

Auto Skills Lab Policies and FAQs

Livework is defined as utilizing student labor to service and repair vehicles owned by the public.

MPC Automotive Technology Department accepts livework primarily in the AUTO 161/62 (Supervised Trade Experience) classes to help achieve the goals and mission statement of the training program. It is used to complement the curriculum and provide valuable learning opportunities for the students. Livework should not place any demands on the instructor or the student that would distract from the delivery of student learning. **The primary goal is student learning and not providing a low cost alternative for automotive repair. Please keep this in mind when you bring your vehicle in for service.**

Jobs are selected on the following criteria:

- ✓ **Will the job be a benefit to student learning?** Most of our students are preparing for entry level employment in the automotive service industry. Entry level technicians generally perform routine maintenance operations (fluid changes, tire rotations, brake inspections, etc...).
- ✓ **Does the MPC Automotive Technology Program have the correct tools and information to properly service the vehicle?** We can service most domestic vehicles and Asian imports; however, some European vehicles require very specialized tools and equipment.

It should also be noted that:

- We are not a professional shop and cannot offer the level of service customers are accustomed to in the retail world.
- We do not accept vague, intermittent, or in-depth car problems that no one has been able to fix.

- We will make every effort to ensure the job is finished by the end of the class period; however, if it doesn't get done, it may have to wait until the next class meeting.
- Only by-the-book repairs and services are done in accordance with industry "best practices".
- We do not require payment for any student labor. Donations will be accepted and directed back to the students through our "High Achievement Award"

Auto Lab Frequently Asked Questions

How do I make an appointment?

Appointments are handled entirely online through the MPC website. If you are interested in having the students service your vehicle, please go to the Automotive Technology page. From there, you should find links to the Auto Skills Lab online form. We will review the request and, if it's a good match for our students, we'll typically email you 48 hours prior to when the class meets to confirm your appointment. The class meets Fridays at 1pm. Please note that, in some cases, it may be a week before we respond.

Why are some vehicles turned away for others seem to get in week-after-week?

Please remember the primary goal of the class is student learning. We are trying to create valuable learning experiences for our students. There are some vehicles that we do not have the correct tools or information to service. In which case, the students become frustrated and the learning opportunity is lost. Also, some jobs are beyond the skill level of many of our students. Again, this leads to problems and frustration that detracts from the primary goal. The work must not place any demands on the instructor or the student that would distract from the delivery of student learning.

Do I need to supply the parts?

No, we can supply the parts and supplies needed to service your vehicle. However, you also have the option of supplying your own. You may be able to find parts cheaper than we have to offer but it should be noted that not all parts are created equal. As with anything, you get what you pay for. We supply only high quality aftermarket or dealership parts. As we say to our students: "Don't let crappy parts make you look like a crappy technician"

How much does it cost?

You are only required to reimburse us for parts and materials used; however, donations for labor are accepted and encouraged. These donations benefit the student technicians in many ways. First, it sends a clear message to the student that says they are learning something valuable. This goes a long way in terms of motivation and encouragement. Second, almost all the money collected goes to the students in the form of tool scholarships. See below.

The suggested donation of \$30/hour is roughly **one quarter** of the industry standard. It's a real bargain for high quality automotive service.

How do I pay?

We currently only accept checks as payment. Checks can be made payable to "MPC" with "Auto Lab" in the notes line.

What do you do with the donations you collect?

The donations go into a trust account on campus. At the end of the school year, the money is used mainly to fund *our High Achievement Award*. This is a tool scholarship that is given to any student that meets an ambitious set of standards devised by our instruction staff in collaboration with industry representatives. For this year, three deserving students will likely earn the award. The tool scholarship is a tool box (with tools) valued at \$3000. It is an entry –level set that is typically required for employment.

Some of the money is also used to offset the cost of shop supplies and to fund part of our MPC Automotive Technology Graduation and Awards Ceremony.

Where and when do I drop my vehicle off?

The Auto Lab operates on all Friday afternoons during the spring and fall semesters (with the exception of scheduled holidays). The typical drop-off time is between 12:30 and 1pm at the MPC Automotive Technology Building. There will be a service advisor stationed in the classroom to check you in. The students start work at 1pm.

Can I drop my vehicle off early?

Yes. There is an afterhours key drop box located on the front of the Automotive Technology building. Please park your car on the front lot and place the keys the drop box. We will call you to confirm before starting any work.

When will my vehicle be ready for pick-up?

Even if it's just an oil change or something "quick", plan to leave your vehicle until 5pm. While the students are honing their skills and learning to work efficiently, we still encourage them to be thorough above all else. As such, we try to avoid pressuring students to complete a job. Unless we call you to let you know otherwise, the vehicle can be picked-up between 5 and 6pm.

Can I pick up my vehicle after 6pm?

Provided you have an extra key, we can park the vehicle on our front lot for pick-up anytime. The keys will be hidden under the floor mat and the doors locked.

How can I be sure the students know what they're doing and that the work performed will be done properly?

The students only perform service procedures they have been trained to do. In addition, the students are closely supervised and all vehicles are inspected and test driven by the instructor.

It should also be noted that our students, on average, are more thorough than the average professional technician. They are not production oriented and, as such, have more time to do the job right.

Will the work the students do void my warranty?

No. The students do service and repair work that is strictly in line with manufacturer recommended procedures; everything is by-the-book. As such, it cannot void any warranty. There is a wealth of legal precedent in the industry to back this up.

What if I have a problem with my vehicle that seems related to the service performed after it leaves the MPC Auto Shop?

It is important to note that problems have been few and far between. However, if you notice something is not working properly, please return immediately to the shop. If it doesn't show-up until later, please send an email ASAP to jlawrence@mpc.edu or call 831-264-3048. We will make every effort to deal with problems as quickly as possible.

What if a mistake that the students make causes significant damage to my vehicle?

The Auto Lab has been in operation for the last six years and has never had a situation where a customer vehicle has been seriously damaged. That being said,

it is important to note that it could happen in the future. It is also important to note that there is no budget to cover substantial repairs. When you sign the repair order, you are releasing MPC and the MPC Auto Tech staff and students from any financial responsibility related to the repair. The repairs are done at the owner's risk.

For any additional information, please contact James Lawrence at jlawrence@mpc.edu or 831-646-4189.