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Grumpy Old Mechanic – Ridiculous Fasteners!

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Our Grumpy Old Mechanic is (quite rightly) moaning again - this time about odd-shaped fasteners requiring 'special' tools!

I have been in the motor trade for many years, and in that time I have seen all sorts of 'tricks' built into vehicles by manufacturers keen to drive their customers to their own dealerships for maintenance and repair, by making jobs too difficult for home mechanics or even independent garages.

Years ago, during our everyday work, instead of just finding hexagonal nuts and bolts that could be released using conventional socket, ring or open-ended spanners, we encountered recessed-head Allen screws, requiring Allen keys, for some jobs. Fair enough, we could cope with that; these days most garages have sets of Allen keys in their tool chests.

However, recently we have been called upon to work on cars incorporating a variety of nonsensical fasteners that require equally nonsensical and usually expensive special tools. Just the other day we helped a local car owner who had been struggling all morning to remove the rear trim on his car in order to fix an ailing rear washer jet; the fasteners used



were 'specials' and we had to obtain the tool to remove them. Time and money wasted all round.

One of the most ridiculous things we've seen lately is the wonderful 'five sided' bolt head, found on both sides of the front suspension on a car we were called upon to fix last week. I ask you, who on earth has five sided socket or ring spanners of the type needed to release such stupidities..?

It took a while of our time (and hence cost the customer more money) to obtain the special tool required for this one.

Crazy. End of rant!!