

Now and Tomorrow Excellence in Everything We Do

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Essential Skills and Apprenticeship

Essential Skills for Success as an Automotive Service Technician

Automotive service technicians use Essential Skills to complete trade-related tasks. Use this fact sheet to:

- · learn how Essential Skills are used on the job;
- find out the skills you need to succeed in your trade; and
- help prepare yourself for your career.



Reading



- Read emails or notes from colleagues.
- Read comments on work orders to understand problems and repair schedules.
- Read instructions and safety warnings on product labels.
- Read reports from manufacturers describing recalls and faults of specific models of automobiles.
- Read repair manuals to diagnose and fix mechanical faults.

Document Use

- Read safety symbols on movable parts.
- Fill out a variety of documents, such as job estimates, warranties, inspection reports and accident forms.
- Study schematic diagrams for information on electrical, hydraulic, coolant and other systems.
- Use work orders to find information on vehicles to be serviced, such as repair needs and descriptions of previous problems.
- Find automotive system faults by interpreting diagnostic graphs and integrating information from other sources.



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Numeracy



- Measure tire pressure using a gauge.
- Monitor levels of oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid and engine coolant.
- Calculate the total cost of repair jobs including parts, labour rates and taxes.
- Measure the tightness of bolts and fasteners with torque wrenches.
- Analyze electrical readings to identify faults, such as an engine that will not start.
- Estimate the useful life remaining for parts, such as tires, brake pads and exhaust systems.
- Measure mechanical parts, such as cylinder walls, brake disks and bearings using callipers, dial micrometers and plastigauge strips.

Writing

- Write brief notes on work orders describing repairs to customers' cars.
- Write brief emails or notes on web forums and technical support sites about unusual or difficult repairs.
- Write long letters for police and insurance investigations describing the causes and results of accidents.

Oral Communication



- Give instructions and guidance to shop helpers.
- Inform supervisors and customers if jobs are going to take longer than expected.
- Explain regular vehicle maintenance procedures to customers.
- Place orders for parts and supplies by telephone.
- Participate in discussion groups to share experiences, discuss problems and learn new methods of increasing productivity and providing customer service.
- Speak to customers and service advisors to obtain information about vehicle repairs.
- Respond to customer complaints regarding quality, cost or duration of repairs.

Working with Others



- Work well independently.
- Assist others as required.

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Thinking



- Decide whether to reorder parts or contact alternate suppliers when the parts needed for repairs are not available.
- Decide which tools to use, procedures to follow and tests to perform in order to diagnose and repair vehicles.
- Find information on stickers, labels, assembly drawings and repair manuals to determine the proper use, application and installation of parts and supplies.
- Decide to replace worn parts when repairs are not feasible or economical.
- Assess the condition of critical parts and systems, such as brakes, tires and exhaust systems.
- Interpret displays on computerized scanning equipment and onboard vehicle sensors to find operational information.
- Determine the reliability of information received from customers and its relevance to repairs.
- Decide on the most efficient course of action to complete various jobs.
- Evaluate the complexity of jobs to determine if they can be successfully completed.

Computer Use

- Use the Internet to gather information, such as technical service bulletins and recall notices.
- Use databases for activities such as reviewing past service information or to complete work orders.
- Use communications software for activities such as exchanging emails with other technicians or manufacturer support specialists.
- Use computer applications and computerized machinery such as diagnostic scanners and wheel alignment machines.

Continuous Learning



- Learn about the latest technology on the job, in organized information sessions and in work discussion groups.
- Read work-related magazines, periodicals and automotive websites.

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For more information on the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program, visit

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