

Women account for more than half of all customers who take their vehicles to a repair shop. While female motorists are making more automotive service and repair decisions, they need to take certain steps to ensure that their repair experience is a positive one.

To take control of your automotive service experience, it is essential that you possess the tools to find



the right repair shop, and then communicate with technicians and service advisors once you're inside the shop. The following tips should help:

Do your homework before taking your vehicle for service.

- ❑ Start shopping for a repair shop before you need one. Better decisions are made when you are not rushed.
- ❑ Ask friends and associates for their recommendations. Old-fashioned word-of-mouth is still valuable information.
- ❑ Look for a neat, well-organized facility, with vehicles equal in value to your own in the parking lot, and modern equipment in the service bays.

- ❑ Read your owner's manual and follow the recommended maintenance schedule.

Look for evidence of qualified technicians, such as trade school diplomas, advanced training certificates, and ASE certification – a measure of professionalism.

Once you choose a repair shop...

- ❑ Start off with a minor job. If you are pleased, return with more complicated repairs later.
- ❑ Be prepared to describe the symptoms and supply a written list of recent problems.
- ❑ Mention unusual sounds, odors, changes in acceleration, engine performance, and problems in handling, braking, steering, and vibrations.

You know your vehicle better than anyone else. Since you drive it every day, you know how it feels and sounds. So don't ignore the warning signals.

Stay involved – ask questions

- ❑ *Ask as many questions as you need. Request an explanation in simple terms and definitions.*
- ❑ *Don't rush the service writer or technician to make an on-the-spot diagnosis. Ask to be called and Informed of the problem, course of action, and costs before the work begins.*

- ❑ *Before you leave, be sure you understand all shop policies regarding labor rates, guarantees, and methods of payment.*
- ❑ *Leave a telephone number where you can be reached.*

Better-educated consumers feel confident, informed, and "in control," and are less likely to have a negative experience when taking their vehicles in for service.

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 is 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.*



Questions for My Mechanic

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 high-tech vehicles *need* more, and today's conscientious 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 guess-work out of finding a competent technician.

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

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 almost a half-million ASE technicians at work in every type of repair facility.

*Provided as a public service by
The Bucks County Commissioners*

AUTOMOTIVE

Women in the Driver's Seat: Taking Control of Auto Service and Repair



County of Bucks Department of Consumer Protection/ Weights and Measures

**1260 Almshouse Road
Bldg. G, 4th Floor
Doylestown, PA 18901**

**215-348-6060
1-800-942-2669
www.buckscounty.org**

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