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## TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

### NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

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## Garage Services

### Introduction

This information is aimed at improving your business's customer service procedures. It applies to any work you carry out for customers who are not other business customers.

### Civil Law

#### The Supply of Goods and Services Act

The Act requires a trader to carry out the supply of a service

- with reasonable care and skill
- within a reasonable time (unless a specific time has been agreed) **and**
- for a reasonable charge (where no charge has been agreed)

Where the supply of a service or repair does not come up to these standards, a customer has the right to take legal action in order to obtain compensation or rectification of any work carried out.

#### Unfair Contract Terms Act and Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations

The Act and Regulations limit the ability of traders to contract out of their responsibilities in respect of standard business terms and conditions. If you use contract terms allowing you to dishonour promises or impose unreasonable penalty charges, a Court could declare those terms to be unfair and not legally binding.

### Criminal Law

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 is a wide-ranging piece of legislation which makes it a criminal offence for a trader to engage in unfair commercial practices in relation to the provision of goods or services, including any practice likely to mislead consumers. The misleading element could be in the form of an actual action or description, or in the omission of facts about the goods or services.

For example, if your service includes "cleaning brakes", say what this involves. Is it simply blowing out the dust, or complete removal, cleaning and greasing?

**Pricing Law** requires you to include VAT whenever you indicate a price to a consumer. This applies to estimates and quotes for the cost of any proposed work, just as much as it does to the final invoice.

### **The Business Names Act**

The Act requires you to include the full name and trading address of your business on all invoices. Where the business name is a trading name, such as " S Smith t/a ABC Garage," the owner's name must appear on the invoice to enable the person behind the company to be identified.

### **A Guide to Best Practice**

#### **Communicate**

The majority of complaints and problems arise through poor communication. Good communication reduces misunderstandings.

Before carrying out any work on a customer's vehicle, obtain as much information as possible from the customer about the work they want doing. If they're not exactly sure what the problem is, offer to diagnose the problem first and then let them decide how to proceed.

Even where a customer asks you to do any work or fit any parts which you think are necessary, you should let them know what you're doing and how much it will cost.

Let them know how long you expect the work to take, and agree a collection time. Make sure they are aware of your labour rates, and always try to provide a quote for the work rather than an estimate. A quote is a set price for the cost of work. It is a firm, fixed price and cannot be changed once it has been agreed.

Explain that the work may take longer than expected if the vehicle has been poorly maintained or is badly corroded. Where you're unsure, you could consider giving the customer an estimate instead of a quote. If the work takes longer than was originally agreed, keep the old parts you've removed to show why this happened.

Tell the customer about any guarantees and how long they last. If you guarantee your work, consider giving the customer written details. Remember that a guarantee is only ever in addition to the customer's legal rights.

#### **Do what you say you will do**

If you state that you will flush out the cooling system, do just that (don't just flush out the radiator).

Always provide an itemised bill, and agree how the customer will pay before the work is done.

#### **Servicing**

Before carrying out a service, explain exactly what the service includes and how much it's likely to cost. Always try to provide a quote rather than an estimate.

## **Service Schedules**

Always follow written service schedules (whether the manufacturer's or your own). Give customers the opportunity of seeing blank schedules - they may request a different service or require additional test items. Make sure you give the customer a copy of the completed service schedule.

If you suspect that the service may take longer than the manufacturer's scheduled time, it may be preferable to provide the customer with an estimate. Explain to the customer the reason why you can't give them a fixed price quote, and give them an estimate for each aspect of the service. Consider doing this in writing in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

If advising about additional work, don't say (for example) that the brakes need replacing if they still have a few thousand miles wear left. Point out the wear you've found, and leave it up to the customer to decide upon replacement.

There will be occasions during a service when it becomes clear that additional work or parts are required which could not have been anticipated. Always seek the customer's permission before you carry out any work or fit any parts. (Where you replace parts, ask whether the customer wants you to retain the old parts for them to inspect).

Obtain as much information from the customer as possible: the type of service they require; any current problems with the vehicle; the last time the car was serviced; comments made at the last service. Background information will help you to target the work and provide a better service. Tell the customer whether you're going to use brand-name parts or non-branded parts.

## **Schedule work**

If it takes one day for the service keep the car for this time, but if it only takes two hours then contact the customer once the car is ready.

## **Itemised invoices**

Identify individual parts, labour and VAT separately on invoices for all work, including servicing. This avoids confusion over the total cost and allows the customer to see where their money has gone. Note down any advice on the invoice: consider what state the car will be in before it's next service, and comment on potential work (with particular regard to potential safety matters).

If you require further information please contact the Trading Standards Service.

*This is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance*

For a copy of this document on audio cassette, in large print or Braille, or if you require assistance in reading this, please contact the Council's Policy Unit.

Shetland Islands Council Policy Unit  
Town Hall, Hillhead, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0HB

Tel: 01595 744537

Email: policy@shetland.gov.uk

This document is also available at [www.shetland.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/tradingstandards)

### Do you require the services of an interpreter?

If you do, please contact **01595 744537** for assistance.

We will provide an interpreter, or we can supply the document in your choice of language.

你是否需要傳譯服務?

如果需要，請致電 01595 744537 尋求幫助。

我們會適當地為你安排傳譯人員或者提供你需要文字的文件。

ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪਰੀਟਰ (ਤੁਰਾਸ਼ੀਆ) ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ?

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ 01595 744537 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

ਜਿਥੇ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ ਸਕਿਆ ਇੰਟਰਪਰੀਟਰ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਸੰਦ ਵਾਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

আপনি কি একজন দোভাষীর সাহায্য চান ?

যদি আপনার প্রয়োজন থাকে তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন -01595 744537  
যেখানে সম্ভব সেখানে একজন দোভাষীর ব্যবস্থা করা হবে অথবা আপনি যে ভাষাতে চা  
দলীলটি অনুবাদ করে আপনাকে প্রদান করা হবে ।

کیا آپ کو انٹریپرٹری کی ضرورت ہے؟

اگر ایسا ہے تو پھر (انٹریپرٹری) مدد حاصل کرنے کیلئے فون نمبر 01595 744537 پر بات کریں۔

جہاں ممکن ہو وہاں انٹریپرٹری کی سہولت فراہم کی جائے گی یا پھر (مطلوبہ) دستہ دیز کاتر جسے آپ کی

پسندیدہ زبان میں فراہم کیا جائے گا۔