

N F O C F g r o u p

**AirCare Certified Repair Shops
Memo Report**

May 2003

R0876/KC

Prepared by • Préparé par

NFO CFgroup

Presented to • Présenté à

**Envirotest Canada
Burnaby, B.C.**



Memorandum

To: Kevin Boothroyd, Envirotest

Date: May 30, 2003

From: Kelvin Chan, NFO CFgroup

Copy: Sheila Hartmann, Peter Hill; TransLink

Ref: R0876—AirCare Certified Repair Shops Research

BACKGROUND

When a vehicle fails an AirCare test, the owner is given an informational brochure that contains a list of Certified AirCare Repair shops. AirCare is considering a change to the brochure that is presently being distributed. The revised brochure could include information on the number of repairs each Certified Repair Shop performed and the percent of these repairs that received a “pass” when the vehicles were re-inspected.

AirCare is interested in evaluating general attitudes toward having repairs performed at various types of repair shops. Specifically, they are interested in knowing whether car owners have a preference for certified or non-certified shops and whether additional information (i.e., pass/fail track record of each shop) could ultimately increase usage of Certified Repair Shops. In order to obtain a measure of response from car owners, AirCare commissioned NFO CFgroup Inc. to conduct a telephone survey with motorists who recently failed AirCare.

A total of 100 telephone interviews was conducted from NFO CFgroup's call facility in Vancouver between May 14 and 21, 2003. Using lists provided in confidence by AirCare, interviews were conducted with motorists who recently failed their AirCare test. See Methodology for details of the study implementation.

Key Findings

Following their vehicle's failure of an AirCare test, many motorists have different perspectives on who is best qualified to repair their vehicles. A small number prefer to take their vehicle to the regular mechanic or fix the vehicles themselves. Most motorists are open to new options and many would consider an AirCare Certified Repair Shop.

Actions After Vehicle Failed AirCare

Seventy-four percent of motorists who failed their AirCare test arranged for their vehicles to be repaired. Another 18% say that they have not had time to make their repairs. A small number had their vehicle retested and it passed without the need for any repairs (5%), while the rest parked or sold their vehicle (3%).

For the motorists who went to have their vehicles repaired after failing AirCare, most chose to go to a local gas station or small neighbourhood repair shop (61%). There is a split in the number of motorists who went to a major repair chain (15%) versus those who either did the repairs themselves or used a friend or backyard mechanic (15%). Less than one-in-ten motorists (9%) went to a car dealership for repairs.

Overall, 73% of motorists who used a commercial repair shop used an AirCare Certified Repair Shop for their repairs, 14% did not and 13% are unsure or did not know whether their mechanic is AirCare certified or not.

AirCare Brochure Usage

When a vehicle fails the AirCare test, motorists are given a brochure containing a list of AirCare Certified Repair Shops. Awareness of the brochure is very high (82% of these motorists recall receiving this brochure) and 34% of motorists consulted the brochure in order to find an AirCare Certified Repair Shop. However, some motorists may have known of AirCare Certified Repair Shops without the need to consult the brochure.

Attitudes Towards Repair Shops

Car owners were asked to rate a series of statements regarding their opinions and impressions of various types of repair shops. These motorists trust their vehicles to their regular mechanic or repair shop—69% agree that it will be less costly to go to their regular mechanic (41% agree strongly and 28% agree somewhat). In addition, 66% of motorists believe that going to their regular repair shop gives them a better chance of passing an AirCare test, than by going somewhere new (45% agree strongly and 21% agree somewhat).

One-half of motorists show confidence in repairs done by Certified Repair Shops:

- Approximately one-half of motorists (51%) agree that an AirCare Certified Repair Shop is their best option if their vehicle fails AirCare; and,
- An even higher 59% believe that the proper repairs will be done correctly at an AirCare Certified Repair Shop.

Despite this confidence, motorists have some concerns about using an AirCare Certified Repair Shop:

- One-half of motorists believe that AirCare Certified Repair Shops charge more for repairs than non-certified shops. Twenty-four percent of motorists disagree with this statement and 26% do not know; and,
- 61% of motorists agree that using an AirCare Certified Repair Shop will not guarantee that their vehicle will pass AirCare after the repairs are done.

Likelihood Of Considering Certified Repair Shops

If a track record (the number and percent of repairs that receive a “pass” when re-inspected) were provided for each AirCare Certified Repair Shop, 72% of motorists say that they would be likely to consider one of these shops (35% are very likely and 37% somewhat likely).

Furthermore, 70% agree strongly or somewhat that such a track record would help them pick a Certified Repair Shop. The main reasons for considering an AirCare Certified Repair Shop include:

- The belief that a track record provides more information to make informed decision and offers an indicator of competence; and,
- The belief that being AirCare certified makes the shop more trustworthy and knowledgeable.

