



Car Running Rough or Misfiring — What It Usually Is

How real visits for rough running ended at independent shops across the US — the part actually replaced, how often, and what it cost when it was the only fix.

Spark plugs or ignition coil

Nearly half of all these visits end in one of these two

Spark plugs **\$170 – \$474**

Ignition coil **\$184 – \$402**

typical cost when it was the only fix
(parts + labor)

THE FIX INVOLVED	SHARE OF THESE VISITS*	TYPICAL COST†	MEDIAN
Spark plugs	42.4%	\$170 – \$474	\$296
Ignition coil	30.5%	\$184 – \$402	\$269
Fuel filter	8.9%	\$134 – \$436	\$256
Sensor	6.7%	\$180 – \$433	\$287
Fuel injectors	6.7%	\$164 – \$697	\$343
Distributor	4.5%	\$242 – \$533	\$388
Valve cover gasket	4.4%	\$182 – \$481	\$299
Oxygen sensor	3.8%	\$212 – \$435	\$304
PCV valve	3.5%	\$85 – \$268	\$152
Other, rarer causes	smaller shares — vacuum leaks, EGR valves, mass-airflow sensors, throttle bodies	varies	—

*Share of visits whose repair involved this part; combined repairs count toward each part, so shares overlap and don't add to 100%.

†Middle half of real invoices when this was the only fix — parts + labor, all vehicle types.

WHICH ONE IS YOURS? LISTEN FIRST

- **Shaking with a flashing check-engine light** — That's an active misfire.
- **Rough only at idle** — Smooths out when you rev? Vacuum leaks and idle-control carbon are the usual suspects — a different, usually cheaper family than misfires.
- **Rough under acceleration** — Stumble under load with normal idle points at fuel delivery — filters, pumps, injectors — or breakdown in coils that only shows under demand.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SHOP

Rough running almost always sets a misfire code that names the cylinder — a good shop swaps the coil or plug to confirm the culprit before replacing it. Plugs and coils are the common answers; injectors and fuel pumps the pricier ones. If the quote is a full set of coils on a single-cylinder misfire, ask why.

ABOUT THIS DATA · HOW TO USE THIS BRIEF

Vehicles **all makes and models, US fleet**

Data confidence **High** — *large sample, stable shares*

Records through **July 2026**, refreshed continuously

Source **paid invoices from independent US repair shops**

Take it to the shop. It tells you what the likely answers are and what each one should cost — so when the diagnosis comes back, you already know whether the number fits. Vehicle-specific price reports for the common fixes are on fixdozer.com.

NOT A DIAGNOSIS This brief describes how other owners' visits for rough running ended. Your vehicle, its history and the shop's testing decide yours. FixDozer does not perform repairs and receives nothing from shops.