

AAA: Vehicle Repairs Cost Double for High Tech Safety Features

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Categories : [Transportation](#)

Tagged as : [AAA Northeast 2018](#), [Vehicle Repair Costs](#)

Date : October 25, 2018

Your new car's high-tech safety features, such as blind spot monitoring, automatic emergency braking and lane departure warning, may be designed to save your life in crashes, but not your money when it comes to repairs.

— [an announcement](#) from the American Automobile Association and [AAA Northeast](#)

Vehicles equipped with advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) can cost twice as much to repair after a collision because of expensive sensors and calibration requirements, a new AAA Automotive Engineering study reports.

In fact, minor roadway incidents damaging the technology behind a vehicle's windshield, bumpers and side mirrors can add up to \$3,000 in extra costs.

Many new cars, including base models, now feature high-tech systems that do indeed offer many safety

benefits. But minor damage will inevitably affect your pocketbook because components may have to be replaced and re-calibrated, said Fran Mayko, AAA Northeast spokeswoman.

“It’s critical drivers understand what their vehicle features, how the technology performs and how much it could cost to repair should something happen, before signing on the dotted line,” she added.

To understand repair costs for sophisticated systems that “see” a driver’s roadway world, AAA evaluated three top-selling models — a small sport utility vehicle, a medium sedan and a full-size pickup truck — equipped with the latest safety technology.

The study found repair bills for a minor front or rear collision on such vehicles can run as high as \$5,300, nearly two and a half times the repair cost for a vehicle without these safety systems.

For example, it’s not unusual for windshields to get chipped or cracked during the vehicle’s life. In a new car with advanced safety features, the camera is positioned behind the windshield and this common repair issue can run about \$1,500 — as much as three times the cost to replace the windshield on cars without high-tech features, the study reports.

The higher costs are due camera recalibration requirements and windshield replacement with factory glass that meets special standards for optical clarity, per the auto manufacturer.

Radar, cameras and ultrasonic sensors in or behind front and rear bumpers or bodywork or built into side mirrors can be easily damaged by simply pulling out of garages, sideswiping mailboxes or inadvertently bumping into stationery objects.

As part of the research, AAA estimated repair costs on typical high-tech repair expenses, which would be over routine bodywork after a collision. (Variables such as make and model, sensor type and location, and repair facilities can affect costs.):

- Front radar sensors for automatic emergency braking and adaptive cruise control systems: \$900 to \$1,300;
- Rear radar sensors for blind spot monitoring and rear cross traffic alert systems: \$850 to \$2,050;
- Front camera sensors for automatic emergency braking, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning and lane keeping systems: \$850 to \$1,900 (Estimate doesn’t the cost of windshield replacement);
- Front or side mirror or rear camera sensors for around-view systems: \$500 to \$1,100; and
- Front or rear ultrasonic sensors for parking assist systems: \$500 to \$1,300.

To help manage repair expenses, AAA recommends drivers:

- Realize most trained auto technicians can replace high-tech sensors but special training, tools and

knowledge are needed to restore systems to proper calibration and operation;

- Verify whether the repair facility can properly repair and calibrate the damaged systems and request proof once the work is completed;
- Educate themselves about vehicle's advanced safety capabilities. Understand how these systems work and how much repairs may cost, if damaged.
- Review your insurance policy regularly to ensure you have manageable deductibles to minimize out-of-pocket expenses and have appropriate coverage to cover repair costs