

Choosing a Mechanic

It is important to be vigilant when choosing a mechanic. The following tips could help in selecting the right mechanic:

- Ask around to see if a good, reliable mechanic is recommended. Get opinions and advice from more than one mechanic to be clear about what the problem is with your vehicle.
- Check online and on social media for recommendations.
- Also check whether the mechanic has certification from a reputable institution.
- Always look for mechanics or garages that are approved by the Land Transport Authority or opt for garages recommended by friends and relatives.

Estimates and repair records

Request an estimate and cost break down of all materials and labour charges for any repair work done to your vehicle. This will protect you from being over-charged by mechanics. Keep all the receipts if you have work done, so you can keep track of what was fixed.

Repair Work

Before the mechanic can do any work on a vehicle, he or she must have your permission for the work you want done.

- If you do not understand what needs to be done, ask for an explanation.
- Don't just agree to whatever repairs are suggested or advised by the mechanic. You might end up with a rebuilt engine when all you wanted was a new fuel pump.
- Ask to see what needs to be fixed and ask for an explanation of what will be done to your car.
- Ask to see the parts that were replaced.
- Don't let anyone tell you that you won't understand. Even if you don't know much about cars, you have the right to be told what work is being done to your car and what you will be paying for.
- Be specific about what you give permission for.
- Ask what the garage does with the parts they remove from cars.
- Consumers also have a right to get their old parts from the mechanic once all works are completed.

After the Repair

- Test drive the vehicle to make sure the repairs conducted is what you wanted and that the car is working properly before you pay for the repair.
- If it is not, return it immediately to the shop and ask the mechanic to fix the repair.
- If you feel you have been unfairly treated in an auto repair transaction, please lodge an official complaint with us immediately.

Tips for best repair job

- Get quotes from several mechanics any time you're facing an expensive repair. Make sure the work includes a warranty or a guarantee on the quality of service.
- Always engage in written agreements with any trader or service provider before payments. Written agreements should set out the timeframe for the work, the total amount to be paid, breakdown of costs and the conditions in place should the repairs not be completed successfully.
- When the work is done, compare the final bill to the price you were originally quoted. Review all the line items before you sign off on the work and pay your bill.
- Ask for an explanation of anything you didn't expect or don't understand.
- To ensure that your faulty parts really were replaced, ask the mechanic for your old parts back.

Know your rights

TO LODGE A COMPLAINT, OR FOR ADVICE

CASE STUDY

A consumer had been promised by a garage mechanic that his vehicle would be repaired within a month. The consumer's vehicle had been involved in an accident so the extensive work would cost \$3000.

Having agreed to the costs and the time frame for repairs, the consumer delivered the vehicle to the garage. But repair works had taken longer than promised and the consumer had started to question the mechanic's credibility. The vehicle was later delivered to his home in his absence and his worst fears were realised. Upon inspection, he noticed that the repairs were poorly done. The air conditioning system, the wheel brace, jack handle and the floor mats were all missing from his vehicle.

He confronted the mechanics who made no effort to complete the repairs or return the missing parts. The consumer later engaged the services of another mechanic to complete the repairs which cost him an extra \$1,000. He then also sought the assistance of the Council.

Upon the Council's intervention, the garage immediately returned the parts and accessories that were in the vehicle when given for repairs.



MECHANICAL SERVICES



PLEASE CONTACT US ON OUR TOLL FREE
NATIONAL CONSUMER HELPLINE 155

OR VISIT US AT:

Head Office
Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade
Suva

Phone: 3300792/3310183

Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West
Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street,
Lautoka

Phone: 6664987

Email: consumerltk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North
Level 1, Lot 41 Raza Properties Ltd
Nasekula Road,
Labasa

Phone: 8812559

Email: colbs@connect.com.fj

Website – www.consumersfiji.org
Facebook- Consumer Council of Fiji
Twitter- @ConsumersFj