



## The Parts in Your Car Make a Difference

Frugal consumers have been a big story this past year. The average consumer has been searching for bargains. Coupon usage is way up as are sales of private label consumer goods. With household budgets strained, it is imperative that consumers get the best value for every dollar spent.

One area where consumers have saved is in car purchases. Many consumers have delayed a new car purchase or bought a used vehicle rather than a new one. In addition, millions of late model vehicles are coming off warranty so the repair and maintenance of these vehicles is now the responsibility of the consumer.

While it is a wise fiscal decision to retain a current vehicle, the repair decisions that consumers make can save them money as well as insure the safety of the vehicle. Certainly, a consumer is wise to maintain a car properly. Putting off scheduled maintenance can cost more in the long run – delaying vital maintenance can result in very costly damage. It is wise both financially and from a safety standpoint to take good care of vehicles as they age. A well maintained car will last longer, deliver significantly better gas mileage, be friendlier to the environment and, most importantly, be safer for you and your family.

By far, independent repair centers offer the best value in car maintenance. There are more independent repair centers than dealerships in many convenient locations. Their technicians are just as well trained – in fact, today's independent shop technicians are better trained and more skilled than ever. And, most importantly, automotive service is their *sole* mission.

A consumer's local repair facility is usually the best choice for everything from minor maintenance to major repairs. Oil changes are a good example. A full service repair shop can change your oil and check out other vital components – tires, filters, radiator, transmission – for just a few dollars more. Those few dollars can add thousands of trouble-free miles to your car – and better gas mileage, too!

One thing consumers should be aware of is the brand of parts being installed in their cars when repairs or maintenance are being performed. Consumers should insist on quality parts from recognized and respected parts companies.

The same rules associated with consumer products do not apply to auto parts. There is no list of ingredients to compare one product from another as with consumer goods. They may fail prematurely, costing consumers more in the long run and may even pose significant safety issues depending on the critical nature of the part.

Cheap auto parts have been flooding the country and it is wise to be aware of this so you can direct the repair shop to install quality parts from full service suppliers – those automotive parts manufacturers that provide essential services such as product specifications, quality control, product liability, research and development. A smart consumer will always ask about the parts when repairs are being performed. Most shops will be glad to share this information with you.

So save on maintenance and repairs by using a good independent repair shop but always “know your parts.” That is the smart choice that will save you money in the long run and will insure your safety as well.

The Automotive Aftermarket Supplier Association is a trade organization representing North American Automotive Aftermarket suppliers. Visit <http://kyp.aftermarketsuppliers.org> for details on the “Know Your Parts” campaign.

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