

# Kawasaki Service Facility General Guidelines



**K-TECH TRAINING**

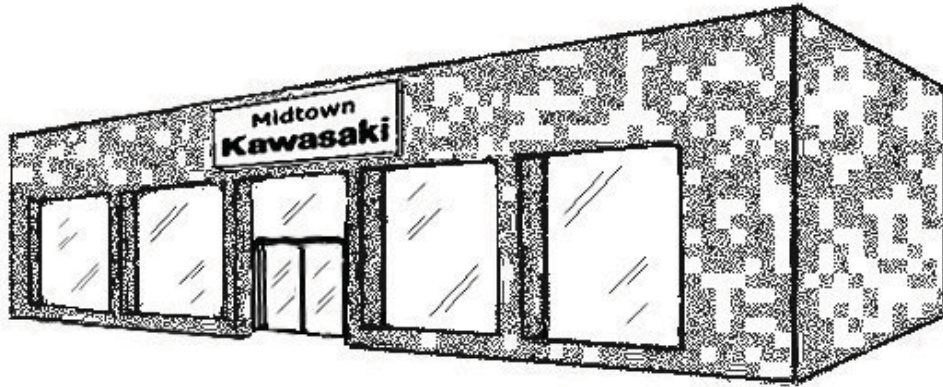
Service Training and Communications  
Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.

# Kawasaki Service Facility General Guidelines

(Short Version)

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Congratulations on the start of your new business venture! Since planning is a key part of beginning a business, Kawasaki offers you these ideas to consider when building and/or organizing your service department.

The role of the service department in your dealership's overall customer service game plan is vitally important. Yours is a service business, and people come to your store for their Kawasaki product maintenance needs. Consequently, whether you intend it or not, your business is going to have an image, and how people view your business will depend on the image you reinforce. Your service department is more important in creating this image than many people realize. The customer's relationship with your dealership begins with one department and unfortunately may also end through the interaction with just one department, should that happen. Often, this happens in the service department more often than in any other department, partly because the department has more customers, but mostly because the service department's stock-in-trade is more closely tied to customer expectations. Do all you can to make your service department a customer-building and customer-keeping tool within your business. This begins with an emphasis on good customer service, which in turn is based on efficient and ethical service transactions, which ultimately starts with setting up and using your service department facility effectively.

The Japanese have a saying, "None of us is as smart as all of us." Consider this booklet primarily educational in nature, designed with the input of many dealers just like yourself, with the goal of providing helpful suggestions for setting up an authorized Kawasaki service department. Its intent is not to render legal advice, and should not take the place of legal, accounting, or other professional services, for which competent assistance should be sought.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.

Technical Services Division



## General Service Department Layout

### *Perception is Important*

The appearance of the service department is one of the most important considerations in designing what will probably last for many years. As you know, customer perception is one of the most important factors in generating sales. Look at your service department in that light. What the department sells is partly labor hours, but even more importantly, it sells customer goodwill for the entire store. Therefore, how the customer perceives the service department is very important.

### *Plan the Traffic Pattern*

The key thing to remember about your service department's layout, even if you don't have the luxury of building your own building, is to develop the floor plan of your shop with your expected traffic pattern in mind. There is no better time than right now to take advantage of what might otherwise be a missed opportunity to maximize the more passive elements of the service facility – its walls, doors and general layout -- and use them to add to the bottom line.

Specifically, consider beforehand how both people and vehicles will need to move from place to place around, into, and out of the service area.

