

Protecting Wisconsin Consumers for 75 Years

Motor vehicle repair

Being given a repair bill that is more than you were told has been illegal in Wisconsin since 1975. The law includes businesses that install or repair accessories – such as stereos and cellular phones – and covers shops that rebuild parts.

Here is what you should know about this law:

- When bringing in your car, pickup, or licensed motorcycle for repairs, you must be offered a written estimate if the bill might exceed \$50. If you do not want an estimate, the shop must still give you a copy of the repair order describing what repairs will be done.
- No unauthorized repairs are allowed. But if you drop off your car before the shop opens with a note to repair something – **and you do not ask them to call you with an estimate** – the shop can charge what it wants.
- When calling for additional authorization, the shop must tell you both the cost for the additional repairs and the new total cost of the complete job. Make sure you leave a telephone number where the shop can reach you.
- The shop must return replaced parts to you if you ask for them **before** repair begins. Warranty parts or parts exchanged for rebuilding need not be returned, but must be made available to you for inspection.
- When work is completed, the shop must provide you with an invoice describing the repairs, replaced parts (specifying if used or rebuilt), and warranties for repairs and parts.

Finding a repair shop

Look for a repair shop before you need one. Ask friends and family to recommend repair shops they trust.

Make sure you ask if the repair work will be under a warranty. Ask about the terms of the warranty. Compare warranty policies when selecting a shop.

Be sure the shop is capable of performing the repairs needed. Look for mechanic certification and shop membership in professional associations.

Get a second opinion

If you are not sure about the work that needs to be done, if the shop recommends additional repairs,

or if it seems too expensive, get a second opinion.

What if you do not pay?

The shop may hold your vehicle until you pay for authorized repairs. However, once you have paid for authorized repairs, the shop cannot keep your vehicle because you refused to pay for **unauthorized repairs**.

Double damages

If the vehicle repair law is violated, you may be able to start an action in Small Claims Court. Wisconsin Statute §100.20(5) enables consumers to recover twice the amount of any monetary damages, court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

For more information

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact the:

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