

# Airport Auto Body Turns to Equalizer for Training, Tools to Get Techs Up to Speed on Glass



by Autobody News Staff

In 1983, **Tony Cavallaro Sr.** purchased a 3,000-square-foot building on Airport Road in Hartford, CT, which became *Airport Road Auto Body*. He and his wife, **Rita**, worked hard to build a reputation for providing exceptional service.

In 2017, the business outgrew its original location and moved to a 34,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility on Locust Street. The company dropped "Road" from its name, but the team at Airport Auto Body is still known for their dedication to repairing vehicles the right way.

The shop and its technicians are certified by I-CAR and a host of OEMs, and repair 150 to 200 vehicles per month.

Tony Sr. and Rita were later joined in the business by their two sons, **Tony Jr.** and **Joe**, who now work as operations manager and service advisor, respectively.

Tony Jr. said he started working in the shop as a young kid, after school and over summer breaks. After high school, he earned a degree in management from Bryant University in Rhode Island, before returning to the family business full time in 2013.

"Seeing the success my parents had with [the business] made me want to pursue it, to continue that success," Tony Jr. said.

In 2023, **Antonio Obando**, a tech who has worked at Airport Auto Body since 2019, learned about Equalizer's Auto Glass Academy in Round Rock, TX, led by Global Education Director **Gilbert Gutierrez**. The academy's one-week, 40-hour course includes classroom and hands-on training in auto glass removal, replacement, repair and calibration, with all tools provided.

Until that point, Airport Auto Body had been using a third-party mobile auto glass service to do that work on the vehicles it repaired. Obando "put a bug in our ear," Tony Jr. said. "He said 'Send us out to get that training and we could do this.'"

"For the longest time, for whatever reason, I thought glass was



**Airport Auto Body has been serving Hartford, CT, since 1983. It moved into its current 34,000-square-foot location in 2017.**

a specialty outside the capabilities of a body technician, but that's not the case at all," Tony Jr. "It's easier than a lot of what they do, as long as they have the right training and equipment."

Obando was sent to Texas, where he completed the course. When he came back to work, he "started spreading the knowledge," Tony Jr. said, and other technicians wanted to go too.

A year later, six techs have now completed the training, and Airport Auto Body is reaping the benefits in faster cycle times.

"Having to wait for a third party to come in during disassembly or reassembly and having to pull a technician off the car while they're working just wasn't working with the volume we're doing," Tony Jr. said. "You have downtime in this industry for whatever reason, and it's a killer."

Being able to do that work themselves means "the cars get done much faster," Tony Jr. said.

"Glass is usually one of the last things you're doing," he said. "The [third-party] glass company might not be able to get to a job until next day, so that car's not going to leave. But if we can do it ourselves, it's going to go."

At the Auto Glass Academy, Airport Auto Body's techs also learned how glass components affect the structural integrity of a vehicle, Tony Jr. said. "It's important to make sure it's done right, because the repairs they do really

depend on how well that glass gets put in."

The techs also learned a few things they had been doing for years that were not best practices. "We learned how important it is to tape pinch weld glass openings so that the glass has a stronger surface to adhere to," he said.

Tony Jr. said he is now even more confident in Airport Auto Body's repairs.

"A third-party tech might have glass experience, but I don't know if a glass company is thinking about the structure of a vehicle and how it's going to react if it gets hit again," Tony Jr. said. "I'd rather keep that under our umbrella; I have faith in our technicians."

Airport Auto Body bought "all the Equalizer tools" — vacuum cups, blades, and cord and wire glass removal tools — which are in a separate toolbox techs can wheel to their station when they need it.

"It's what the techs were trained on, so that's what they felt the most comfortable with," he said.

Over the past year, the techs at Airport Auto Body haven't run into a glass-related repair they couldn't handle as a team, Tony Jr. said, and haven't had to reach out to Equalizer's support team for help.

"The class is very informative and well-run, judging by our techs," Tony Jr. said. "They come back and feel like they can handle anything we need to do."

## Airport Auto Body

Hartford, CT

**860-296-2639**

[airportroadautobody.com](http://airportroadautobody.com)

## Company At A Glance...

**Type:** Collision Repair

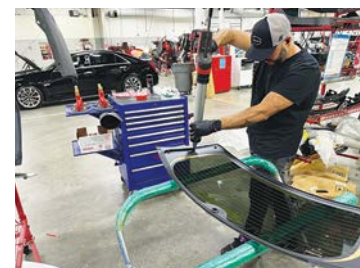
**Facility Employees:** 40

**In Business Since:** 1983

**Number of Locations:** One

**Production Space:**

34,000 square feet



**Technician Emanuel Rivera uses a urethane gun to apply urethane to a rear liftgate glass before installation.**



**After six Airport Auto Body techs completed the course at Equalizer's Auto Glass Academy, the shop invested in a toolbox full of the same tools they had been trained to use.**

## Equalizer® Industries, Inc.

**512-388-7715**

[Equalizer.com](http://Equalizer.com)

[autoglassacademy.com](http://autoglassacademy.com)

Facebook: @equalizertools

X: @equalizertools

Instagram: @equalizertools

YouTube: @equalizervideo