



State of Connecticut  
Attorney General William Tong

## Quick Tips

### *Automobile Repair in Connecticut*

#### *Repair Shop Licensing*

Connecticut law requires that motor vehicle repairers be licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The DMV [publishes an online list](#) of licensed repair shops in the state, and the Consumer Complaint Center can tell you whether the shop has any pending complaints against it or has been subject to a disciplinary action.

#### *Repair Authorization and Written Estimates*

Connecticut law requires that a repair shop obtain your written authorization that provides an estimate of the maximum cost of parts and labor before performing any work which must be signed by you. In fact, a repair shop must get your consent before charging you for an estimate or diagnosis, and your consent must be in writing if the charge for estimate or diagnosis is \$50 or more. The repair shop must also keep a written record of the specific repairs you requested or a brief description of the problem that requires repair.

Exceptions to this general rule include:

**After hours:** If you leave your vehicle at the repair shop at a time when the shop is not open for business, the estimate of the cost of parts and labor and your authorization to do the work may be given verbally when the shop is open but still need to be recorded on your invoice.

**Unknown problem:** Sometimes a repair technician will not know the cause or extent of a problem until after your vehicle is examined. In this case, the shop cannot give a complete written estimate until the problem is diagnosed. Once the shop learns what repairs may be needed, the shop must notify you, give you an estimate of the maximum cost for parts and labor and obtain your consent before making repairs. If consent is given verbally, the shop must keep a written record of your approval.

**Consent:** You may agree that the repair shop does not have to give you a written estimate. This is called a waiver and is only allowed if it is in writing, signed by you and sets a maximum dollar amount for the repair work.

#### *Know your Rights*

Repairs must be completed on the same business day the vehicle is delivered to the shop unless:

- ~ You are informed at the time you deliver the vehicle that the repairs will not be completed that day;
- ~ You agree to a later date for completion; or
- ~ As soon as the shop knows the repairs will not be completed that day, the shop makes a reasonable effort to notify you and obtain your consent. The shop must make a written record of its efforts and your consent.

After the repairs are completed, the shop must give you a written statement or invoice that itemizes the work done and the parts supplied. If any used or rebuilt parts were used in the repair, that must be noted on the invoice. The invoice must also specifically state any warranty the shop gives on its parts and labor.

You have a right to have any replaced parts returned to you if you make the request before or at the time you give written or oral authorization for the work to be performed. An exception occurs when the parts must be returned by the shop, either to get credit for warranty work or because the parts may be rebuilt, in which case you are entitled to inspect the replaced parts.

#### *Have a Complaint?*

The Department of Motor Vehicles investigates repair-related complaints, such as failure to provide a written estimate, failure to return parts when requested, failure to provide written invoice for repair work or charges for work not done or unnecessary repairs.

If you have a complaint, please contact the DMV's Consumer Complaint Center at 860-263-5405 or at [www.ct.gov/dmv](http://www.ct.gov/dmv).