

Ethical Business Practices & Competency Standards

Out of 40 plus transmission repair shops and 470 plus automotive repair shops in the Tucson area, only a few can live up to these 21-point ethics and competency standards. These 21 points are essential for the development of long-term relationships with customers. **All of AASTRO's employees are ever mindful and appreciative of our customers and are always striving to continue to earn the trust that they, our customers, have placed in us by strictly adhering to the following standards.**

Guard yourself against sub-standard workmanship or dubious business practices...demand that your automotive repair facility comply with these 21 points. A company that conforms to these standards and can provide the level of competency outlined in these 21 points, prove that they are capable of performing at the levels necessary to provide you the peace of mind you deserve.

Does Your Automotive Repair Facility Comply?

1. Educate the customer on what repairs and services are needed and why:

When receiving automotive repairs, your service advisor should:

FIRST: Listen to you and assist in translating the problem to 'mechanical' terms that can be understood by an untrained person.

SECOND: Assist the technician in arriving at an accurate diagnosis of the cause of the problem.

THIRD: Advise you of the total cost and an accurate time of completion of the repairs.

FOURTH: Inform you of any other problems noted, while inspecting your vehicle.

FIFTH: Inform you of the manufacturer's recommended maintenance services based on the year, make and mileage of your vehicle.

2. To insure proper diagnosis you should be supplied a standardized diagnostic questionnaire:

To properly diagnose your vehicle's problem, Standardized Diagnostic Questionnaires should be available to gather all necessary information. Ask to see the standards for the performance of a diagnostic. Diagnostic results should be explained to you simply using the 3-C's: Complaint, Cause and Cure.

3. Know the cost before the job begins:

Before any work is done to correct a problem, your repair facility should tell you exactly what the price is and what they will be fixing. However, there are some exceptions you should be aware of.

With the complexity of today's vehicles, many repairs are no longer a simple matter of it being either mechanical or electrical. Now, they may also be hydraulic, electronic or a combination of all five. You may be asked, especially on intermittent drivability problems, to approve initial electronic diagnosis or testing. This is necessary to pin point the problem. Otherwise, you may find yourself paying for parts that you may not have needed.

4. You shouldn't be "sold" anything! If there is something that needs service or repair you should simply be asked for your authorization to perform those services or repairs that are indicated:

Getting your car serviced should not be a high-pressured ordeal. After all it is your car; it is your decision on what repairs should be done. However, you should always be given options. There is always more than one way to proceed with accomplishing the indicated repairs.

5. No repairs should be performed without your express written authorization:

Nothing should be done to your vehicle without your signed approval.

This way you know exactly what repairs are being done and how much it will cost before you receive your bill.

6. Don't exceed quoted price:

No customer should be surprised by the amount of their bill. The price quoted should be the price you pay. However, your repair facility may find that additional repairs are necessary, after they have completed the first repair. Your repair facility should not perform any additional repairs without your approval in advance of those repairs.

7. Is the repair facility a Certified Drug Free Workplace:

All of AASTRO's facilities are a Certified Drug Free Workplace by the State Fund:

(Workers' Compensation Insurance Fund)

When your vehicle is being repaired, you should have the peace of mind knowing that the person working on your vehicle is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. A recent survey points out that 80+% of the drug abusers have jobs! Well, you don't want them having a job where you have your family car repaired.

8. ASE-Certified Technicians:

All of AASTRO's technicians are ASE Certified.

Don't be misled by the ASE sign hanging in most auto repair facilities. Be certain that ALL technicians at your automotive repair facility are ASE Certified.

Each Certification earned shows competency in a different area of automotive repair. An ASE Automotive Master Technician has EIGHT (8) different Certifications with a ninth one in Advanced Engine Performance also available. Make sure your repair shop has their technicians' certifications displayed, showing they have people competent in all areas of auto repair. Any worker that is not ASE certified should only be considered an apprentice, performing repairs supervised by an ASE-Certified Technician, until they have completed the requirements for ASE Certification.

9. Ongoing training for technicians:

Continuing education for all technicians is vital in ensuring the top quality repairs that you should expect from your repair facility. The easiest way for a customer to review the competency of the employees of a facility is to review training certificates that are displayed in the facilities lobby. The more recent the date the more 'up-to-date' the technicians will be. What that means to you is that repairs will more likely to be performed correctly and within an acceptable time frame.

