

Have a Complaint? Need Help?

1. Contact the business and explain your specific complaint.
2. Deliver it in writing. Keep proof that it was received (such as sending it by registered mail), and keep records of all communication with the business.
3. If you are still not satisfied, file a formal complaint with the **Ministry of Consumer Services**.

How to file a complaint with the **Ministry of Consumer Services**:

- Visit the Ministry's website at www.ontario.ca/ConsumerServices.
- Or, call **416-326-8800** or toll-free at **1-800-889-9768**.

VIDEO

Scan the QR barcode on the right with your smartphone to watch a "Know Your Rights" video about car repair estimates.



Be a Smart Consumer ... We Can Help

Ontario's **Ministry of Consumer Services** informs and protects people so they can shop with confidence when buying goods and services.

Visit us:

www.ontario.ca/ConsumerServices

Call us:

Greater Toronto Area 416-326-8800
Toll-free 1-800-889-9768

TTY

Greater Toronto Area 416-229-6086
Toll-free 1-877-666-6545

E-mail us:

consumer@ontario.ca

Smartphone user?



For more information about **car repair estimates** scan this QR barcode with your smartphone.

ESTIMATES

What you need to know



MINISTRY OF CONSUMER SERVICES
www.ontario.ca/ConsumerServices



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Has someone who did work for you ever:

- Charged you for repairs you never asked them to do?
- Charged you a lot more than they said they would?
- Refused to give back something you asked them to repair, unless you paid more money?

Written estimates protect you from these kinds of problems. Make sure you get one before you hire anyone for services such as moving, home renovations, car or appliance repair, or other services.

Once you have a written estimate, the supplier cannot charge you more than 10 per cent above the quote unless you ask them to do more work. Extra work costs more – but you cannot be charged for services you did not approve.

How can I protect myself?

When you ask for an estimate

- Stay away from anyone who does not inspect the job before giving you a quote. Or who only wants to provide a quote over the phone.
- Ask for detailed, written estimates from at least three suppliers.
- Be specific about what you want done. If you want an accurate estimate, you have to be clear and precise.
- Estimates should be on the supplier's proper letterhead and include, among other things:
 - The date.
 - The full name and signature of the person you spoke with.
 - The supplier's name, address and phone number.
 - The number of hours to be billed for doing the work, the hourly rate to be charged.
 - Itemized listing of services to be provided, materials/parts to be used and the cost.
 - Total amount payable.
 - Start and finish dates of the repair work.
- Don't be afraid to negotiate. Be wary of a price that is a lot lower than others. It could be a sign of lower-quality work; it could mean you will see higher charges later.

Did you know?

Businesses are not required by law to provide written estimates except for car repairs. If a supplier refuses to provide a written estimate, go somewhere else.

REMEMBER:

Your consumer rights are protected by law. No one can take those rights away from you.

When you choose a supplier

- Research the company carefully to make sure it is reputable.
- Stay away from a supplier who offers to do the work without charging tax, or demands to be paid in cash – this is often a sign of unprofessional work and, if you have a dispute over terms or payment, you may find yourself unable to enforce your agreement.
- Read your contract thoroughly before signing to ensure you agree with the terms.
- Ensure all terms, conditions and promises are clearly stated in contracts.
- If you make an agreement in your home, you have the right to cancel within 10 days of receiving a written copy.
- If a deposit is required, keep it to a minimum. Ten percent should be adequate in many cases. Some estimates, such as for car repairs, don't usually require any deposit. Others, such as home renovations or landscaping, may require only a 10 per cent deposit on labour charges, but will also require that materials be paid for up front. Large and complex jobs may have a multi-stage payment schedule, which should include a holdback until all work is satisfactorily completed.
- Insist on an invoice; don't pay without it.