

Housewife Requires Arbiter For Transactions

Appliance service men can cause consternation and confusion because they often do not diagnose accurately the unit's problem and they charge the same hourly fee for a woman who has no trouble in her appliance when in fact, she does.

Housewives discussing this problem recently decided that appliance owners should have recourse to an arbiter in such matters.

For example, one woman discovered that service fees and new parts in the last two years have been more than twice the cost of her four-year-old washing machine.

"She just realized recently when she moved to a new community that service men do not always know their business. It is expensive when you can't afford their mistakes."

"A service man told me my machine needed a new pump. I couldn't believe it as the pump was six months old. He took a \$7 service fee and left. Later, my husband fished around in the machine and found a child's sock caught in a vital section. He removed it and the machine worked fine but I was out \$7."

If a service man is told the part he suggests being replaced is, in fact, new, he should stay for the \$7 hourly fee and try to locate the real trouble.

ANOTHER HOUSEWIFE mentioned that one service man in a community where she had formerly lived was hipped on removing washing machine pump systems. "Practically every woman in our neighborhood had one installed sometime or another," she said.

She thinks he is like the dentist who pulls all your teeth when you are having trouble with two - the serviceman just removed something that might solve one of several potential problems.

Housewives also resent servicemen who run down certain machines in a derogatory fashion. "I wouldn't have one of these klunkers... This company doesn't know anything about dishwashers... They are taking these owners off the market..." and so on.

If asked, he'll recommend a machine that he can sell, apparently, presiding that only certain appliance centers sell the other machines.

One man using this psychology caused a woman to feud with longtime reputable companies over an oven and washing machine.

Some television repairmen do not know these electronic

devices they come to repair. One woman claims that one repairman is always accompanied by his teenage boy, a science student. One day, she charged the same hourly fee for a woman who has no trouble in her appliance when in fact, she does.

One man who had put two

new tubes in his television without getting a rumble called a repair man who installed six "new" tubes, and charged him for the tubes plus service. The owner looked into the set just as the TV man was about to leave and discovered that his two new tubes were mis-

ing and two used tubes had been put in their place. The repairman relinquished the new ones without a murmur.

ONE GOOD service man points out that there are a number of dead beats in the

service field but, he says, people catch up with them in a short time and they are out of business.

Problems the ladies would like to have straightened out include:

Paying a service fee when the machine isn't fixed or it

goes on the blink again within minutes of the service man's departure.

Paying a service fee for an inaccurate appraisal of the problem.

The idea of having to accept a diagnosis that doesn't seem logical - i.e., when he sug-

gests that a new part should be replaced.

They also think that most reputable companies make good products that should require a minimum of service. They should have trouble wires so that one can seek advice when an appliance becomes

an unreasonable financial burden.

And if an occasional machine is a "lemon," the company should recall it just as car companies do "if they want to maintain their good reputation," one homemaker says.

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Should Consider Safety

The old adage that haste makes waste is vital when you start shopping for a house. After all, this is probably the biggest purchase you'll ever make. Time spent in weighing convenience features, safety features, and structural soundness is invariably money saved in the long run.

Give some thought, for instance, to traffic lanes and behavior patterns of the family, when you count the number of rooms. Floor interior arrangements can be forever frustrating. Who has to walk through what room or passage to get where? Is the family gathering area large enough to be comfortable, to justify the fact that there's an extra bedroom? Are laundry facilities located conveniently so they can be used day or night without disrupting the household?

Put value on a house's safety features, too. Why buy readymade hazards? Check for sufficient electrical outlets in all rooms. You'll also want to be sure that electrical fixtures in the bathroom are out of reach of tub or shower. Stair treads ought to be uniform in height and depth for comfort and safety, and at least one handrail is a safety must for any stairway. So is good lighting, with convenient switches "upstairs and down."

While you need the opinion of experts as to the condition of the plumbing, the foundation, heating unit, and wiring, you can look for some indications of potential trouble yourself. You can note whether a concrete floor or wall in the basement is damp; whether there are water streaks from window walls. One of the tests for plumbing performance is to open all faucets and then flush a toilet. This tells you something about the water pressure, although it does not tell you what is causing low pressure.

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