

## **How to Protect Yourself: Auto Repair Fraud**

*Source: The Florida Attorney General's Office*

Every consumer, at one time or another will face the need to get their car fixed. Auto Repair rip-offs consistently rank as the number 1 consumer complaint throughout the nation. How can you avoid these pitfalls and still keep your car in working order? Consider the following.

### **Find an auto repair shop before you need one.**

This will avoid the pressure of a last minute choice. Ask friends, family members or co-workers to recommend repair shops they trust.

### **Be certain the repair shop honors any existing warranty on your car.**

If not, you may be paying for parts or labor covered by your manufacturers or extended warranty.

### **Be certain the shop is qualified to complete the necessary repair.**

Ask if the shop has experience working on the same type of vehicle as yours and whether they have done this type of repair before.

### **In Florida, each repair shop must register with the State of Florida.**

Ask to see their registration. Check with the agencies listed below to see if complaints have been filed against the shop.

### **If the repair exceeds \$100, the shop MUST give a written estimate.**

Be certain the estimate specifically identifies the condition to be repaired, the parts needed and the anticipated labor charge.

### **The repair shop must contact you before exceeding the estimate by \$10 or 10% whichever is greater.**

### **Shop around for the best deal.**

Compare the estimates of the shops.

### **After the work is completed, the repair shop must provide:**

A legible copy of the repair invoice showing the repair work done to correct the problem, an itemized description of parts and labor charges, as well as any guarantees.

### **Review this document carefully.**

Ask questions if you do not understand anything contained in the ESTIMATE or REPAIR INVOICE.

### **If you have complaints:**

Contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 1-800-HELP-FLA or visit their website at [www.800helpfla.com](http://www.800helpfla.com).