

Automotive Repair Act Consumer's Rights Under the Law

Required Disclosures

Before performing any repair work, repair shops must provide the consumer with a written estimate. Among other items, the estimate must include:

charges for parts, labor and diagnostic test;
description of parts;
disclosure of whether parts are new or used;
disclosure of charges for disassembly, reassembly;
statement of whether repairs are required or suggested;
date, odometer reading, and length of time needed
to repair vehicle (if more than one day);
method for calculation labor costs.

Required Consumer Rights

As a consumer, you have a right to a written estimate. It can be either:

an itemized estimate separating parts and labor,
which the shop cannot exceed by more than 10%; or
a non-itemized estimate stating the total price for repair which the shop
cannot exceed at all.

NOTE: *Consumers may waive their right to an estimate. They may also authorize the shop to perform certain repairs at total costs not to exceed a certain dollar amount.*

Invoices

A repair shop must provide a copy of the invoice to the consumer. Invoices shall indicate:

itemized costs of parts and labor;
odometer reading;
warranties, if any;
total price.

Lien Charges

The Act prohibits facilities from asserting lien charges for any unauthorized repairs.

Payment Upon Pickup

Consumers may remove a vehicle from a facility upon paying for labor actually performed, parts actually installed, parts ordered specifically for consumer's car **if** parts cannot be returned, and storage charges if disclosed to the consumer prior to repairs.

Signs

Auto repair shops must post customers' rights in a visible location. Remember, you are entitled by law to:

a written estimate for repairs costing \$100 or more unless waived or absent fact-to-face contact;
authorize, orally or in writing, repairs which exceed the labor and parts estimated by more than 10% or the non-itemized limited price estimate;
authorize repairs orally or in writing after leaving a vehicle with a repair facility without face-to-face contact between you and facility personnel.

NOTE: *If you have authorized repairs in accordance with the above, you must pay for the repair costs prior to driving away from the premises.*

The New Law

A new law which takes affect January 1, 1998, requires auto repair shops to make specific disclosures to consumers and prohibits certain unlawful practices. This page describes the requirements imposed on these businesses under the Act.

Note: The law does not apply to repairs resulting from collisions, repairs under \$100 or retail merchandise installed at a customer's request for a firm price where there is no diagnosis.

Non-Business Hours

If a consumer leaves a vehicle for repair before the shop opens, the repair facility must:

telephone consumer with price quotation;
obtain consumer's oral consent;
prepare a written estimate;
note on the estimate the name of the person authorizing the repairs, and the date and time when consent was secured.

Unforseen Repairs

If the shop finds the total price will exceed the estimated price, because of unforeseen circumstances, it must obtain the consumer's oral or written consent to proceed with repairs. When a consumer authorizes the shop to proceed with repairs over the telephone, the shop must note the date, time, name of person authorizing the service, the consumer's telephone number, and any additional costs on the estimate or invoice.