

AUTOCAP: A free public service

No one wants problems with car purchases and repairs. Not the consumer, not the auto dealer. Both have a common interest in an auto sale or repair that fully satisfies both parties. The consumer wants a car that performs well. The dealer wants a contented customer who will return again.

But problems do arise. When they do, both customer and dealer expect them to be handled fairly and promptly in a procedure that everyone understands and accepts.

AUTOCAP provides that procedure, free of charge. It is operated through the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association (WANADA) to answer consumer questions, solve problems and mediate disagreements that develop between auto dealers and the public.

AUTOCAP like WANADA, covers metropolitan Washington localities in the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. It is one of 38 such programs throughout the country, coordinated nationally through the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA). AUTOCAP exists for consumers with car questions. Use it when you need its help.

What AUTOCAP Does

AUTOCAP has a professional staff that handles consumer calls, answers questions, reviews consumer letters, discusses problems with dealers and, when necessary, refers cases to a mediation panel which oversees staff actions.

The Panel consists of 3 mediators— one industry representative and 2 consumer professionals from area agencies, all volunteers from the community.

AUTOCAP's effectiveness is demonstrated by its success rate in bringing customers and dealers together on disputes. Four out of five cases are resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

First Step: Talk

If you have a question or problem concerning a car you've bought or had repaired, first try to resolve matters directly with the dealer. That's the best and easiest way. Most issues can be handled satisfactorily at that point, with no outside involvement.

Talk to the dealer. Raise your questions and problems. The dealer is looking for solutions just as you are. Go to someone like the department manager or customer relations director who has the authority to answer questions and settle problems.

If you can't arrive at a mutual understanding, that's the time to call AUTOCAP at (202) 237-7200.

Working Through AUTOCAP

When you bring a case to AUTOCAP, the staff talks to the dealer on your behalf. Most problems are settled this way by direct intercession. Some cases, however, do require review by a mediation panel.

In opening a case, AUTOCAP will provide you with a form requesting a written summary of the problem. It should include:

1. A brief description of the facts with supporting papers (original copies are not required).
2. A statement of the issue at hand, repairs, warranty, new or used car purchase or other matters.
3. A request for what solution you seek.

Direct correspondence to:

AUTOCAP

**Washington Area New Automobile
Dealers Association**

5301 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Suite 210

Washington, DC 20015

Phone: (202) 237-7200

Fax: (202) 237-9090

E-mail: autocap@wanada.org

Case processing by AUTOCAP generally takes three to four weeks. Some matters can be handled more quicker. Others take a good bit longer. It depends on what is involved.

About Non-Dealer Issues

Some problems go beyond the dealer to other levels, such as the auto manufacturers. AUTOCAP seeks to resolve problems with manufacturers and others in the auto industry as well as with dealerships so that consumers don't get caught in the middle. However, AUTOCAP cannot deal with problems involving non-industry entities such as gasoline stations and independent repair shops.

After AUTOCAP's Involvement

AUTOCAP is not a legal channel like the court system and is not a "lemon law" arbitration forum for purposes of any state automotive warranty in D.C., Maryland or Virginia.

A consumer using AUTOCAP is free to go elsewhere if he or she is not satisfied after using the process.

Experience has shown, however, that respondent dealers and auto makers overwhelmingly support the process, and few consumers find it necessary to seek other assistance.

Outside the Washington Area

All cases involving dealers outside the Washington Metropolitan area should be directed to:

NATIONAL AUTOCAP

National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA)

8400 Westpark Drive

McLean, Virginia 22102

(703) 821-7000

AUTOCAP
C/O WANADA
5301 WISCONSIN AVE. NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

