

# CALIFORNIA

## OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

### AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE ADVISORS

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INTEREST AREA  
CONVENTIONAL



#### WHAT DOES AN AUTO SERVICE ADVISOR DO?

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE ADVISORS work in new and used automobile dealerships and large automobile repair shops. They greet customers, listen to their description of the problems or service needed, determine the type of service required, and prepare service orders. If a vehicle requires additional repairs not covered in the original order, they estimate the added cost and telephone the customer for permission to do the work. They also advise customers on other available services.

Automotive Service Advisors, sometimes known as service writers handle the administrative and customer relations functions of the service department. Their work influences customer satisfaction and their willingness to do business with the dealer again.

Automotive Service Advisors perform the following tasks:

- Advise customers about necessary service for routine maintenance.
- Help identify a mechanical problem by questioning the customer or doing a visual inspection or road test.
- Confer with customers about inspection results, recommend corrective procedures, and prepare work order for needed repairs.
- Prepare a repair order showing time, cost, and labor estimates for service.
- Write a brief description of the problem on the repair order to help the mechanic locate the problem.
- Explain the work performed and the charges to the customer.
- Handle customer complaints.

#### WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Automotive Service Advisors include:

- Troubleshooting – Determining causes of operating errors and deciding what to do about it.
- Reading Comprehension – Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Writing – Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- Speaking – Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- Active Listening – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

- Mechanical – Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- Engineering and Technology – Knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, procedures, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.
- Problem Sensitivity – The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
- Number Facility – The ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.

Good communication skills and sales ability are necessary for success in this occupation. Advisors need the ability to work with customers who are concerned about the amount and cost of the work to be done to their automobiles. They also need to be able to sell the service of the dealership or garage.

### WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

This job generally requires standing on one's feet all day. Unlike the mechanic's job, it is removed from dirt and grease. The work day is broken into relatively quiet periods and extremely busy times, such as the early morning when customers bring in their automobiles for service and repair and in the evening when they return to pick up their automobiles. An Automotive Service Advisor's work may not be physically strenuous, but may be emotionally exhausting at times. They spend a large amount of time interacting with the public. They may need to calm stressed, irate, and dissatisfied customers.

#### **Union Membership**

Service Advisors who are union members belong to Automotive Machinist Locals of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

### WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment

Development Department (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID) and represents the broad occupational group Cost Estimators which includes Automotive Service Advisors:

#### Cost Estimators

Estimated number of workers in 2002:	23,800
Estimated number of workers in 2012:	30,100
Projected Growth 2002-2012:	26.5%
Est. openings due to separations by 2012:	5,300

*These figures do not include self-employment.*

This occupation will grow faster than average compared with all occupations in California.

There will be an estimated 1,160 job opportunities per year in this occupation during the projections period.

#### **Trends**

Automotive Service Advisors with broad knowledge of automotive systems will be competitive in the job market. Also those with the communication skills to gain customer confidence and the sales ability to sell related and additional services will be in demand.

### WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

#### **California Earnings**

The following information is from the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID and represents the broad occupational group Cost Estimators which includes Automotive Service Advisors:

#### Cost Estimators 2005 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$21.02	to	\$36.38
Average hourly wage	\$29.55		
Average annual wage	\$61,474		

*These figures do not include self-employment.*

No formal wage survey is available for Automotive Service Advisors, but an informal sampling of jobs listed on America's Job Bank shows wages somewhat lower than those listed here.

**Hours**

Service Advisors generally work from early morning to early evening and may be expected to work on Saturdays. Some Automotive Service Advisors no longer work a traditional day shift, since some dealerships are now open on the weekends or late in the evening for customer convenience.

**Benefits**

Fringe benefits can include vacation, sick leave, health insurance, and a retirement plan.

**HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?**

**Education and Training**

Most employers prefer to hire applicants with some automotive experience and at least a high school education. Employers also recommend high school or community college courses in sales and marketing, business math, and interpersonal communication. Basic computer knowledge can be useful, but data entry skills are usually learned on the job.

A driver's license and a good driving record is mandatory. A basic mechanical background is helpful.

Automotive Service Advisors are trained on the job under the guidance of experienced Service Advisors and the service manager. Trainees may begin by helping route repair orders, compute cost, and determine time required for repairs. Some trainees attend automobile manufacturer training programs. Often trainees supplement on-the-job training with vocational courses in automobile mechanics.

**Licensing and Certification**

Automotive Service Advisors are not required to have a license or certificate to work in California. However, certification can help with career development and higher pay. Contact Automotive Service Excellence for information about testing and certification for automobile service consultant.

**Continuing Education**

While continuing education is not required, Automotive Service Advisors keep up with changes in automobile technology through on-the-job experience or employer-sponsored training programs offered by automobile manufacturers.

**HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?**

Applying directly to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Most Automotive Service Advisors are employed in the new and used car dealer industry.

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- Automobile Dealers - New Cars
- Automobile Dealers - Used Cars
- Automotive Repairing and Service

The following Internet resources can be helpful to the job search process:

America's Career InfoNet  
[www.acinet.org](http://www.acinet.org)

America's Job Bank  
[www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us)

CalJOBS<sup>SM</sup>  
[www.caljobs.ca.gov](http://www.caljobs.ca.gov)

Job Search and Resume Writing  
[www.worksmart.ca.gov/success\\_tips\\_menu.html](http://www.worksmart.ca.gov/success_tips_menu.html)

Local Job Service Offices  
[www.edd.ca.gov/jsrep/jsloc.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/jsrep/jsloc.htm)

Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) Online  
<http://online.onetcenter.org>

One-Stop Career Centers List  
[www.edd.ca.gov/ONE-STOP/pic.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/ONE-STOP/pic.htm)

For statewide and local projections, wages, employers by county, and other occupational information go to [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov) and select *Find an Occupation Profile*.

### WHERE CAN THE JOB LEAD?

In automobile dealerships and large automobile repair shops, qualified Service Advisors can advance to the position of service manager. Occasionally, Service Advisors establish their own independent repair shops.

### OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Automotive Service Excellence  
 National Institute for Automotive  
 Service Excellence (ASE)  
 101 Blue Seal Drive, S.E. Suite 101  
 Leesburg, VA 20175  
 (703) 669-6600  
[www.asecert.org](http://www.asecert.org)

Automotive Service Councils of California  
 758 University Avenue  
 Sacramento, CA 95825  
 (800) 810-4272  
[www.ascca.com](http://www.ascca.com)

### RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Automobile Mechanics	No. 24
Parts Salespersons	No. 237

### OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

**SOC** (*Standard Occupational Classification*)  
 Cost Estimators 13-1051

**O\*NET** (*Occupational Information Network*)  
 Cost Estimators 13-1051.00

**OES** (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)  
 Cost Estimators 21902