- ✓ Customers entering and exiting
- ✓ Customers loading/unloading vehicles into trucks or onto trailers
- ✓ Customer watercraft trailer access and parking
- ✓ Vendors, fleet and commercial customers, collision transports
- ✓ Waste material recyclers
- ✓ Walk-in customers (tires, portable products, etc.)
- ✓ Washed vehicles

Ease of access between departments is especially important. Planning beforehand can result in maximum efficiency from the start. For example, technicians need to have ready access to a Parts Department window or counter, Sales Department vehicles entering and exiting A&P area

- ✓ Sales Dept. vehicles moving between service area and sales floor
- ✓ Technician access to the Parts Dept.
- ✓ Technician access to equipment, emergency eyewash station, entrances and exits, break room and restroom

### *Square Footage*

There is a link between what you project in terms of sales and what you should anticipate in service volume. Realistically, you'll need one tech for every 200 vehicles you sell each year and you should have 200 square feet of service space for each technician. The short way to do this is "Sales = Sq Ft." If then your sales target is 500 vehicles, for example, then plan for a department that is at least 500 square feet in size and is manned by 2-3 technicians

$$\text{Sales} \times \frac{200 \text{ sales}}{200 \text{ sq ft}} = \text{sq ft} \quad \text{Techs} = \frac{\text{Sq ft}}{200}$$

### *The Main Work Area*

No matter how you divide up your available space, give your techs plenty of room. Give them the room they need at the beginning. Aside from the area the vehicle lift takes up, there should also be room immediately next to the lift for another vehicle to be serviced. Also, use the workshop floor intelligently. Your shop floor communicates your work ethic to service customers.

- ✓ Clutter communicates inefficiency
- ✓ Parts scattered all over speaks of indifference
- ✓ Grime, grease and dirt indicate poor work standards

Value your floor space highly. Don't make the mistake of over-using the floor and under-using the walls. Which is there more of in your shop, anyway? The walls, of course! Race stands, special tools, phones, bodywork storage, etc. If it isn't bolted down, hang it up or put it on a shelf instead of putting it on the floor or on a workbench!

Devote at least one service bay to quick jobs such as oil changes, tire and battery replacements, and accessory installations. Provide a window from the Parts Department into the service department. You want your techs to have ready access to parts, and techs should not be going into the Parts Department for any reason. It looks bad to the counter customers, and presents inventory control problems.

### *Battery Service Station*

Although fewer batteries need the kind of attention they once did, the Service Department will still service batteries sold by the Parts Department, and the maintenance of Service customer's vehicles will still include occasional battery servicing. The battery station doesn't need to be large, but it will need to be far from gasoline fumes and should be near the emergency eyewash station. A small shelf or bench with at least one BatteryMate 150 battery charger/load tester and some distilled water is a good start (refer to Kawasaki bulletin WTY 03-01 for more information). Remember to include a full-face safety face shield for users of this station.

### *Wash/Prep Area*

Every shop needs space in which the vehicles being sold can be prepared. Not only for new vehicle A&P, but also trade-in reconditioning and inspections prior to trade, and in some cases even state-related safety inspections, will be performed here. For this area, a vehicle lift, workbench, and nearby wash bay are all desirable. Provide this area with good access to the Parts Department, especially if heavy used vehicle reconditioning or a lot of new vehicle accessory installation will be done.

## **The Service Customer Waiting Area**

### *The Minimum*

At the very least, your customer waiting area should have the usual magazines and TV, coffee and tea, of course, and industry-specific videos would be nice. And a lots of light for that airy, easy-living feeling. And, far from the grease and noise, on the edge of the Sales area so new vehicles are in view, and put a vehicle or two inside the waiting area, for maximum benefit.

### *Waiting or Visiting?*

But let's face it. This kind of customer service will definitely get noticed, and will generate positive customer goodwill, but at this stage of the game there just isn't anything very exciting about waiting for service. The absolutely top flight customer waiting area isn't a



waiting area at all. At least not so you would notice. Instead, it's a destination. To really ramp this waiting area thing up, make waiting for their vehicle an event, like going to a theme park. Really successful shops succeed in positioning their stores as destinations. A place to go. Just to be, to "hang." Incorporating a coffee bar is a good idea, or better, a sandwich nook with a counter that looks through a window into the service department. You'll know your ideas are working when your customers' families come into the shop with them. The key to it all? Make it *fun* to wait.

