included in the repair of a BMW 3 Series convertible. I hope that shop estimators, technicians, and owners will learn from this and, hopefully, write a better estimate.

The labor time per the December 2000 *European Mitchell Collision Estimating Guide* for installing a right quarter panel on a 1992-1999 BMW 3 Series convertible is 16.5 hours. Are the following operations included (see the end of this column for answers):



Anderson

1. Drilling out the spot welds.
  2. Cleaning up undercoating from the outer wheelhouse where the quarter panel attaches.
  3. Cleaning up caulking or factory seamsealer from around the taillight opening on the rear body panel where the quarter panel attaches.
  4. Cleaning body Schultz (gravel guard) off the rocker panel where the quarter panel welds in.
  5. Removing the wheel for access to drill out spot welds and install the new quarter panel.
  6. Removing the convertible top.
  7. Protecting the interior during the welding process.
  8. Wrapping up the leather interior to protect it while it is stored out of the vehicle.
  9. Drilling the hole for the antenna.
  10. Replacing sound deadeners.
- In addition to these body labor operations, ask yourself if you have

to do the following:

1. Paint the rear body panel, rear trunk floor extension, inner quarter panel, inner sail panel/roof panel, inner or exterior rocker panel, or roof aperture after welding in the quarter panel?
2. Paint the roof and opposite quarter panel, or does the quarter panel have a natural breaking point?
3. Remove existing gravel guard on the rocker panel and re-gravel guard the entire rocker panel?
4. Clean off existing gravel guard?
5. Prepare the weld damage for paint beyond 150 grit sanding (which is all the Mitchell labor install time pays to finish off)?

Several other items are not included in the labor operation of installing a quarter panel. Please take time to review the P-pages so you don't leave money on the table.

Also, the Automotive Service Association has a great guide that compares all of the not-included items for ADP, CCC, and Mitchell. To order, call (800) 272-7467.

If you disagree with a labor time in the Mitchell manual, fill out a reader's comment card with a brief explanation of why you feel the time should be changed. Over the past 12 years, I've submitted several suggestions to Mitchell, and the labor times have increased.

Instead of complaining, document your reasons and submit them. You can make a difference.

If you have questions, comments, or would like to see a particular issue addressed in a future column, e-mail me at wagonworkshop@aol.com or fax me at (703) 549-2658. **H&D**

Mike Anderson manages Wagon-work Body Shop in Alexandria, Va.

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Answers: 1. Yes. 2. No. Removal of undercoating, grease, body wax, or other materials that would interfere with the operation are not included. 3. Yes. However, the price of the seam sealer or caulking materials is not included. 4. No (for the same reason as number 2). 5. No. 6. No. Only loosening the convertible top is included. 7. No. 8. No. Though removing the interior is included, protecting these panels to prevent damage—i.e., wrapping them in bubble wrap—is not included. 9. No. Removing the antenna for access is not included either. 10. No.