



Citizen's Lobby Offers Advice On Repairs

The Michigan Citizens Lobby offered advice today to car owners seeking ways to protect themselves against being cheated or misled by auto repair shops.

"In the six weeks since we announced the results of our auto repair survey," Lobby director Doug Ross stated, "several thousand car owners have written or phoned us requesting advice on how to avoid being taken advantage of by auto dealerships and garages."

Ross went on to outline steps every car owner can take to significantly reduce the chances of overpaying for auto repairs:

BEFORE LEAVING YOUR CAR at a dealership or garage, obtain two or three price estimates. Getting several estimates often results in considerable dollar savings and isolates the grossly dishonest repairman.

INSIST THAT THE SERVICE WRITER or mechanic road test your car before recommending repairs. Very few dealerships or garages actually start the engine and drive the car before writing up a service order unless the customer demands it. A road test will increase the likelihood of a correct diagnosis.

DEMAND A WRITTEN ESTIMATE of the cost of repair, including an itemized list of the work to be done. Without a written estimate, it is simply your word against the garage's word in any dispute over exactly what repairs you authorized and at what price.

DEMAND A COPY of any document you sign at the time you sign it. Your copy of the original is protection against attempts to write in additional repairs above your signature.

WRITE ON THE WORK ORDER that no additional repairs, or work that will result in a bill exceeding the original cost estimate, be done without your written or verbal permission. This will avoid the situation in which you think you have authorized a \$50 repair only to find a bill for \$200 waiting for you when you come to pick your car up.

BEFORE SIGNING the work order, request that all replaced parts be returned to you when the repair is completed. This will increase the probability that the work you pay for is actually done.

IF YOU BELIEVE you have been cheated, first complain to the owner of the dealership or garage. Then if you are not satisfied, file a claim against the repair business with the Small Claims Division of Common Pleas Court (in Wayne County) or District Court (in the rest of Michigan). No lawyer is required in such cases.

Ross stated, however, that the kind of security car owners desire and deserve will "remain unattainable without the legislation regulating the auto repair industry which is the Lobby's principal objective."

A list of these auto repair tips on a wallet-sized card can be obtained without cost by writing the Michigan Citizens Lobby at 1592 Vernon Road, Trenton 48183.

Booklets On Car Care...

A number of booklets on car care and safety are available from the United States government. Among the publications available are:

- Automobile batteries, their selection and care (40 cents)
- Automotive fuels and air pollution (40 cents)
- Brakes, a comparison of braking performance for passenger cars (40 cents)
- Maximum safe speed for motor vehicles (\$1)
- Motorcycles in the United States (10 cents)
- Principles of automotive vehicles (\$3.25)
- Speak up when you buy a car (10 cents)
- Tires, their selection and care (65 cents)

The publications are available to Canadian and most Western Hemisphere residents at no additional postage cost. For order blanks and full details write Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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