

WOMEN AT THE WHEEL

Use Your Five Senses For Vehicle Maintenance

(NAPSA)—Mothers teach their children that the five senses—hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch—are important for learning about the world around them. These same senses can also help moms—and women in general— with vehicle maintenance.

According to the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), women now represent 65 percent of the customers who take their vehicles in for service and repair. Women also influence more than 89 percent of vehicle-service purchase decisions, and oversee the spending of more than \$300 billion annually on used vehicles, maintenance, service and repair.

Because more women than ever are not only buying their own cars but taking care of their families' vehicles as well, what can women do to make more-informed choices regarding their vehicle service?

Lea George, marketing analyst for ACDelco, a global leader in automotive replacement parts and services, urges women to use their various senses to help detect problems with their vehicles. This includes feeling or sensing any vibrations, lurching or shimmying while driving; smelling gasoline or coolant; looking at the floor of the garage for any fluid leaks emanating from the vehicle; and listening



Building a relationship with a trusted technician will enable him/her to better understand how you drive and anticipate and advise on your service needs.

for squeaks, clunks, hisses and other abnormal sounds and noting from where they are coming.

“The more knowledgeable the customer, the more accurately she can describe what is wrong with the vehicle,” George says. “That helps the service writer draft a more specific work order, which enables the technician to zero in on that problem and increases the chances he/she will fix the vehicle right the first time.”

George adds the following tips for vehicle owners to further assist service consultants and technicians and to help better their service center experience:

- Write down the symptoms. Take detailed notes on any problems and include if the condition is weather related or if the engine was warm or cold. These written clues will help allow the technician to understand intermittent problems.

- Describe, don't diagnose. Similar to going to the doctor, you want to relate the symptoms but you wouldn't prescribe treatment.

- Tape notes to the steering wheel. The service writer to whom you describe the problems may not be the technician who actually works on your vehicle, but whoever does will likely sit in the driver's seat at some point.

- Understand the service performed. After the diagnosis, expect to receive an explanation of the maintenance or repairs performed on your vehicle. Ask for a signed estimate for parts and labor so there are no surprises at vehicle pickup time.

- Look into purchasing a vehicle service contract. It can provide coverage for your vehicle in the event of mechanical failure beyond the manufacturer's warranty.

ACDelco recommends that motorists get their vehicles serviced at a service center that has ASE-certified technicians. To find an ACDelco parts retailer nearby, log on to acdelco.com or call (800) ACDelco.