



How a **Large Auto Retailer** streamlined the inspection process and **Improved Lift Safety**

Case Study

“Herding kittens.” That’s how the Facilities and Equipment Manager at one of the nation’s largest automotive retailers described its previously fragmented lift inspection process. All the automotive lifts in the company’s 100-plus shops require annual inspections. However, that involved working with as many as 30 local inspection companies, whose quality of service and reporting methods were often inconsistent. “The biggest problem we had was a lack of consistency and no true process to see inspection-recommended corrective actions through to completion,” he said.

The manager knew that technician safety and productivity depend on well-maintained lifts, yet a thorough inspection with accurate repair recommendations could be elusive. Traditionally, each dealership partnered with a local provider — not all of whom were ALI-certified — for lift inspections. But those providers frequently offered to perform the repairs themselves. How could he trust that the inspectors weren’t recommending only the most lucrative repairs, ignoring less-expensive solutions? And without a streamlined reporting process, even the repairs necessitated by a thorough inspection could be delayed by management turnover in the shop or by the dealership’s innate desire to control costs. He knew that he needed a single solution to reduce conflict of interest with inspection companies, to create comprehensive procedures and streamlined reporting, and to replicate it across a large, multistate portfolio of dealerships.

That solution arrived in a unique way — via the retailer’s corporate risk department. Alerted that DEKRA, already known for certifying collision centers on behalf of automotive manufacturers, was offering lift and equipment inspection services, the risk department partnered with the Facilities and Equipment Manager. Together, they learned that DEKRA was the only company offering a nationwide network of ALI-certified inspectors, promising relief from the chaos and costs of the existing decentralized system. “The door opened wide when they said, ‘We can handle every state,’” he said.

Since partnering with DEKRA, the Manager has seen a more accurate, centralized reporting system. In addition, the company’s spend on repairs and replacements is significantly more cost-effective. Individual shops experience, firsthand, the professional and comprehensive nature of the third-party inspections, which better ensure the technicians’ safety while cutting down on lost productivity and lost revenue — sometimes, as much as \$1,000 a day — for inoperative lifts.

The Benefits of Partnership

How did DEKRA’s lift inspection program benefit the retailer’s network of repair shops and collision centers?

When lifts are out of commission,
technicians are out of commission.
They can’t function, and they can’t work.

- Partnering with a national provider ensures that consistent, comprehensive inspection and repair procedures apply to all the company’s service centers throughout the United States.
- Coordinating annual inspections for multiple shops across the country (more than 12 states) now requires only one point of contact at DEKRA, saving the Facilities and Equipment Manager valuable time and resources during scheduling.
- After establishing the annual lift inspection program with DEKRA, lift maintenance is more often smaller, preventive items — instead of major component repairs and replacements — that are less expensive.
- Unbiased third-party ALI-certified inspectors submit their reports to the Facilities and Equipment Manager, who then coordinates repairs with local equipment providers. Because DEKRA isn’t selling parts or offering to perform the repairs, “We don’t have the fox guarding the hen house,” he notes. And individual shops are no longer responsible for deciding whether to make repairs.
- Higher-quality inspections can uncover previously undetected problems, giving a more accurate picture of lift health and encouraging preventive maintenance that can reduce future costs and prolong the life of the equipment.



- A centralized reporting system keeps the corporate team, shop staff, and equipment vendors well informed, and it reduces, or eliminates, the need for additional on-site inspections.

Going the Extra Mile to Prioritize Safety and Build Trust

Adopting a new system can be an adjustment for shop staff, but DEKRA quickly gained ground with technicians. Recently, the retailer purchased a group of luxury car dealerships in Texas and scheduled the annual lift inspection with DEKRA. Unaware that an assessment was already on the calendar, the dealership's new service manager instead booked a lift inspection with a premier equipment-repair company, one the retailer had worked with frequently. Upon their inspection, none of the lifts failed.

DEKRA, however, took their inspection further, making the considerable effort to unbolt the covers on the in-ground lifts for a closer look at the inner workings. The result? Seventeen lifts failed. The shop technicians were stunned — and impressed. After all, a faulty lift poses a serious risk to worker safety and productivity. The Manager added, “That quality of inspection gave us the real health status of lifts and enabled us to do right by our technicians and create a safer environment. When lifts are out of commission, technicians are out of commission. They can't function, and they can't work. That quality has given us a safer work environment for our technicians and less downtime on lifts that do not pass inspection.”

Ready to partner with a national network of certified lift inspectors you can trust?



Connect with us:

Email us: liftsafety.na@dekra.com

Call us: 470-251-4728

Website: dekra.us/liftinspections

