

Cars and trucks have always intrigued me, mainly trucks

For many years the automotive industry has been dominated by men, however, more women are becoming not only interested in cars, but are excelling in the field. As such, a career as a mechanic has always interested me. My name is Sarah Luxmore, Automotive Service Technician apprentice currently attending Okanagan College.

Since I was young, cars and trucks have always intrigued me, mainly trucks. My father was a welder who tried to teach me some of the basics of automotive, however this usually turned into a head butting match. After watching our Jeep Cherokee burn to a crisp, I wondered how something that was moving ten minutes before could spontaneously combust; this sent me on a quest for knowledge. Taking Automotive courses in high school provided me with an endless supply of beat up cars to dismantle, which I did, sometimes even successfully putting them back together. To make a long story shorter, I took the ELT course at Okanagan College to further my knowledge, and experience in mechanics.

Being a woman in a trade is tough; you have to know your stuff! While some of the guys can get away with joking and pranks, I have to know what I am doing all the time. No, girls aren't as strong as boys, but that's why they made tools! If the bolt is seized, there's a breaker bar, if it still doesn't work, that's why they made impacts. Although, physically, we may not be able to do the same things as the guys, being a woman does have advantages. It has been said that "when you give a woman a job, she sticks with it and is more detail oriented." I enjoy cleanliness and organization of my tools, work space and parts of the vehicle that I have taken off. The desire for organization is useful for the speed and quality of my work. If someone has to search for their tools or parts in the pile on the floor, they are also apt to be the ones forgetting steps or taking extended periods of time to do simple jobs.

All that said, I still have a lot to learn! By no means am I perfect or a whiz at everything that is automotive related. I have a career of learning ahead of me, which will no doubt include some fun, challenging experiences. With the knowledge gained from the course at Okanagan College, I plan on finding employment (almost there!) in the field and eventually pass on my knowledge to the next generation of female mechanics. I hope during my life, automotive mechanics will become less of a male dominated job, and more women will take seriously the abundant opportunities available in all the trades, including automotive. Part of my life goal is to make that happen!

As mentioned earlier, cars have always intrigued me, but more so trucks. Growing up near the forest, we constantly got our mini-van stuck when we went hunting. This got me thinking there has to be some fundamental differences between the Ford Aerostar we drove and the huge trucks that seem to be able to drive through lakes! Currently my fiancé and I are building one of these huge trucks! We are swapping both axels out of a 2007 F-150 and replacing them with ones that won't break every time we go off-road. We are putting a Sterling 10 ¼ in the rear with 4:10 gearing with a high pinion Dana 44 in the front, with 4:11 gearing. By adding a four-link in the front we will also gain the articulation needed to get to the best fishing and camping spots! In time we would also like to build an old muscle car, a Charger or Challenger.

Although my career in mechanics is just beginning, I have big dreams and even bigger plans for all the things I would like to accomplish. At 18 years old, I look at the next 45 years as not even enough time to see the changes in technology, the advancements in power and fuel research and improvements in the very things that bring us such joy to drive, work on and teach others about!

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