

Important Repair Appointment Tips

Specifically for full service repairs, but generally relevant to any repairs volunteers help with.

How to Approaching Repair Appointments

1. Ask the patron what's wrong/needs doing to their bike? If it's too much to fix all at once, **what's the priority?** Setting realistic expectations is key.
2. Quickly **assess the whole bike** and note any problems. Check for the problem described by the patron but don't assume their diagnosis is correct.
3. Consider the problem holistically. Is what you are fixing the cause of the problem, or just a symptom. Get a second opinion if you're unsure.
4. Tell the patron what work you recommend. Explain your diagnosis and suggested work and give a general estimate of cost if you can.
5. Check before starting that we have the parts required.
6. Do the work. **Focus on the main issue.** Ignore peripheral problems unless there's time to fix them, and you'll avoid getting sucked into a 'repair vortex'.
7. When finished, tell the patron about any other problems that you noticed so they are aware of them.

General Tips

Repair expectations and time

- Full service repairs are '*while you wait*'. They are aimed at fixing specific problems (flat tire, bad shifting, etc.), not doing full overhauls/big projects.
- Some patrons have unrealistic expectations and it's important to set boundaries. For instance, many people are unaware how time consuming fender/rack installs are. It's fine to decline such requests if it's more than we can fit in.
- If you're unsure how long a repair will take, tell the patron you'll start with the most essential work and do more if there is time.
- Some repairs will inevitably go over time even with good planning and expectations. For instance, you might make a mistake that needs fixing. How long you spend on a bike is ultimately up to you, but be mindful of how busy the shop is/if we expect it to get busier.

Difficult bikes & repairs

- Use neutral language when describing low-quality bikes (i.e. BSOs: *bike shaped objects*) that you think might not be worth fixing. Use terms like 'entry level' or 'well worn' rather than 'crappy' or 'trashed'.
- Check with the bike's owner before undertaking any risky repairs (e.g explain that straightening a bent derailleur hanger might snap it)
- If we cannot help someone who has prepaid, we can refund their appointment fee. Let the staff know if this is needed.
- If a customer is difficult, or becomes upset let a staff member know.

Mistakes and learning

- If you make a mistake, break something or can't fix a bike, don't panic. This is a learning space, not a commercial shop and most patrons understand this and are patient and appreciative.
- If something gets damaged or you need help, tell a staff member or another volunteer.
- Take breaks! Pushing on without needed rests is an easy way to make mistakes.