

Excerpt from

# Introduction to Motorcycle and ATV Repair

By

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# Author Acknowledgment

Edward Abdo has been actively involved in the motorcycle and ATV industry for over 25 years. He received factory training from Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, and Yamaha training schools. He has worked as a motorcycle technician, service manager, and Service/Parts department director.

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# Preview

The following is a sample excerpt from a study unit converted into the Adobe Acrobat format. A sample online exam is available for this excerpt.

The sample text is from the Motorcycle Repair Technician program. Motorcycle and ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) repair can provide an interesting career, a good income, and job security. To be successful at anything, you must set a goal and have the desire to achieve it.

There are probably several reasons why you're interested in this program. You may be preparing to start a full-time career in the motorcycle repair field. Or, if you're already employed in another field, you may be interested in exploring new career opportunities. Perhaps you want to work only part-time, doing repair work occasionally to supplement your present income. Or maybe you're interested in saving money by repairing your own motorcycle or ATV. Whatever your goals and aspirations, welcome!

The study unit this excerpt is taken from describes the expanding field of motorcycle repair and the increasing need for professionally trained motorcycle technicians. In this excerpt, you'll learn about the many career opportunities available to trained technicians. After reading through the following material, feel free to take the [sample exam](#) based on this excerpt.

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# *Introduction to Motorcycle and ATV Repair*

## THE MOTORCYCLE AND ATV REPAIR FIELD

### Introduction

This section introduces you to the opportunities available in the motorcycle and ATV repair industry. Upon completing their training, many students obtain their first job as entry-level motorcycle and ATV repair technicians at motorcycle dealerships. There are several positions available at a motorcycle dealership for individuals with a motorcycle and ATV repair background. Even if you're not interested in a motorcycle repair industry career at this time, this section will give you an idea of what the industry is all about. To obtain a better understanding of the positions available at a motorcycle dealership, let's take a close look at the dealership.

### Dealership Opportunities

A motorcycle and ATV dealership is an excellent place to begin a motorcycle and ATV repair career. Often, prospective employees must be willing to start at an entry-level position and work their way up the ladder. Most franchised and independent dealerships have three main departments:

- Sales department
- Parts department
- Service department

Before we discuss the service department, let's take a look at the other two departments first. It's possible that your entry job may be in the sales or parts departments. You can gain valuable experience in these departments until a position opens in the service department.

The ability to get along with people is a key requirement for working in any area of a motorcycle dealership. This is particularly true in the sales department. As a skilled salesperson, you must also be able to discuss the technical features of the different motorcycle and ATV models with customers. An education in motorcycle repair provides you with a definite advantage as a member of the sales staff. If you possess the ability to deal directly with customers, the sales department is an excellent place to learn how a motorcycle dealership operates. The sales area provides valuable exposure to business-related

activities. The experience can be very beneficial, especially if you plan to run your own business someday.

The parts department is also a great place to use your people skills. As a member of the parts department, you'll have constant contact with retail customers, the sales department, and the service department. You'll be dealing directly with customers, both in person and on the telephone.

The parts department is more closely related to the service department than to the sales department, especially if you work as a parts technician. A parts technician is responsible for supplying the service department technicians with the parts that they need to complete their service and repair work.

The third department within a motorcycle dealership is the service department. A small shop may have a service department that employs only one or two technicians. A medium-sized shop might employ three or four technicians plus a service manager. It's not unusual to find a significant number of employees in the service department of a large motorcycle dealership. A large motorcycle dealership typically employs the following personnel in the service department:

- Lot attendants
- Set-up technicians (motorcycle assemblers)
- Motorcycle technicians
- Service writers
- Service managers

If you're fortunate enough to get a job in the service department, but not as a technician, you may be employed as a lot attendant. A *lot attendant* is usually responsible for cleaning up the display lot and shop areas; rearranging, cleaning, and detailing motorcycles; picking up and delivering motorcycles and supplies; and performing other related tasks. If you start out as a lot attendant, the dealership management will have a chance to evaluate your job performance before assigning you additional responsibilities.

A *set-up technician* (also known as a *motorcycle assembler*) is a step closer to becoming a motorcycle technician. The set-up technician position requires certain mechanical skills. The set-up technician unpacks and assembles all of the new motorcycles received at a dealership. The set-up activity often includes the initial service of the motorcycle (oil, gas, adjustments, and power checks).

The *motorcycle technician* is frequently considered the backbone of the service department. It's not unusual to find motorcycle technicians who started in sales, in the parts department, as lot attendants, or as set-up technicians and worked their way up. As a motorcycle technician, you'll need a technical background, factory training (which the

dealership can arrange for you), tools, and usually some prior mechanical experience. Some of the job assignments and responsibilities of a motorcycle technician include

- Warranty service
- Preventive and scheduled maintenance
- General repair activities
- Staying current with new products, accessories, and service procedures
- Maintaining accurate repair records
- Alerting the service manager to actual or potential problems

In addition to the direct repair activity involvement of the motorcycle technician, there are other related positions available in most service departments for those who wish to try other assignments in the motorcycle service career field.

