



## Car Care Articles

---

### Always go to the pros when looking for automotive service

Vehicles need regular maintenance.

Vehicles require periodic repair.



These are obviously two givens of automobile ownership but they lead directly to a third, which is that at some point you are going to have to find a service and repair facility to perform these tasks. Preferably in a courteous, prompt, professional and cost-effective manner that allows you to drive away confident the job has been done correctly and you've been treated fairly.

The first thing to understand is that the people engaged in servicing and repairing automobiles are as honest as any other types of business operators in Canada today. And like them they need to be profitable, so keeping you happy and making you a repeat customer is extremely important. They are also aware that if you do run into an operation that abuses the faith you've placed in it, you have rights and there are mechanisms in place to help you seek redress.

Taking the time to select a shop that will deliver on your expectations will give you the peace of mind you want the next time you take your vehicle in for service or repair, says Car Care Canada.

The right time to start looking for a service facility isn't just after you've coasted to the shoulder with steam billowing from under the hood. Do a little "shopping around" before you face an emergency situation that could force you into the first place available.

Following the correct maintenance schedule outlined in your vehicle's owner's manual is a good way to start. Taking your car, truck, van or SUV into a shop for a basic "oil change" type service allows you to get a feel for how it conducts its business. If you leave feeling good about how you were treated and the work performed, you'll feel comfortable returning. If you don't, you can look elsewhere.

To start the process of finding a shop you have a number of options. The first one should definitely not be to look for a second rate operation that promises bargain prices. Any shop that is going to provide you with professional service and repair of any of today's highly complex vehicles needs to have made a large investment in properly trained staff and up to date equipment. And to ensure customer satisfaction it will use quality products and parts. It won't stay in business long if it isn't charging a fair price for the work performed.



## Car Care Articles

---

You can telephone a few shops selected at random to check out local prices for basic services and current labor rates.

Selecting a shop located near where you live or work will make the logistics of getting your vehicle serviced easier, and local business people always appreciate being supported by members of their community – a good start to building the rapport that goes hand-in-hand with any business relationship.

If you're new to an area a good source of information is the Car Care Canada website – [www.carcarecanada.ca](http://www.carcarecanada.ca) – which, along with plenty of other useful auto repair and service related information, offers a Find A Shop feature that lists more than 5,000 auto parts retailers, repair facilities, body shops and parts remanufacturers. Finding a shop that specializes in your particular type of vehicle is always a plus.

Or, you can seek recommendations from family members, friends and co-workers. If they've established a good working relationship with a shop, chances are you will too. Letting the shop know you've been referred by an existing customer is always a good idea.

The final decision on where you get your ride fixed or serviced should be yours, however, which means you should meet those you'll be dealing with face-to-face and conduct a personal inspection of the premises.



A well run business will usually welcome you with a clean reception area/waiting room and attentive staff that deals with you promptly and courteously. Most shops will proudly display their business and employee licenses, accreditations and such things as service awards.

If you can, meet the owner or manager, and ask about such things as how long the shop has been in business, how it calculates labor rates and what kind of warranty it offers on work performed. You can also ask about ongoing staff training and such things as whether the shop offers loaner vehicles or a customer shuttle service and if it road tests cars prior to return.

A quick look into the actual working portion of the shop should reveal a clean, uncluttered area equipped with modern looking tools, equipment and diagnostic aids. If you can also meet and chat with the technician who will be working on your vehicle all the better, but if you're dealing only with a service writer, as you will in larger shops, make sure he or she is willing to take the time to fully understand your needs. This is a job that requires patience and understanding of both vehicles and people and as this person is often your main point of contact, make sure you feel comfortable with him or her.



## **Car Care Articles**

---

Once you've selected a service provider and have become comfortable with its operation and level of service don't be shy about letting them know you appreciate their efforts and reward them with your loyalty, both of which will help build a stronger relationship.

The fact that a recent Car Care Canada survey shows almost three-quarters of Canadian motorists have a regular automotive service provider to deal with their needs is proof that the vast majority of these operations are meeting the expectations of their customers.