

appliance doctor

# Inquire before repairing appliance



JOE GAGNON

I would bet that many of you who have purchased a major appliance recently are expecting to need service on the product. It is just a way of life today to expect a product to fail and it wasn't always this way. Back in the

days of old, the merchandise sold to consumers certainly had a higher quality factor built into it and we expected it to last.

According to a national study, the life span of major appliances built today has dropped dramatically. It can be a serious consequence if you are not aware of a good, honest, reliable appliance repair company. The stories we've seen on television and read in newspapers about the rip off companies have tarnished the image to a very serious degree. I believe these stories have been accurate but I

remind you that they usually are always about the same companies. You, as a consumer need to know who the bad guys are and don't expect them to go away just because you are on the 6 o'clock news.

Let me give you some ideas of what to expect when you do need service and how you base some sort of judgment as to whether or not a service company meets your criteria.

A. Where did you get the number of the company you are about to call? Was it from advertising or was it from a friend or relative. Do you know anything about this company as to their reputation. Did you contact the local office of the Better Business Bureau and make any inquiries. If you live in Detroit, did you contact the office of Consumer Affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, did you do anything at all to inquire about the credibility of the service company which is about to enter your home and repair an appliance. If you didn't, you are at fault and what

has happened to so many may happen to you.

B. What was the telephone response like when you called? Were they polite and did they suggest anything that might solve the problem. Did you ask for time preference such as morning or afternoon and receive a negative or were they obliging. Did you ask how much a service all will be to come to your home. How much is the labor cost per hour while they are doing the repair job. Did they give you an estimate of what it would cost for repairs after they checked it out. Did you feel comfortable with the phone call and do you feel confident with the service technician who is in your home.

C. When the technician rolled up in your driveway, was it a surprise or did he or she call you in advance. What does the vehicle look like and, most importantly, what does the first impression do for you. Most qualified technicians will enjoy showing you what they're doing and explaining what has to be done. You

should always ask and observe the person doing the work. Being aware is important now and in the future. Was the invoice presented to you for payment clear in its presentation. Did it explain the labor cost and the parts cost to your satisfaction. It is at this point that you will find out for sure whether this guy should have been in your house or not. If you feel like you've been ripped off then don't pay the bill and ask the person to get off of your property NOW. You can expect the boss to call you later and that gives you time to make some much needed inquiries.

Drop me a note and please let me know how it goes for you the next time you have an appliance repaired.

UPDATE: The book "First Aid" I wrote three years ago is being rewritten and a new cover is being applied. I apologize that the old book is no longer available. I've been assured by the publisher that you will be able to buy the new book by Sept. 1 at all Damman Hardwares and leading book stores.

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