

refusing to release the car back to you until repairs are paid for, or (2) by filing certain documents with the county recorder within sixty days after the work is done.

In either event, the garage may be allowed to sell your car and use sale proceeds to pay the mechanic's bill.

It is important to resolve payment disputes, wherever possible, before the garage places a mechanic's lien on your vehicle. If you cannot resolve the dispute, and a mechanic's lien is threatened or imposed, you may wish to seek legal assistance as soon as possible.

Other legal remedies

You may also have legal remedies against the garage or mechanic if they:

- ◆ Falsely tell you that repairs are needed.
- ◆ Charge you more than 10% over the estimate without your permission (if the repairs exceed \$750).
- ◆ Make unauthorized repairs.
- ◆ Dispose of repaired or replaced parts without giving you 3 days' notice.
- ◆ Make other false claims as to quality, price, warranty, or time of completion.

After the Repair

Test drive the vehicle to make sure the repair 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 shop to fix the repair.

If you feel you have been unfairly treated in an auto repair transaction, and cannot resolve the matter on your own, you should consider contacting the Better Business Bureau, the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General's Office, or an attorney.

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TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE, CALL ILS INTAKE:

Anderson:
1-877-323-6260

Evansville:
1-877-323-6260

Gary:
(219) 886-3161

Indianapolis:
1-800-869-0212 or
(317) 631-9410

New Albany:
1-800-892-2776 or
(812) 945-4123

Bloomington:
1-877-323-6260

Fort Wayne:
1-877-323-6260

Hammond:
(219) 853-2360

Lafayette:
1-800-382-7581 or
(765) 423-5327

South Bend:
1-800-288-8121 or
(574) 234-8121

ESPAÑOL 1-877-323-6260

Happy Car, Happy Owner: Auto Repair Tips for Consumers

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<http://www.indianajustice.org>

This is for information only. It is not legal advice. For legal advice, contact an attorney or a Legal Services office.

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Auto repairs can be complicated and costly. Sometimes it is difficult to tell what work has been done. A few tips might help make your next auto repair experience a little easier...

Maintenance

If you can, get your vehicle serviced at the same shop each time you get the oil changed or have other maintenance work done. That way, you can get to know how the business handles your work, and the mechanic can get to know your car. A good mechanic may be able to warn you of problems while they are small, easier and cheaper to fix.

A mechanic can also recommend preventative maintenance that you can do to reduce the need for costly repairs. An example of a preventative maintenance checklist includes:

Antifreeze levels	Tire inflation/wear
Belt inspection	Shock absorbers
Transmission fluid	Exhaust emission
Oil filter	
Air filter	
Brake fluid level	
Battery check	
Wiper blades	
Light bulbs	

Choosing a Mechanic

If you are a regular customer, the mechanic will want to keep you as a happy customer so when more major repairs are needed, you will feel more comfortable dealing with someone you know.

If you don't have a regular mechanic, ask around to see if one is recommended. You can check with the Better Business Bureau to see if there have been any complaints against the mechanic. The Attorney General's Consumer Division also keeps track of consumer complaints against businesses.

Estimates and Repair Records

Request an estimate on any repair work done to your vehicle. 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 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 say "Do whatever needs to be done." 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 a 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.
- ◆ Ask the mechanic if the shop gives a credit for parts that can be sold or can be rebuilt into other vehicles.

What if you can't pay for all the repairs?

Ask for an estimate on any major repairs and find out if you can make payments while you use the car. Usually, you have to be a regular customer before he or she will extend credit. Otherwise, you may have to make payments while the car sits at the garage.

If you cannot make the payments, the garage can put a "mechanic's lien" on your car. This can be done in two ways: (1) by