

Auto Hobby Shop

MC2 Justin Smelley

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI – Ever since the creation of the automobile, vehicles have needed to be maintained to operate properly. Most people take their cars to mechanic shops to have them repaired but some prefer to work on their own vehicles. For many it's a hobby where people get to learn the ins and outs of the vehicle that helps them get to their destinations.

Sailors and members of the Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi that enjoy working on their vehicles may find it hard to do due to the limited space in Japan and the lack of places to go that allow them to get under the hood of their cars. The solution to their problem is the Auto Hobby Shop located on base.

“This is a place where you can come and work on your car,” said Joe Enriquez, automotive helper. “You can come here and change your oil and do all the basic maintenance. If you don't know how to use the equipment we'll teach you and assist you with it.”

The Auto Hobby shop offers many of the tools and equipment that can be found at your standard maintenance shop.

“The facility has six indoor stalls with vehicle lifts and two outdoor stalls,” said Keith Hileman, Hobby's Manager of Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR). “We have tire changing and balancing machines, outdoor car wash with a steam cleaner, engine crane and we also have resale items.”

The Auto Hobby Shop has four qualified mechanics that can help out and explain how to accomplish whatever task the customer may need.

“Everyone here is qualified, if someone comes in and they don’t know how to do something we’ll provide assistance,” said Hileman. “Like if someone doesn’t know how to use the tire machine, someone will come over there and show them and then they will watch to make sure they understand how to use it.”

“I’ve been a technician for thirty years and I enjoy my job,” said Enriquez. “I like teaching people how to work on their cars. What I’ve learned through the years I get to share with people so that way they don’t have to do things the hard way.”

The Auto Hobby Shop also provides junking services for transferring members of the base if they decide not to sell their vehicles.

“They need to bring in identification and all the paper work associated with that vehicle and then we verify it and go ahead and submit the junking request,” said Hileman. “They need to allow themselves three weeks, unless they have a power of attorney for the junking process.”

For more information about the Auto Hobby Shop and their services please call 264-3780.