## **The Customer Reception (Write-Up) Area**

### *Location*

You already know the importance of the first impression. Devote an area to greeting and talking to the customer. It should be away from most of the noise and bustle, if possible, and of course it will need to be near your shop entrance. Gear this area to providing the customer with everything he or she needs to feel at ease with the service experience as a whole. The object is to disarm and to inform, so equip this area accordingly. In the smaller shop, the reception area may be inside the work area itself, as long as it is out of the flow of traffic.

### *Equipment*

The reception area should include a small library of quick reference materials such as ROs (repair orders), flat rate manuals, a collection of each model's periodic maintenance tables, and of course a computer terminal linked to the store's DMS (Dealer Management System).

### *Key Control*

Since this will also be the area the customer returns to when picking up the vehicle, the customer's keys should be kept here also. A key board marked with the alphabet in relation to the customer's last name works fine. This is much more secure than leaving the keys in the vehicles (many shop insurance policies forbid that, anyway), and it ensures that the service manager or writer is the last person to talk with the customer before he or she leaves the store. Just make sure the service one or the other is not too busy to talk to the customer when he or she arrives to pick up their vehicle.

## **Service Department Support Areas**

### *The Concept*

Be proactive in considering how much time spent with the customer goes into service sales, and just as importantly, how much planning, perspective, and paperwork is necessary to keep a hand on the pulse of the department and keep it profitable. Avoid thinking of the Service Department as merely "That place in the back where they work on stuff." Be professional.

### *Service Manager's Office*

The Service Manager needs a place to take a customer to, when one-on-one conversation is needed. This might be a customer service issue, or it might be a special sales opportunity. Either way, there needs to be a place that is quieter than the rest of the shop, some place where interaction can take place undisturbed. The Service Manager will also want a place to meet important people such as the Kawasaki Field Service Advisor, suppliers' and vendors' agents, insurance representatives, his technicians, and the store's other managers. He can't really be a manager without this facility. It will also provide him with a private place in which to plan long-term objectives.

### *Service Advisor (Writer)*

You may want a separate office for your Service Advisor(s). In many shops this is basically an outer office attached to the Service Manager's office, in which one or more writers wait on customers, freeing up the manager to manage.

### *Warranty Clerk's Office*

Warranty provides as much as a third of a busy dealer's Service income, so it pays to be forward-thinking in this area. The Warranty Clerk's office will be where this person works on submitting warranty claims and interacting with Kawasaki on warranty-related issues. The Warranty Clerk should have the same electronic communications tools as the Service Manager – phone, fax, and copier -- and of course, a computer terminal with access to the store's DMS.

## **Service Department Storage**

### *The Importance of Planned Service Storage*

Few storage issues in your dealership will be as critical as the needs for storage in the Service Department. There are several distinct storage need areas in the Service Department. For one or more of them, consider partnering with the other departments on sharing some space. But however space is allocated, these important storage areas must stay under the Service Department's control, as they will affect its revenue most directly.

### *Warranty Parts*

Perhaps the most important Service storage need is removed warranty parts storage. Kawasaki requires that you hang on to all removed warranty parts for a period of 90 days after the claim is paid. This will probably require an organized shelving system that has labels linked to the repair order number. A good system is one in which it is easy to recycle parts out that have been shelved for over four months, and one that permits easy retrieval of parts that Kawasaki calls for. You have just 30 days to return these parts when asked to, after which the claim may be debited.

### *Parts for Pending Jobs*

Next, you want a system of shelving or bins for parts that are arriving for pending jobs. This might be labeled with removable tags with the customers' last names, in alphabetical order. This system can also be used by the Parts Department, who will appreciate having a place in which to organize parts received that have been ordered by the service department. A parts waiting system such as this makes it easier to get those jobs back online when the parts arrive.

### *Vehicle Bodywork*

Third, you need some place to store bodywork removed during the service of customer vehicles. You must strive to protect the very delicate and very expensive cowling and other pieces normally removed during services. Some shops hang cowlings on wire suspended from the ceiling. Others use wood shelving lined with indoor/outdoor carpet. Whatever you use, it must be a dedicated system that does not double as, for example, a battery workstation.