10. The shop should be AAA-Certified Automotive Repair facility.

AASTRO is a AAA of Arizona Certified Automotive Repair Facility.

American Automobile Association of Arizona (AAA) has a very stringent application review process that covers several areas of customer satisfaction levels, equipment and tool mandates and employee training, experience and ASE certifications. Based on their findings, certain repair facilities are then recommended by AAA for their members.

11. Current and advanced equipment to diagnose drivability problems:

Ask your repair facility what equipment they have available to fix your vehicle. Expect them to have scanners updated to handle your vehicle (year, make and model) dual trace lab scopes for wave form analysis, emissions analyzers, leak detection equipment, air conditioning recyclers, electronic databases, and more. However, any automotive repair facility can provide the most current diagnostic equipment. The most important piece of equipment in fixing your vehicle is still a well-trained and experienced technician.

The best repair facilities are the ones that have a group of experienced technicians who know how to use the equipment and the information provided by it. These technicians help each other by sharing their experience and expertise. This large information 'pool' provides a more accurate and timely diagnosis and repair to your vehicle's problem--which means it will ultimately save you money.

12. Use only original equipment standard, or better, parts for the job:

Your automotive repair facility should guarantee all aftermarket parts to be equal to or better than OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) parts. They must always tell you in advance if they plan to use parts that are used, rebuilt or remanufactured.

13. Warranty:

AASTRO provides the customer with one of the most comprehensive written warranties in Arizona.

Expect your repair facility to provide you a complete written warranty that spells out what is covered and for how long the repair is covered on both parts and labor. Something just hand written on the repair order will not give you the coverage that a clearly written warranty will.

14. Delivery of the customer's vehicle:

When you come to pick up your vehicle, an ASE-Certified Service Advisor or manager, not a cashier, should be present to explain all the repairs and answer any questions. You should be given a complete breakdown of the charges and how they were assessed.

15. Post repair customer follow-up:

All customers should receive timely follow-up phone calls, so that the customer can respond to the service they received. Additionally, reminder cards for indicated service intervals should be sent out as applicable.

16. Accountability:

Customer Service Evaluation Cards should be provided to all customers and reviewed weekly to determine a customer satisfaction rating for each technician and service advisor. In addition, the number of customer problems should be tracked for each technician and the results used in performance evaluations.

17. One-stop shopping:

Be wary of small shops that say they "can repair anything." Your vehicle has become increasingly complex and the one-stop repair facilities are few and far between. For example, 95% of all mechanics in the Pima County area are unable (due to lack of experience, training or the specialty tools required) to rebuild or repair damaged transmissions. If you have a transmission problem, these "one-stop repair" shops will send your transmission out to another shop to have it repaired. The shop will then pay for it and then mark it up on your repair order and in most instances have no clear understanding as to the nature or necessity of the repairs that were performed.

18. Facility and staffing requirements:

The repair facility should be large enough and have enough equipment so that they can handle your vehicle's repair in the same day (in most instances). It should be staffed with enough technicians and apprentices to handle all routine repairs on a same-day basis.

A manager must be on duty at all times and have the authority to handle any issue that may arise. There should also be staff dedicated to shuttle customers, pick up parts, and to provide all of the customer service extras, within a reasonable amount of time.

19. No appointment necessary for repairs:

You can't always schedule when your vehicle needs repairs. Expect your automotive repair facility to have the means to work with you, even without an appointment, and have your vehicle repaired the same day (in most cases).

20. Convenient hours of operation:

Does your shop provide full-service repairs on Saturdays, as well as the rest of the workweek? Do they accommodate your schedule with drop boxes, late pick-up or express check-in service? Do they care about fixing your vehicle the same day it was dropped-off, or do their technicians quit working at 4:00 o'clock?

21. Free ride home:

When you leave your car to be serviced, you should expect a free courtesy shuttle to and from home or work in the surrounding area, or, if you prefer, you should be given special rates, through your automotive repair facility, for a rental car while your vehicle is in the shop.

**If your automotive repair shop doesn't meet these standards,
your best option is to continue to look for one that does.**