Another key employee in the service department is the service writer. The *service writer* is responsible for writing the repair orders for service work. He or she must be technically trained and must have a complete understanding of the service process. When writing a repair order, the service writer must obtain detailed failure information from the customer, verify the customer's input, and then provide the customer with an estimate of the services that might be required to correct the problem. In most dealerships, the service writer creates the repair orders, which are then distributed to the motorcycle repair technicians. The service writer also has a hand in job scheduling, ensuring that the repair process flows smoothly.

The *service manager* is the highest position in the service department. Most service managers are responsible for the following:

- Customer transactions
- Warranty claims
- Product update and information publications
- Technician training
- Employee hiring and dismissal
- Equipment needs
- Building maintenance
- Service policy changes
- Service files and records

Service managers usually have an extensive service background and prior management experience including

- Technical training
- Factory service school training
- Lot attendant experience
- Set-up/assembly experience
- Motorcycle repair experience
- Customer relations skills
- Management experience

The service manager has the overall responsibility for the service department. He or she must see that everything in the service department is well organized, that all necessary parts are in stock, and that the service work is performed correctly and completed on time. The service manager must handle all customer complaints and any technical questions from both customers and technicians. The service manager needs an extensive amount of motorcycle repair experience and excellent management skills.

Finally, the top position in a motorcycle dealership is the general manager. The *general manager* has the overall responsibility for the sales, parts, and service departments. He or she oversees the day-to-day operations of the entire business. A general manager is likely to have had experience in all of the other departments.

## Other Industry Opportunities

Some individuals with motorcycle repair backgrounds (for example, motorcycle technicians and service managers) have found challenging career opportunities as motorcycle repair instructors. To be a *motorcycle repair instructor*, you must meet certain requirements. These requirements vary by locality. For example, in California a technical instructor must be certified. To be certified in California, a technician can apply for teaching credentials if he or she has qualified in one of the following ways:

- Seven years experience in the trade
- Five years experience in the trade plus two years of college (with a major in the specific trade)

Because of the growing popularity of motorcycles for sport and utility purposes, more motorcycle technical trade schools are opening every year. The demand for qualified motorcycle repair instructors is growing, especially at the post-high school, technical vocational level.



There are also teaching positions in most motorcycle manufacturing training schools.

Before seriously considering a career as a motorcycle repair instructor, be sure that you enjoy explaining the details of how something works, that you feel comfortable working directly with groups of people, and that you have an abundance of patience. The pay and benefits for the instructor position are usually good, but to some instructors the greatest single reward can be watching the students develop the ability to apply their newly acquired knowledge.

If you enjoy motorcycle repair theory more than you enjoy actually repairing motorcycles, it's quite possible that you would enjoy a career as a *technical writer*. Almost everything that you've read about motorcycle repair was written by one or more technical writers. Technical writers in the motorcycle industry are constantly in demand, especially if they're skilled at transforming technical ideas and concepts into everyday language.

Most technical writers have the following:

- Technical training
- Higher education (college)
- Writing experience

Most motorcycle photographs and illustrations contained in service manuals, sales brochures, and other printed matter are created by *technical illustrators*, who work closely with technical writers. Although most of the illustrations are created by the technical illustrators, in certain cases the illustrations are created by the technical writers themselves. At the very least, technical writers should be able to define the illustrations or photographs needed to support the text that they've developed, and to verify that the completed illustrations support the text. There's usually a close working relationship between technical writers and the technical illustrators to develop the finished printed material.

Most technical illustrators usually have the following:

- Technical training
- Some writing experience
- Photographic experience
- Technical illustration and layout experience

Another possibility worth exploring is in the area of motorcycle manufacturing. Companies in the manufacturing industry offer numerous career opportunities. Although the complete list is long and varied, these positions include

- Technical advisor
- District service manager
- District sales manager
- District parts manager
- Technical writer
- Technical illustrator
- Warranty coordinator
- Service training instructor
- Customer service coordinator
- Quality control specialist
- Research and development engineer
- Race team support technician
- Advertising and marketing specialist

Most motorcycle manufacturing company employees enjoy competitive salaries and generous company benefits. Before seriously considering a career with a motorcycle manufacturer, make sure that you've had most of the following:

- Related mechanical experience
- Employment at a dealership
- Technical training in a related field (small engines or electrical circuits)
- Factory service school training in motorcycle repair
- Higher education (college or vocational school)

We've explored several career opportunity options for someone who has the necessary skills and training in motorcycle repair. What about the person who wants to be self-employed? Are the days of the independent service technician over?

Not at all! With adequate financial backing, a person with the proper skills and background could start any type of related business, including a full motorcycle dealership, a parts and accessories store, or a major service and repair business.

It's possible for a trained motorcycle or ATV repair technician to start a small repair and service business with little available capital. Many of today's thriving repair and service businesses started out in the back of a garage. If self-employment is your goal, you might start out by using that spare space in your garage!

These are just some of the possibilities that await you in the exciting and challenging field of motorcycle and ATV repair. As you've discovered in this section, a wide range of career opportunities are available to qualified individuals.