

Diagnosing Dilemma

Not all scan tools are alike.

John writes: *I have three Jaguars insured through Hagerty—two XKRs (2006 and 2011) and one 2006 XJ8. I am looking for an OBD scanner that will give basic, easy-to-decipher code readings at a relatively low price. I am not mechanically inclined, and I'm tired of getting wrong advice from bad or unscrupulous mechanics.*

There are three things to understand about scan tools. The first: There's a distinction between generic OBD-II code readers and brand-specific scan tools. Any \$20 generic OBD-II code reader will read the standardized OBD-II emissions-related codes that cause the Check Engine Light (CEL) to come on and tell you if a coil is misfiring or an oxygen sensor is out of range. However, the fact that the OBD-II/CEL system is standardized across all post-1996 cars means that an inexpensive code reader can only read the generic codes and thus can't read Jaguar-specific codes. To do that, you need a Jaguar-specific scan tool.

Second: Even with a Jaguar-specific scan tool, there's a distinction between one that reads the Jaguar-specific control modules for the engine, transmission, airbag, ABS, suspension, parking sensor, and other systems, versus a tool that actually performs service functions on those systems. For example, finding and clearing a fault with the air suspension or the ABS is different from recalibrating the suspension or cycling the ABS for brake bleeding. The more you spend, the more of these service-type functions you get.

Third: The use of a scan tool is almost always coupled with hands-on repair. That is, a scanner may report an error code and give you the capability of clearing it, but if you or a repair shop haven't corrected the underlying fault, the code will come right back. In addition, even with a brand-specific scan tool that has an easy-to-understand user interface, some amount of brand-specific repair knowledge is often needed to translate the message into action. "Bad left rear wheel speed sensor" is pretty clear, but a "minor

evaporative leak" could be coming from many small hoses, and it usually takes an experienced technician to figure out exactly which one it is.

That said, the Land Rover/Jaguar scan tools from iCarSoft and Foxwell both appear to be popular in the Jaguar world. The iCarSoft LR v1.0 (\$190), will read and clear trouble codes and perform an oil service maintenance reset. The Foxwell NT630 (\$150) will also perform the service functions of steering angle calibration and ABS bleeding. For \$260, the iCarSoft LR v2.0 adds Electronic Throttle Control (ETC) and Battery Management System (BMS) reset.

Andy Hoffman writes: *Can I ask for clarification on the article "Winter is Coming" from the November/December issue? First, the article recommends putting the car on jack stands to avoid flat-spotting the tires. I always thought that would expose the [shock absorber] shaft to the elements and possibly cause corrosion, thus ruining the shock. I pull my cars onto pieces of rigid foam insulation, which contours (somewhat) to the tire and reduces the flat spot. What do you think? Second, the article recommends disconnecting*