



Car Won't Start — What It Usually Is, and What It Costs

How real visits for a no-start ended at independent shops across the US — the part actually replaced, how often, and what it cost when it was the only fix.

Car battery or starter

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

Car battery **\$140 – \$314**

Starter **\$267 – \$494**

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

THE FIX INVOLVED	SHARE OF THESE VISITS*	TYPICAL COST†	MEDIAN
Car battery	23.3%	\$140 – \$314	\$206
Starter	21.9%	\$267 – \$494	\$370
Fuel pump	17.3%	\$380 – \$829	\$600
Fuel filter	13.0%	\$134 – \$436	\$256
Spark plugs	7.8%	\$170 – \$474	\$296
Sensor	6.4%	\$180 – \$433	\$287
Distributor	5.1%	\$242 – \$533	\$388
Alternator	5.1%	\$302 – \$563	\$414
Module / actuator	4.8%	\$254 – \$696	\$413
Other, rarer causes	smaller shares — relays, fuses, ignition switches, wiring, timing	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

- **Click or silence when you turn the key** — A single click or nothing at all is the no-crank family: battery, battery connections, or the starter.
- **Cranks but won't fire** — If the engine spins normally but never catches, it has spark, fuel, or compression missing.
- **Starts sometimes, dead other mornings** — Intermittent starting with a jump box in your trunk is the battery/charging family.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SHOP

A no-start visit should start with a charging-and-starting test before any part is sold — a good shop confirms the battery and alternator are healthy before replacing a starter. Diagnosis time is normal here and worth paying for: a wrong first guess costs more than the test. If the quote lands well above the band for the part named, ask what else the invoice carries — towing, a second failed part, or a battery that had to come out to reach the starter.

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 a no-start ended. Your vehicle, its history and the shop's testing decide yours. FixDozer does not perform repairs and receives nothing from shops.