### *Disassembled Work*

Fourth, your technicians will need space to store disassembled work. Don't simply leave this to chance. Poly tubs under the workbenches, for example, work well. In a larger shop, a shelving system containing bins with three or four letters or colors, numbered 1 through 9, referring to the last character on the RO, works fine. A bin is selected whose



number matches the last character on the RO, and the RO is marked, for example, "B." The techs will have fewer "comebacks" and you'll have fewer customer headaches. Be proactive and plan ahead with this element of good customer service.

#### *Customer Parts to be Inspected*

Fifth, you will find that customers will occasionally want to look at their old parts. There are regional laws governing this, as to whether you must retain removed parts and how long, so check local authorities. You'll be way ahead however in terms of customer service if you simply opt to shelve every significant part (i.e. not oil filters or gaskets) until the customer has picked up the vehicle. Then toss them.

#### *Additional Storage*

In addition to these important storage needs, you'll need a tire rack devoted to walk-in tire jobs, especially if you have a lot of off-road vehicle traffic. Storage for walk-in engine work is also desirable, as are racks on which to place carried-in work such as portable generators and yard equipment. Finally, you'll need space for storing waste material (tires, batteries, oil and coolant). Save space by putting the service library overhead, above the workbenches, on shelving attached to the wall.

### **Service Department Communications**

#### *Computers*

Make the most of computer power. A DMS is a *given*, and so much an advantage that you will not likely reach your full potential without one. Not enough could be said about the record-keeping power alone, power that will fuel better customer service. Moreover, a DMS offers a report-generating capability that will make revenue stream monitoring almost a pleasure. The same is true about using k-dealer.com, Kawasaki's Internet-based DCS (dealer communications system), and Kawasaki's on-line electronic parts catalog. In communicating with Kawasaki, and for accessing materials with which to conduct your business, nothing is as powerful as these two Kawasaki resources.

You want at least one computer terminal in the technician's work area. Your techs will use it to look up bulletins and part numbers, record important service notations on the electronic RO, and electronically clock in and out of each job as well as clocking in and out daily. The techs will also take online quizzes associated with either video or hands-on Kawasaki factory training.

#### *The Digital Camera*

The digital camera is changing the face of dealer communications. For less than the price of a single advertisement in a major newspaper, you can have a tool that better than most communicates issues specific to the Service Department. Kawasaki's warranty people will ask for them, insurance companies require them. And you do not have to know photography to use a low-priced digital camera or less expensive.

### **Service Department Lighting and Safety**

#### *Service Department Lighting*

Careful lighting adds to both your employees' and customers' safety. The benefit to your bottom line in terms of avoided liability can easily offset potential lighting equipment costs. Wise lighting choices also set an area's mood, that is, an attitude that is in your favor. Customers will feel your facility is more friendly and comfortable. Plenty of well-placed lights in the Service Department will do much to add to the quality of your work.

Your technicians will do better work because they see better and feel better as well. Also make sure entrances and exits are well lighted, as well as parking areas and walkways.

### *Service Department Safety*

Be aware of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) regulations in your area. Among other things, OSHA regulations govern your restrooms, material storage, break rooms, noise levels, and ventilation. OSHA also requires you to submit notifications of injuries, and to post a fire evacuation plan.

Your technicians should have eye protection and ear protection, and suitable work clothing. If you have a solvent tank or carburetor acid bath, you the dealer are required to also provide rubber gloves for your technician's use. Contain spills immediately, and if large use commercially available spill dams and related materials. The techs should use a safe means of raising vehicles to remove and replace suspension components. Using a fork lift for this purpose is hazardous and may be against regulations. Keep the shop floor free of haphazardly stored objects. Watch out for items placed at or just above eye level, which are usually overlooked and can therefore pose a safety hazard.

