

The lowdown on Paintless Dent Repair

Paintless Dent Repair techniques are revolutionising the speed, cost and ease with which car dents and dings can be fixed. But how does the end result stack up against more traditional panel beating techniques? And should you recommend it to your clients?

By Chad Vigar, Head of Claims Operations



While Paintless Dent Repair (PDR) is not a new phenomenon – Australian car dealers have used the technology for more than a decade to do repairs that are virtually untraceable – it has recently gained a lot more widespread traction. And it's not difficult to see why.

Compared to traditional repair methods, PDR leaves the vehicle's body as close to its original manufacturing condition as possible. Using fluorescent lighting or a light-reflection board, the repairer uses the PDR reading instrument as a guide with which to push dents out with metal rods and body picks from the inside of the damaged panel to their former position. In hard to reach places, special adhesives and small studs are sometimes used to pull the dents out from the outside of the panel.

An art rather than a science, the technique requires considerable finesse on the part of the repairer. But in the hands of a specialised technician the end result is as close as possible to the car's original manufactured state given it doesn't disturb the original paintwork.

The great thing about PDR is that it's a quick and affordable repair method that offers superior results in many cases to traditional panel beating. Owners of damaged vehicles can take their car to an experienced PDR technician and have small damage fixed while they meet a friend for coffee.

PDR repairs are very hard to pick because the original paintwork remains intact. That's why PDR is rapidly making traditional repair methods – like filling, sanding and repainting – a thing of the past for eliminating uncomplicated dings, dents, hail damage and other body part kinks. And the technique can be used to repair both aluminium and steel panels.

A question people often ask me is can PDR be used to fix large dents? The answer to that is 'yes'. But there is a catch. PDR can only be used to repair panel damage where the paint has not been broken or cracked and in good condition. In addition, the panel can't have had a major repair previously and the dent can't be too close to the edge.

So what are the benefits? Apart from the substantial cost and significant time savings, other benefits include:

- Retaining the vehicle's original paintwork and body panels
- Ability to repair both big and small dents
- The technique is recommended by manufacturers
- The repair method is environmentally friendly because the amount of paint and associated pollutants is kept to a minimum or even eliminated.

Do insurers recommend the use of PDR? Most definitely 'yes'. The only thing that I don't get is why it's taken so long for this repair method to take off in non-motoring circles.

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