

Motor Mechanic interview questions

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What to expect

Motor Mechanic interviews are usually run by a workshop manager or lead mechanic and often include a practical or technical component alongside the conversation. Expect a mix of questions about your trade knowledge, how you handle real workshop problems, and how you deal with customers when things go wrong.

- **Technical/process:** Questions about how you diagnose and repair specific systems, checking depth of trade knowledge and correct procedure.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past situations, testing how you've handled pressure, mistakes or difficult customers.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical workshop situations testing decision-making when something isn't straightforward.
- **Safety:** Questions on safe work practices around hoists, tools and hazardous materials.
- **Client-facing:** Questions on explaining faults and costs to customers who may not have technical knowledge.

Most interviews open with general background and qualifications, move into technical and process questions, then a scenario or safety question, and finish with client-facing and behavioural questions before you get a chance to ask about the workshop, tools and rostering.

1. Walk me through how you'd diagnose a car that's come in with an intermittent electrical fault and no obvious warning light.

Why they ask

Tests your systematic diagnostic process and familiarity with tools like scanning equipment and a multimeter, rather than guesswork.

How to structure your answer

Step through the process in order: gather information from the customer, visual inspection, use of diagnostic scanner, narrowing down with a multimeter, test drive to confirm the fix.

Example answer

"First I'd ask the customer exactly when the fault happens, since intermittent faults often relate to vibration, temperature or specific driving conditions. Then I'd do a visual check of wiring and connectors before plugging in the diagnostic scanner to pull any stored fault codes, even if the warning light isn't currently on. If nothing obvious shows up, I'd use a multimeter to test continuity and voltage drop across suspect circuits, often starting with connectors near known problem areas like the engine bay firewall. Once I isolate the fault, I'd repair it and take the car for a test drive that replicates the original conditions as closely as possible before signing off."

2. Tell me about a time you found a fault that a colleague or previous mechanic had missed.

Why they ask

Checks technical competence and whether you can handle this diplomatically without undermining colleagues or customers' trust.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result, focusing on the technical reasoning and how you communicated it.

Example answer

"A customer brought in a vehicle that had already been to another workshop for a brake pulsation issue, and new pads and rotors hadn't fixed it. I test drove it myself and felt the pulsation was speed-related rather than brake-related, so I checked wheel balance and found a significant imbalance on one front wheel. I rebalanced all four wheels and the pulsation was gone. I explained to the customer what I'd found without criticising the previous workshop, just noting that pulsation can have more than one cause. They were relieved to have it sorted and became a regular customer."

3. A customer says your quoted repair is too expensive and wants you to skip a safety-related part replacement. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Tests judgement around safety compliance versus customer pressure and commercial reality.

How to structure your answer

Judgement-under-pressure: state the priority (safety/compliance), explain how you'd communicate the risk, describe the compromise or line you won't cross.

Example answer

"I'd explain clearly what the part does and why it's not safe to skip, for example if it's a brake or steering component affecting roadworthiness. I'd offer to break down the quote so they can see where the cost is coming from, and check if there's a cheaper compliant part or a payment option. But I wouldn't sign off a vehicle as roadworthy if a genuine safety item hasn't been fixed, and I'd document that conversation clearly for the workshop's records."

4. What safety checks do you always do before putting a vehicle on a hydraulic hoist?

Why they ask

Direct safety competency check given hoists and heavy equipment are core daily hazards in this trade.

How to structure your answer

Checklist-style walk-through of the specific safety steps in order.

Example answer

"I check the hoist's rated capacity against the vehicle's weight, make sure the lift points match the manufacturer's specifications, and confirm the arms are correctly engaged and locked before raising. I do a visual check of the hoist itself for any damage or leaks, clear the area of tools and trip hazards, and raise the vehicle a short distance first to check stability before going to full height."

5. How do you stay current with new vehicle technology, given how much modern cars rely on electronics and computer systems?

Why they ask

Given moderate AI/automation risk and rapid vehicle tech change, employers want to know you're keeping pace rather than relying only on older trade knowledge.

How to structure your answer

Direct answer covering ongoing learning habits, specific resources or training, and how you apply new knowledge on the job.

Example answer

"I keep up with manufacturer technical bulletins and do refresher training on new diagnostic software when it's available through the workshop. I also follow trade publications and forums where mechanics discuss specific fault patterns on newer models. When I come across a system I'm less familiar with, like advanced driver assistance sensors, I make sure I understand the calibration requirements properly before touching it rather than guessing."

6. Describe a time you had to complete a job faster than usual because the workshop was under pressure. How did you make sure quality didn't slip?

Why they ask

Behavioural question testing time management and whether corner-cutting happens under commercial pressure, relevant given routine servicing volume.

How to structure your answer

STAR, with emphasis on the specific safeguard used to protect quality despite the time pressure.

Example answer

"During a busy holiday period we had more logbook services booked than usual. I stuck to my standard checklist for each service rather than skipping steps, but worked more efficiently by laying out tools and parts in advance for each job and batching similar tasks like oil changes. I still road-tested every vehicle before handover. We got through the backlog without any comebacks, which told me the process held up even under pressure."