



Motorists need to be 'service savvy'

BRITISH motorists must wise up to the ways of being 'service savvy', a nationwide consumer survey has revealed.

More than half (52%) of the 1,338 private car owners questioned didn't know when their next service was due, according to findings released at the British International Motor Show in London.

Nine per cent also admitted they didn't carry out any basic maintenance and safety checks, such as monitoring tyre pressures and oil levels, in between service intervals.

The research was carried out on behalf of Automotive Technician Accreditation (ATA), the UK's first independently run voluntary scheme which proves the skills and abilities of car technicians to a national standard. This scheme includes a requirement for them to sign and follow a professional code of conduct.

The findings also revealed confusion amongst motorists about the numerous sophisticated systems built into today's cars.

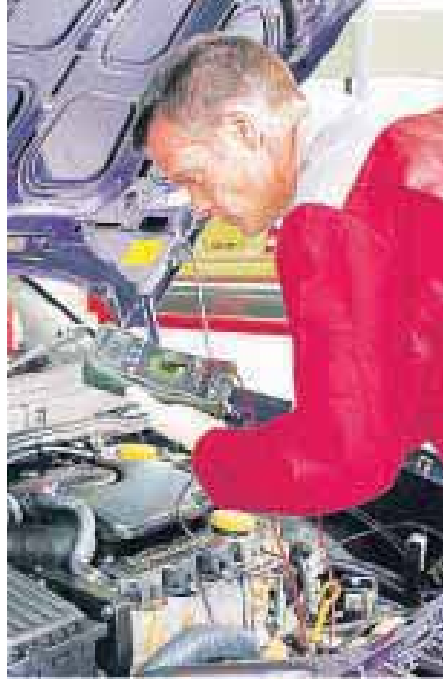
When asked about various acronyms, nearly a third of all respondents (30%) said they had no idea what the likes of EBD (Electronic Brakeforce Distribution), VVT (Variable Valve Timing) and TCS (Traction Control System) actually mean.

The advanced technology now included on most cars has made DIY servicing a thing of the past, with 45% of people saying that, unlike their parents' generation, they know next to nothing about maintaining their car.

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), which regulates the ATA scheme, has launched a campaign to help motorists seek out garages who employ ATA registered technicians. Sporting the slogan, 'You know you're OK with ATA', consumers can search online at <http://www.OKwithATA.com>.

The scheme has the support of consumer groups. Steve Brooker, Senior Policy Advocate at the National Consumer Council, said: "It can be difficult for consumers to find a reliable garage, so we welcome the ATA scheme as a means to reassure motorists that their technician has been properly trained and adheres to a code of conduct."

Sarah Sillars, chief executive of the IMI, said: "Motorists really need to get more service savvy now that cars have become so complex. This means making sure your car is well looked after at the right time."



MAINTENANCE: Car owners are lacking in knowledge about servicing