

## **NOVEMBER 7, 2006**

### **Girls' Garage Gripes - Women Drivers Risking Their Lives by Avoiding a Trip to the Garage**

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM--(CCN Matthews - Nov. 8, 2006) - More than four million female drivers admit to putting their lives at risk by continuing to drive faulty, and potentially un-roadworthy, cars because they dislike the experience of visiting a garage, according to a new report out today.

The 'Girls & Garages' survey from Sheilas' Wheels - a car insurer designed for the female driver - shows that a staggering 30% of women have continued to drive their car around for more than a month before taking it to a garage knowing there's a fault that needs investigating.

Almost half (47%) of female motorists say visiting a garage is an ordeal they'd rather avoid. In fact, a fifth (20%) of women say they would rather go to the doctors - an experience that few look forward to - than take their car into a garage for a service or repair.

Despite the fact that three fifths (61%) of women currently take their car into a garage on their own, 39% of them say they would prefer to take someone along with them if they were able to - such as a partner, friend or relative. One in ten female drivers (12%) currently arranges for someone else to take their car in on their behalf to avoid the garage experience altogether.

The report reveals that the main reasons why women are put-off garages is because the experience is too 'blokey' (39%); the staff come across as patronising and rude (27%); and the atmosphere makes them feel intimidated (23%).

Sheilas' Wheels exclusively uses 'female-friendly' repairers who receive additional guidelines and advice to be more receptive to women's needs. They follow a code of practice to better meet the individual requirements of female motorists, such as helping with child car seats, arranging visits to fit around school runs, offering flexible drop-off and pick-up times during daylight hours, and so on.

Jacky Brown, spokesperson for Sheilas' Wheels says: "It's astounding that so many women motorists are potentially putting their lives on the line by driving around in cars that they know have a fault, just to avoid visiting a garage.

"With over 14 million female drivers behind the wheel on UK roads, it makes sense that their specific needs are met. Sheilas' Wheels is urging the motor industry to take action and encourage female drivers to steer towards, rather than steer clear, of garages if their vehicles are in need of maintenance, servicing or repair. After all, it's in their interest from a business point of view."

The 'Girls & Garages' report also reveals the top five things garages can do to make dealing with them a better experience:

1. Offer transparent pricing structures for labour and parts (63%)
2. Provide clearer and more honest information (55%)
3. Ensure that receptions are manned by friendly and welcoming staff (41%)
4. Improve waiting areas - make them clean and more comfortable (39%)
5. Improve the levels of customer service overall (34%)