

The next steps for the CASIS agreement: Vehicle Security Information access

On May 1, 2010, a major development in the Canadian automotive aftermarket was realized. That was the day when all of the 18 new car manufacturing companies in Canada opened up their technical information web sites to the aftermarket. Prior to then, with some manufacturers, only dealership personnel could access certain repair information, tools and training, to work on certain models of cars and light trucks.

This major event, a huge improvement for aftermarket technicians, was only made possible because the involved groups, the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers of Canada, and the National Automotive Trades Association of Canada, along with the Automotive Industries Association of Canada, recognized the value of co-operative agreements.

But one thing was still missing, and recognized as missing: the Vehicle Security Information component. Yes, we had agreed to share information, but no car company was eager to share security information with persons that had not been approved or vetted to obtain that information. That all made sense - no manufacturer wants to supply immobilizer reset codes or key codes to a car thief.

Other issues specific to Canada were anticipated. For instance, unlike the United States, where the national Locksmith association was partnered with and who handles the registry for the project, Canada has no similar organization. As well, privacy rules and criminal record check processes are significantly different in the United States than in Canada.

How then do we design a system that allows legitimate aftermarket repairers to access this security information while maintaining the integrity and security of the data for the benefit of the manufacturer and the customer?

In the United States, through the NASTF (National Automotive Service Task Force), with the Associated Locksmiths of America (ALOA) as an administrator, most of the car manufacturers participate in a program to provide security information to the aftermarket. The program in the U.S. is called the SDRM (Secure Data Release Model). The American model has advantages for Canadian car companies as well. A number of Canadian car manufacturers already use their U.S. website for Canadian repair information access. The relationship between NASTF and their Canadian counterparts is very positive. The system includes a component whereby the Insurance Bureau of Canada is able to access data from the National Insurance Crime Bureau's computer that is linked-in to the U.S. SDRM database.

A partnership was formed to amend the U.S. model to include access from Canada, while respecting privacy issues. In Canada the process for an aftermarket technician to obtain vehicle security data is called **Vehicle Security Professional**. The program is based on, and utilizes the U.S. model.

What is the Vehicle Security Professional program (VSP)?

The VSP program is a data exchange system conceived and designed cooperatively by automakers, the independent auto repair community in co-operation with the insurance and law-enforcement communities. It allows the aftermarket to access security-sensitive information related to automobiles (i.e. key codes, immobilizer reset information and similar types of information). The VSP program allows access to security-related information while protecting the safety and security of consumers and the integrity of automobile security systems.

Security Information gaps that the VSP program addresses

Up until the development of the VSP program, aftermarket service providers were unable to provide a limited number of services that required the use of security-related information. In some instances, information and/or special tools required to perform certain repairs like immobilizer reset functions were protected by automaker security policies. Over the past several years, incidence of these types of repairs has increased due to proliferation of advanced security technology on large populations of mid-priced vehicles.

How the VSP program resolves security information gaps

Currently, technical information is publicly available via the web on a subscription basis. Until the advent of the VSP program, security-related information was blocked from most parties except dealership personnel because there was no way to verify the security credentials of the requestor. The VSP program creates a Registry of automotive service/security professionals who have cleared a background check process. Automaker website subscribers who want to use security-related information can apply to join the Registry. Security-related transactions are validated against the Registry and are fulfilled if the requestor's security credential is in good standing.

How will Security-Related Information access work in Canada?

After applying for and obtaining a Vehicle Security Professional identification number, a Vehicle Security Professional (VSP) can log onto automaker service information websites that they subscribe to and access security-related service information. The registered VSP is only allowed to access this information at the request of a customer and is required to follow strict positive identification standards to ensure that the requestor has the authority to make the request. Once the VSP has established proof of ownership of the vehicle by matching name on the driver's license with the vehicle registration and registration with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), a VSP is authorized to access information on behalf of a customer. When using the VSP program, the VSP identification number is validated against the Registry on every transaction and the transaction is posted with the National Insurance Crime Bureau and can be accessed by the Insurance Bureau of Canada. This validation takes place in real time and the requested information is returned to the requestor in a matter of seconds, much like a credit card transaction is approved electronically.

The application requirements

To become a Vehicle Security Professional and be included in the Registry, the following information is required:

- Fully completed application form
- Full contact and company information
- Criminal record check
- Insurance and insurance liability policy information
- Copy of provincial trades license (if applicable)
- Municipal business license (if applicable)
- Must agree to successfully complete a VSP training program if provided
- Payment of registration fee

A sample range of locksmiths, auto electric shops and both collision repair and mechanical repair technicians from across the country are currently testing the Canadian program. At the same time we are working with each car manufacturer through their respective associations to address any website and process amendments that may be required to effectively make their websites available and open for security inquiries from Canada as early as mid-January 2012. This is a time consuming project and the car manufacturers' associations have been very co-operative. While it is recognized that perhaps not all car makers will have all security information available by a target date, many will have security data available, and the owners of vehicles across Canada needing these types of service and repairs will be the winners.

If you have a comment or suggestion on how to make this program even better, please contact:

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