

Waiting On Wheels? Call Kurtis Investigates How Supply Chain Issues Are Impacting Car Repairs

CBS13 Sacramento

ROSEVILLE (CBS13) — After waiting five months to get a new gas tank, a Roseville viewer called Kurtis to investigate cars that aren't getting fixed because of supply chain issues.

Vicki Robinson was out to dinner in Roseville last November when a thief drilled a hole in her gas tank to siphon out fuel. Undriveable, the car was towed to the local Hyundai dealership where it has sat awaiting a new part.

"It makes me feel helpless," Vicki said. "I've been told that there's just nothing they can do, the part that's needed to fix my car, get it operational, is on backorder with no estimated time of delivery."

Vicki said she was told that if the dealership couldn't find a new gas tank, no one would. So she had to wait. She said the dealership didn't provide a loaner, which forced her to rent a car for \$200 a week, all while making car payments and her insurance premium for a vehicle she couldn't drive.

"What do you do? If you don't go out and hire a high-powered attorney, what do you do?" she asked. "You just have to take no for an answer. You just have to wait."

In fact, an August 2021 report by the automotive research firm, IMR, Inc., found that 100% of mechanics they surveyed reported it was taking longer to complete vehicle service. And the most common reason they listed? A delay in parts.

So that got the Call Kurtis team wondering how long someone should wait for a part before demanding a better solution from their insurance company.

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Amy Bach, executive director of United Policyholders, a nonprofit consumer advocacy group for insurance policyholders, acknowledges that the law doesn't give a clear timeframe for such a situation, but notes that an insurer has a maximum of 40 days to approve or deny a claim. But even then, they can ask for more time.

"It's their job to put you where you were before a loss, right?" she asked. "[Vicki] bought insurance so that if something went wrong she would have financial protection, and it doesn't seem like she's getting that."

She said that you should demand your insurance company cover a rental car, even if you don't have rental protection. You could also try asking your insurer to total your car and cut you a check, but that's not a good solution if you owe more than your car is worth.

Tired of waiting and feeling like she'd exhausted all possible avenues trying to get her car fixed, Vicki went out and bought another.

"To continue to pay for something I can't use is ridiculous," she said.

After CBS13 got involved, the insurance company and dealership found a used gas tank that they would cover as long as Vicki still drove the car. She agreed and said she plans to either sell the vehicle now or give it to a relative.