

Your Repairs: Our Process

Or how I stopped worrying and learned to love My Shop

If you ask most people if they trust their auto repair shop, you will find that only about 50% will say yes. Think about that for a minute. Of all of the vehicle repairs done every week, in the tens of thousands nationwide, only half of those are performed by a trusted source.

To say this information is shocking doesn't quite do it justice. This information leads us down many different paths. Are there that many shops that are doing terrible work and or fraudulent repairs? If so, and as would indicate, people know this information and continue to frequent said facility, why?!? Is this a healthy skepticism, or are some people just never going to fully trust a repair shop? If the former is true that gives me some hope, but if the latter is true it speaks to quite a few very jaded people out there.

In the end this path heads to one conclusion, as far as King's Garage is concerned. Trust is something that is earned. Trust is not, and should not, be freely given without cause. That said we need as a repair facility to do more to earn that trust from our customers. I speak for all of us here when I say we won't be happy until 100% of our customers trust us. I know what you're thinking "There are no shops that have 100%, it is next to impossible!". Next to impossible is not impossible, just in the neighborhood, maybe a few doors down.

We need to communicate better to our customers, both current and future, how it is we operate. Transparency is another aspect of trust after all. To that end I figured I would take this time to explain some of our processes as well as some reasons for how we perform services here at King's Garage. I will attempt to answer questions that I feel are quite common with honest answers, that I sincerely hope, will start to build trust with our customers.

Question 1: How long have you been in business? King's Garage has been in business since 1975 and is still run by the same family.

Question 2: Do you stand behind your work? Absolutely! King's Garage has a nationwide 24 month/24,000 mile warranty on nearly all repairs. There are some repairs that have a different warranty, some more, some less, but these will be noted on your invoice. Printed on every invoice is the contact information for both roadside assistance (comes with all services) and the nationwide warranty program, just in case you are travelling. As a note, if you call this number and are within 25 miles they will bring you back to us, if further they will tow the vehicle to the nearest Auto Value Certified Service Center, which will do everything they can to get you back on the road.

Question 3: Why are auto repairs so expensive! This is a loaded question for a few reasons. On the one hand 'expensive' is more a threshold than an actual price. This is different for everyone and for obvious reasons. On the other hand, I think we can all agree that all money spent on repairs is money that could be spent on something more pressing, dare I say, fun!

To really answer the question, I think it best that I explain how our costs come into play. The following things all contribute, in one way or another, to the cost of a repair.

- Building costs. Both traditional rent or mortgage, to maintenance, repairs and upgrades to our facility. These include heating and cooling, the structure of the building, the parking lot etc.
- Cost of tools. If I told you that a mechanics tool box, completely empty, can cost upwards of \$5,000.00 plus, would you be surprised? Pick your jaws up off the floor and hold on to your hats folks because some of the top end boxes with tops and accessories can cost in the \$25,000.00 to \$35,000.00 range. Yes, seriously. Then we get into the tools themselves. It is easy for a technician to have upwards of \$60,000.00 in equipment, sometimes much more! Don't forget there are some shop owned tools, such as diagnostic equipment (\$6000.00+ for one scan tool), various flush machines, vehicle lifts etc. More on this in the next question.
- Training costs. Believe it or not, we spend a lot of time every year in training. This is necessary for many reasons. It helps keep us sharp and on point and since there are always new systems coming out in vehicles, keeps us informed. I offer up as an example an upcoming training event in Grand Rapids. We are sending 5 people to this event at a cost of \$400.00 each person, for one day of training!
- Diagnosis. We cannot repair your vehicle if we don't know what is wrong with it. You would be surprised how often we get a vehicle from another shop that was unable to correct the customer concern. Our technicians have several decade's worth of experience. There are benefits to having that experience on hand, but it isn't cheap. Nor should it be.

Question 4: What kind of parts do you install on my vehicle? At King's Garage we only use top quality parts. This is a no-brainer, we don't even look at parts that don't meet this one simple criteria: Would I install this on my mother's vehicle? I know it is a bit cliché, but that doesn't make it any less true. We provide all of our services and repairs as if they are being done to our loved one's vehicles. Does this increase the cost of the parts? Yup, sure does. Do we ever consider using a lesser part? Nope. We need to control the quality of our parts, it's just that simple. Don't forget we have also have a warranty in place. If we used inferior parts, we are making a lot of unnecessary work for ourselves, potentially putting customers at risk and wasting their time.

Question 5: Do you install customer supplied parts? The short answer is, no. The slightly longer answer is only under the rarest of circumstances. On occasion someone will have a vehicle that will be very difficult to get parts for. Whether that is due to age or rarity, this does come up. If that is the case, the customer has the parts and is willing to wave our warranty on those parts, then yes, we will perform the repair. In the name of said trust building, we make part of our living on parts profit.

Question 6: Are you more or less expensive than the Dealers? Great question! The answer is it really depends on both the dealer in question and the service being offered or the repair made. I have done hundreds of estimates and I can say with honesty that **most** of the time we are a more reasonable option. Some of this doesn't come from just cost alone. Since most dealers only offer a 12mo warranty on their work, our warranty alone is a great reason to come to us over a dealer. Getting that out of the way, most of the time we are still less expensive, the warranty is just icing on the cake!

Question 7: What the heck are Shop Supplies/Environmental Charge? Shop Supplies are a category charge that covers all of the things we use in the process of repair, diagnosis or service. These charges

cover things like shop rags, cleaners, all of the little clips, bolts, nuts and such that aren't put on the invoice as a separate item. The Environmental Charge handles a small portion of the fees associated with waste fluid disposal. No matter how big the job is, your combined Shop Supplies and Environmental Charges will not exceed \$40.00.

Question 8: **Why should I chose King's Garage over any other shop?** This is difficult to answer without being a bit self-serving, but I will do my best. To be frank, we don't have the best building in the business, we really need a new parking lot and we've quite literally gone to the dogs, but what we do have, we have in spades. We have knowledge, expertise, integrity and honesty, friendly staff, free coffee and very cute dogs! Not that having cute dogs makes us trustworthy, but it does make coming to see us a bit more fun.

Overall our hope is that this bit of information will add a window into how we operate and who we are. We always encourage our customers to be proactive, don't ever be afraid to ask why something needs to be done. Besides, part of my job is to translate between technician speak and English.

Is King's Garage the best choice for you? We certainly hope so! We are, however, grounded enough to know that we aren't going to be perfect for everyone, no one shop is or can be. That's ok, tough to come to grips with, but necessary.

We don't ever wish anyone to have any problems with their vehicle, but we sure appreciate that you trust us to take care of you when do. We look forward to earning your trust and once we have it, to keeping it. Our focus in on building relationships, not making a quick buck at someone else's expense.

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

King's Garage