Despite providing a track record, 24% are unlikely to use an AirCare Certified Repair Shops. These motorists believe that:

- AirCare Certified Repair Shops charge more;
- AirCare is not to be trusted or believed; and,
- They have no relationship with AirCare Certified Repair Shop and would prefer to go to a mechanic that they know.

CONCLUSIONS

The brochure currently supports the AirCare Certified Repair Shops program. It is recalled by 82% and is consulted by one-third of motorists of failed vehicles who use it to select an AirCare Certified Repair Shop. Most motorists use a commercial repair shop (85%) and, of these, 73% use an AirCare Certified Repair Shop. If the brochure were to include a track record, 35% of motorist would be “very likely” and 37% would be “somewhat likely” to consider an AirCare Certified Repair Shop *if their vehicle failed another AirCare inspection*. Thus, we conclude that the majority of motorists who consult this brochure would be influenced by the addition of “track record” information in the brochure.

Over one-half of motorists in this survey confirmed that their expectations would be high if they use an AirCare Certified Repair Shop (i.e., 59% trust that the repairs will be done correctly). As provision of track record data would, presumably, further heighten expectations, it will be imperative to maintain high standards for service delivery in addition to supporting the program with the brochure. Otherwise, there is a potential risk of backlash in the event that heightened expectations cannot be met.

Finally, there are barriers to the use of AirCare Certified Repair Shops. These include a perceived premium price, the trust and relationships with motorists' existing mechanics and the fact that many motorists are aware that certification is still not the same as a guarantee.

The Methodology

A total of 100 telephone interviews was conducted between May 14 and 21, 2003 with a sample of motorists who confirmed that their vehicles had recently failed AirCare.

The sample used in this survey was provided to NFO CFgroup by AirCare in electronic format. It consisted of motorists whose vehicles failed AirCare in the past two months. From a regional list of 800 motorists provided by AirCare, NFO CFgroup designed a sample of 100 proportionate to the regional distribution of failed vehicles in the list of 800 motorists.

Sample Design

	Total Sample		Actual Telephone Counts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total - Actual	(800)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	#	%	#	%
Locations:				
Abbotsford	49	6	6	6
Aldergrove	9	1	1	1
Burnaby	41	5	5	5
Chilliwack	29	4	5	5
Coquitlam	29	4	3	3
Delta	43	5	5	5
Langley	47	6	6	6
Maple Ridge	33	4	4	4
Mission	18	2	2	2
New Westminster	24	3	4	4
North Vancouver	35	4	4	4
Pitt Meadows	8	1	1	1
Port Coquitlam	17	2	3	3
Port Moody	12	2	2	2
Richmond	55	7	7	7
Surrey	154	19	19	19
Vancouver	149	19	19	19
West Vancouver	9	1	1	1
White Rock	7	1	1	1
Other Municipalities	32	4	2	2

The results of the last call attempts made are detailed in the following record of call.

Record Of Call

	Number	Percent
Total Sample -	(544)	(100)
	#	%
Not In Service	16	3
Non-Residential	34	6
Sample In Frame	494	91
<hr/>		
Net Sample In Frame** -	(494)	(100)
	#	%
Total Willing Respondents	112	23
Completed Interviews	100	20
Disqualified—Did Not Fail AirCare	12	2
Refusals	60	12
Respondent Not Available	12	2
Respondent Ill/Never Available	80	16
Language Barrier	9	2
Appointment	8	2
No Reply	4	1
Engaged	2	*
Quota Failure	184	37
Answering Machine	21	4

* Equals less than one-half of one percent.

** Sample in frame is the total number of usable telephone numbers. It is calculated by subtracting the not in service and non-residential numbers from the total sample.

The questionnaire was developed by NFO CFgroup in consultation with the management of AirCare and TransLink. Prior to start of interviewing, a pretest of four interviews was conducted to ensure the workability of the questionnaire and to finalize question wording and sequencing. All telephone interviews were conducted by trained, experienced interviewers working from NFO CFgroup's call centre facility in Vancouver.

All calls were placed between 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. on weekdays and between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on weekends to ensure the inclusion of those who are frequently busy or not at home. Approximately 12% of the interviews were either partially or completely monitored for validation. Up to five calls were made to each sample listing in an attempt to obtain a completed interview with selected respondents, thus increasing the possibility of completing interviews with those individuals who are frequently busy or not at home.

The reader is cautioned that the survey results are subject to margins of error. The overall sampling error for 100 total interviews at the 90% confidence level is approximately $\pm 8.3\%$. For example, if 50% of all respondents surveyed stated that they would use an AirCare Certified Repair Shop, then we can be sure, nine times out of ten, that if the entire population had been interviewed, the proportion would lie between 41.7% and 58.3%.