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Choosing the Right Repair Shop

By MalaMaal.com

Choosing the Right Repair Shop

No matter what you drive—sports car, family sedan, pick-up, or mini-van, when you go in for repairs or service, you want the job done right. The following advice should take much of the guesswork out of finding a good repair establishment.

I. Preliminaries

Don't just drop your vehicle off at the nearest establishment and hope for the best. That's not choosing a shop, that's merely gambling.

- * Read your owner's manual to become familiar with your vehicle and follow the manufacturer's suggested service schedule.
- * Start shopping for a repair facility before you need one; you can make better decisions when you are not rushed or in a panic.
- * Ask friends and associates for their recommendations. Even in this high-tech era, old-fashioned word-of-mouth reputation is still valuable.
- * Check with your local consumer organization regarding the reputation of the shop in question.
- * If possible, arrange for alternate transportation in advance so you will not feel forced to choose a facility solely on the basis of location.

Once you choose a repair shop, start off with a minor job; if you are pleased, trust them with more complicated repairs later

II. At the Shop

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- * Look for a neat, well–organized facility, with vehicles in the parking lot equal in value to your own and modern equipment in the service bays.
- * Professionally run establishments will have a courteous, helpful staff. The service writer should be willing to answer all of your questions.
- * Feel free to ask for the names of a few customers. Call them.
- * All policies (labor rates, guarantees, methods of payment, etc.) should be posted and/or explained to your satisfaction.
- * Ask if the shop customarily handles your vehicle make and model. Some facilities specialize.
- * Ask if the shop usually does your type of repair, especially if you need major work.
- * Look for signs of professionalism in the customer service area: civic and community service awards, membership in the Better Business Bureau, AAA–Approved Auto Repair status, customer service awards.

The backbone of any shop is the competence of the technicians.

- * Look for evidence of qualified technicians, such as trade school diplomas, certificates of advanced course work, and ASE certifications—a national standard of technician competence.

III. Follow–Up

- * Keep good records; keep all paperwork.
- * Reward good service with repeat business. It is mutually beneficial to you and the shop owner to establish a relationship.
- * If the service was not all you expected, don't rush to another shop. Discuss the problem with the service manager or owner. Give the business a chance to resolve the problem. Reputable shops value customer feedback and will make a sincere effort to keep your business.

A Word about ASE

Perhaps years ago, a shade–tree mechanic whose only credentials were a tool box and busted knuckles was enough. But today's quality–conscious consumers demand more.

The independent, non–profit National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) conducts the only industry–wide, national certification program for automotive technicians.

Consumers benefit from ASE's certification program since it takes much of the guesswork out of

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finding a competent technicians.

ASE certifies the competency of individual technicians through a series of standardized specialty exams (brakes, transmissions, engine repair, ect.) ASE CERTIFIED

We employ technicians certified by the National institute for AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE EXCELLENCE. Let us show you their credentials

Certified technicians are issued pocket credentials listing their area(s) of expertise and usually wear blue and white ASE shoulder insignia, while employers often post the ASE sign on the premises. There are over a quarter million ASE technicians at work in every type of repair facility.

This publication has been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency. Distribution of this document does not constitute or imply EPA endorsement of any ASE service.

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Are you OVER paying your mechanic?

By Austin C. Davis

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Reader Question: I am on a tight budget, should I tell my mechanic how much I can afford to spend?

Dear concerned car owner,

Do you like to take your car in for repairs? Do you ever feel like you were cheated or taken advantage of by the shop or their mechanics? Do you know it could be what you are saying to the repair shop that could be costing you more? Most auto repair shops are run by honest hard-working people but in some circumstances you may bring out the dark side at some shops.

For instance, never tell the shop how much you are willing to spend without first getting an explanation of what you are going to have done. When you give the shop a "spending limit" they may have a tendency to do as little as possible but will manage to spend up to your limit. For example, a woman came into my shop and told me she had \$500 to spend. She did not start off her conversation with "hello", or "can you fix my car", all she said was how much money she wanted to give me.

Now granted, it is nice to have people come into the shop and actually like to pay their bills, but this lady gave me a spending limit before she told me what she wanted to have fixed. She thought she had transmission trouble and assumed that it would cost her a fortune to repair. While on a test drive with her I concluded that the problem was not transmission-related, but that the car probably needed a tune up or something along those lines.

But wait, this person wanted to give me \$500! If I was not an honest shop owner, I would have remained quiet on the test drive and taken the money that she was willing to pay. Let's say that I told this customer that I could fix her car because I am a nice guy and since she only had \$500 to spend I would try to help her out as much as I could. In reality, the actual repairs needed would have only cost \$200.

Because this customer thought she had expensive transmission trouble, she would probably be happy with a bill for \$350 and she will also think the shop did her a favor. Her first mistake was to diagnose the problem herself. I wonder if she goes to her dentist and tells her which tooth to pull or if she thinks it is time for another root canal? You take your car to the repair shop to have someone else diagnose and repair your car; so let them do their job. Her second mistake was to tell the shop how much she was willing to spend.

Most of the mechanics and service writers that I know of work on commission, and in the example above, an additional \$150 would sure be a nice tip. I see this happen all the time and it is so easy to prevent. Sometimes it is better to simply describe the symptoms to the service writer, remain quiet

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about your budget dollars and let the shop diagnose the problem with your car and how much it will cost to repair.

If the problem you are having with your car will require a test drive for the mechanic or service writer to

hear make sure you ride in the car with them at the time you drop off your car for repairs. If they can't hear it or feel it they can't fix it, and you will probably just get frustrated and discouraged by them not being able to repair the problem you want them to fix. Have you been over-paying your mechanic?

Sincerely,

Austin C Davis

Interested in an e-book about everything your mechanic doesn't want you to know? Sound advice from Austin Davis. [Click Here!](#) [Click here](#)

Austin Davis comes from a family that has been in the auto repair industry for over 64 years. Austin has written a book "What Your Mechanic Doesn't Want You To Know". His book is about how to find an honest mechanic, and the simple steps to keep them honest. Austin points out that it is usually what the customer says or does that can cause them to be taken advantage of by a repair "professional." You can view his website at [Click here](#)



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