You will be required to keep MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) on file in your facility. Good ventilation is critical, especially to avoid CO (carbon monoxide) poisoning from running motor vehicles. A forced exhaust ducting system may be required. An eyewash station is important, as is also a dedicated battery servicing area. Electrical extension cords should be 3-conductor grounded type, of sufficient gauge to not be prone to overheating. Vehicle lifts must be in good condition and not modified or used in an unsafe manner. If you have a drill press, it should have a self-ejecting chuck key for maximum safety, and all grinding wheels on your grinder should be replaced frequently to avoid the potential for exploding cracked wheels. Finally, you may need to ban smoking inside the Service area, and you must equip the shop with fire extinguishers, of the A-B-C type, useful for most types of fires. Properly store gasoline and other flammables, and practice safe shop towel (rag) control to prevent spontaneous combustion.

## **Service Department Signage**

### *Don't Overdo*

Signs communicate, decorate, and they add to the "feel" or culture of the business, not to mention the all-important brand identity. However, these things can be both good and bad, if overdone or done without purpose and intelligence. For example, too many signs overwhelm the customer and blur the message. The atmosphere will become officious, stuffy, and rigid.

### *Use Signs Correctly*

Never hand-write your signs. That looks tacky and speaks of a low-budget, low-energy approach that you do not want to communicate to your customers. Most print shops have special low-cost methods of professional-looking sign production, and there are even portable machines that make reasonably sharp signs. Remember too that signs can never take the place of good old-fashioned courtesy. Assume most people don't read the signs and be ready always to direct and inform, without becoming impatient or simply referring to a sign. Treat signs as bonus information.

### *Kawasaki Signage*

Kawasaki is currently offering two important merchandising tools. First, there is the Kawasaki Signage Program, a cost-sharing exterior illuminated signage opportunity. You can get started with great Kawasaki approved signs, and we'll share the expense. Visit

k-dealer.com and click on the Marketing tab in the menu bar for more details on this limited-time signage co-op opportunity.

Kawasaki also offers the “Kawasaki Showroom Shop”, a web-based point of sale merchandising tool. Access the Showroom Shop through k-dealer.com by clicking on the Marketing tab in the menu bar, then follow the POS/Custom Design Shop. Customize each piece with your logo, local events, holiday sale information, and these will be delivered directly to your dealership.

#### *Other Important Signage*

Pursuant to the Kawasaki Warranty Policy and Procedures Manual, you’re required to post your hourly labor rate. Your intention to charge for storage after a specified number of days is also an important opportunity. Waste fluid barrels need to be marked, and labor law notifications must be posted for your employees. You’ll also want to note your department’s hours of operation if different from the rest of the store.

### **Service Department Equipment Suggestions**

#### *Kawasaki Required Tools*

As a dealer you must respond quickly to customer demands and expectations for accurate and timely repairs and service. Kawasaki has established an Essential Special Tool program to help dealers service Kawasaki products without unnecessary delays, and ensure that repairs are made efficiently without damage to expensive components.

#### *Safety Equipment*

For safety equipment, A-B-C fire extinguishers naturally top the list, but a first aid station is a good addition and may similarly be required by regulations, as may also an eyewash station. As mentioned previously you’ll also want covered shop towel storage, rubber gloves, spill control materials, and you may be required to have eye shields on grinding and cutting equipment as well as a self-ejecting chuck key on a lathe or drill press.

#### *Suggested Service Equipment*

The following are suggested basic equipment necessary to properly and efficiently service the Kawasaki product. Lighting is of course important, and more is always better than less. Also, a lot of electrical outlets, and a number of trash cans. You’ll want an air compressor and air lines. Include a water trap in the lines for longer tool life, and place the compressor in a ventilated closet or out-building to reduce noise in the shop. Workbenches are important, and here metal ones are an advantage over wood. You’ll want a solvent tank. Consider vehicle lifts standard equipment, with wheel vises for safe and secure use. Some sort of tire changing machine is a must, which should include a bead breaker for both two-wheel and four-wheel vehicles. Also important is a tire balancer, oil changing equipment (including the vacuum type for watercraft servicing), and gasoline storage containers. Your shop will also need “race stands” for both road and dirt bikes, a BatteryMate 150 charger/tester, and storage cabinets or shelves. Don’t forget extension cords, either natural or forced ventilation, and a tire leak test tub