

Taking the Scare Out of Auto and Cycle Repairs

Many consumers are not very knowledgeable about the mechanics of their vehicles and are reliant on vehicle repair staff to treat them fairly and to do a good job at a reasonable price. Problems can be prevented by taking some precautionary steps.

- Research for the best **licensed** repair facility that gives good service and has **qualified** mechanics that have experience working on your type of vehicle
- Make sure you write down the problems you are having with the vehicle and that the mechanic understands exactly what your problem(s) is.
- Ask questions as to what the possible cause of the problem could be e.g.:
 - Can the problem be repaired or will it require replacement of parts?
 - Could the repair process affect other systems in the car?
 - Is there a charge for diagnostic work?
 - Will the replaced parts be new, used or reconditioned?
 - What is the warranty on the replaced parts?
 - How long will the job take?
 - What would be the final cost?
- Don't leave the vehicle there until you are satisfied they have understood your concerns and have agreed to a course of action
- Insist on a written estimate on the repairs to be performed and make sure it **clearly** states to call you for any unauthorized work
- Once the repairs have been completed, carefully inspect the vehicle **before** you pay for the repairs
- Check with the mechanic to ensure that all work that was approved has been done.
- Get a completed repair order sheet, describing all the work that was performed and the detailed costs

If Something Goes Wrong

- If the vehicle is not ready by the agreed date and time, try to obtain a new date for completion, or it may be necessary to take the vehicle away. You may have to pay for any work that has already been done.
- If the fault has not been fixed, take the vehicle back as soon as possible to allow the facility to examine and fix the problem.
- If repairs have been done **without** your authorization, you can:
 - Ask them to 'undo' the work and put the vehicle back in its original condition, although this action could cause the vehicle to be un-roadworthy.
 - Refer to the original estimate and see if you can both come to an agreement

The facility may refuse to undo the work or release the vehicle without payment. If improvements have been made, then they are entitled to exercise a **lien** over the vehicle. A lien is a legal right to hold disputed goods until payment is made. The only way to recover the vehicle is to pay **"without prejudice"** *and then claim for reimbursement through the **Small Claims Courts** procedure at **Magistrates Court**.

If ever you have a complaint about a cycle or auto repair facility, always put your complaint in writing.

For further information, visit our website at www.ca.gov.bm or call 297-7627.

*It means without affecting your legal rights in that you can send a letter offering a settlement without affecting your legal right to defend or proceed as the case may be for the whole lot.



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