

# 3D Collision Centers Sees 'Consistent Profit' Partnering with PPG



by Autobody News Staff

Before **Dave Niestroy** opened 3D Auto Body in West Chester, PA, in 1981, he spent free time in his parents' garage. Now, 3D Collision Centers spans three counties in southeastern Pennsylvania, with seven physical locations and one satellite location at a Subaru dealership.

**Patrick McCready**, operations manager, said 3D stayed at one location until the late '90s, and then began opening two at a time every few years until the most recent addition in 2017.

"Dave worked closely with insurance partners to find markets that needed a strong, DRP-friendly shop," McCready said.

McCready said 3D Collision Centers has always believed in developing talent.

"We make a point to engage young people by promoting them from within and investing in them, whether it's through education, special training or promotions," he said. "Our greatest asset is our team members, and with today's challenges, rather than placing ads and hiring people, I think it's more important to make sure we're paying a fair wage, that our relationships with insurance partners stay strong, and giving everyone a friendly, nice area to work, along with excellent benefits."

McCready explained 3D Collision Centers' success also comes from continual investment in new, updated technology. Since 2014, it has used PPG's ENVIROBASE® High Performance waterborne system.

"We were transitioning from solvent to a water-based product to get ahead of regulations and be compliant," he said. "So, from everything we looked into and tried, we felt that PPG Envirobase was by far the most superior water-based product on the market from a production standpoint."

McCready said 3D Collision Centers was also investing in OEM certifications at the time, so finding a paint distributor that aligned with this goal was crucial.

"Out of the competitors, we felt PPG had the best coverage as far as OEM certifications," he explained.

In 2016, PPG also helped 3D Collision Centers build one of the



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first fully-equipped Symach shops in the country.

"The technology started in Italy and it bakes a vehicle within minutes, as opposed to a traditional downdraft paint booth," McCready explained. "It has helped us improve our cycle times and allows us to paint 15 to 20 cars a day."

McCready said PPG provided "great support" when bringing Symach to the Conshohocken, PA, location.

"PPG saw the future in drying technology and sent chemists out in the first few months to adapt a clear coat that would pass United States drying regulations," he said. "Now, that shop alone is 30,000 square feet, producing on average \$800,000 to \$1 million a month in gross sales."

3D Collision Centers also recently started using the new PPG VISUALIZID™ 3D color rendering software and DIGIMATCH™ spectrophotometer.

"The VisualizID 3D color rendering software is easy to use," said **Jake Vogel**, painter. "All the jobs are signed ROs from the office; they could put the paint code in that software and it's already on that job."

Vogel said this goes hand in hand with the DigiMatch spectrophotometer.

"A painter, prepper or anybody can go out in the morning and take a spectro reading of every car in paint and assign it to that RO from the device itself," he explained. "So, when you download the reading into the PaintManager XI software, it's already all labeled in the ROs, and all you have to do is

click on it and go."

Vogel said he appreciates how the RO shows the estimated material cost, so he knows where he wants to be as far as selecting the right amount of base or clear coat.

He said the new DigiMatch spectrophotometer works in conjunction with the VisualizID software, which "has a 3D visualizer that shows you a computer-generated spray out of your spectro reading compared to one from PPG themselves, so you see all angles before you go and do a spray out to guarantee the match." McCready added the new VisualizID technology shows how a color will flop with sunlight.

"If Jake is painting a bumper only, it gives him a visual," McCready said. "It may not be the exact color on the screen, but rather than walking out with a paint swatch or a spray out, it'll show him how this color will look under certain light to human eyes, which drastically reduces the struggle of matching paint in different lighting."

McCready also explained how the PaintManagerXI software has developed to integrate with body shop management systems.

"The painter can see the amount written for materials when he starts to mix the color," he said. "So, if there is a special toner required or anything along those lines, we will see the paint cost immediately, and we are able to supplement accordingly in real time."

McCready concluded that 3D Collision Centers has noticed a more consistent gross profit thanks to the technology that PPG offers.

## 3D Collision Centers

West Chester, PA  
**610-692-7776**  
[www.3Dbodyworks.com](http://www.3Dbodyworks.com)

## Company At A Glance...

**Type:** Collision Repair  
**Facility Employees:** 135  
**In Business Since:** 1981  
**Number of Locations:** Seven  
**Combined Production Space:** 90,000 square feet



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