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Auto repair shop, AG resolve allegations

TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER: The state attorney general's office and a city auto repair shop have signed an agreement resolving allegations that the shop failed to obtain consumer authorization before performing repair work and did not provide a customer with invoices for work performed.

The agreement, called an Assurance of Discontinuance, has been filed in Suffolk Superior Court. In it, the firm, Central Auto Works, 78 Canterbury St., agrees to pay \$10,000 into a restitution fund, \$5,000 in civil penalties, and \$10,000 in suspended penalties. The restitution fund will be used to pay any legitimate claims as a result of allegations brought by state prosecutors.

Attorney General Martha Coakley said in a press release issued during the weekend that the action stemmed from a complaint received in 2006 that the company had violated state law by failing to maintain essential documentation that resulted in an insurance company's inability to monitor the repair work it insured. The company has been in compliance with regulations since the state began monitoring its actions that year, she said.

Ms. Coakley said consumers in need of auto repairs should be aware of the following rights under state regulations:

To get a written estimate before repairs are made, unless you sign a specific waiver stating a maximum cost.

To know if there will be any charge for diagnosing your car problem.

To be contacted before any work is done if the repair cost cannot be determined immediately.

To be asked to authorize any additional repairs that are found to be necessary as the work progresses.

Not to be charged more than \$10 over the estimate, unless you are contacted and approve the higher amount.

To get back your old parts.

To receive an itemized bill listing all parts and labor, unless work is done based on a flat rate posted in the shop.

Not to be charged for unnecessary repairs, or for repairs that were not made.

To expect that ads for repairs will include the total charge for the work.

To same-day repairs, unless you agree to a longer period.

To know in advance if there will be any storage charges.

To have shoddy repair work corrected at no charge.
