



Tips for vehicle maintenance and physical distancing

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 required people of all ages and backgrounds to make changes in their daily lives. Older men and women were among the groups the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified as high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19. That forced people 65 years and older to be especially cautious when engaging in otherwise normal activities, including having their vehicles serviced.

In recognition of the threat posed by COVID-19, many auto dealerships and service shops implemented changes to their operations to ensure the safety of their employees and their customers, including those in high-risk groups. Seniors can take additional measures to ensure they stay safe while having their vehicles serviced.

• **Inquire about safety measures.** Before booking vehicle maintenance appointments, seniors should call the dealership or body shop to determine what's being done to keep everyone safe. Many such businesses quickly implemented new safety protocols so they should be ready and willing to share this information over the phone. Look for specific information about sanitization



practices. Are vehicle interiors being sprayed with disinfectant before and after maintenance appointments? Are employees wearing masks each day? Are employees being checked for COVID-19 symptoms before each shift? These are some of the simple yet effective measures many dealerships and body shops are taking to ensure the safety of their customers.

• **Ask about pickup service.** Some communities that have reopened are encouraging high-risk segments of

the population to adhere to stay-at-home measures. Elderly men and women are still vulnerable to COVID-19 even if the number of reported cases in their towns has decreased. Pickup service, in which a service shop employee will come pick up and then drop off a customer's car once the work is done, can be a great way for elderly drivers to have their vehicles serviced without going out in public. Even if pickup is not policy, ask if it's possible and request that your vehicle be disinfected upon being returned. If pickup is not an option, ask a younger friend or family member to drive your car in for maintenance in your place.

• **Only visit safe facilities.** Elderly drivers who must visit a dealership or body shop in person should confirm that waiting rooms feature physically distant seating. If possible, drop the car off and then go for a walk or find somewhere safe off the premises to read a book or listen to music while the work is being done.

Elderly drivers who need to have their vehicles serviced can take certain steps to stay safe in the era of social distancing. (MCC)

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