

## A culture of non-compliance presents red flag for consumers

A growing culture of regulatory non-compliance in the motor vehicle repair industry is not only creating an uneven playing field for many accredited workshop owners in the sector, but also placing consumers at risk.



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Dewald Ranft, chairman of the Motor Industry Workshop Association (MIWA), an association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation, says he is concerned about the increase in the number of these non-compliant businesses in the sector and the apparent lack of enforcement by the relevant authorities.

“We have spoken previously about the dangers of home-based workshops but for the consumer, these non-compliant businesses may pose an even bigger risk,” he says.

As the economic outlook worsens, South Africans remain under immense pressure to save money and may be tempted to select the cheapest option without first checking the business carefully. The reality is that without the necessary registration and compliance, the consumer has virtually no recourse from a business if things go wrong. “There is no assurance about the quality of the technicians working on the cars, the type of parts being used; the quality of the diagnostic equipment or the environmental practices being followed,” he says,

Ranft says it is concerning to see that on one street alone you will find an accredited workshop, fully compliant, and on the other corner a non-compliant workshop merrily marketing at a reduced rate and flaunting many of the industry standards.

It is essential the authorities check that these workshops are VAT registered; registered with the Motor Industry Bargaining Council (MIBCO) and the Motor Industry Ombudsman (MIOSA); paying the municipal rates required to operate a light industrial business; and complying with all necessary occupational health and safety regulations. This is not only important to level the playing field but also for the consumer's protection as well."

"With no oversight these traders can continue to produce substandard work in many cases, which not only affects the industry negatively but also impact ultimately on road safety," he says.

"Accreditation and compliance is the consumer's guarantee that the job will be done correctly and according to stringent industry standards," Ranft says.

Should consumers find that the workshop fails to deliver as promised, they have the recourse of reverting to the Motor Industry Ombudsman of South Africa (MIOSA) or, in the case of a MIWA accredited workshop, to the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI). Non-compliant and home-based workshops do not have this backup. We remind the consumer that dealing with an accredited member of the RMI, provides peace of mind.

"It is time for better oversight and better protection from authorities to level the playing field in the industry and to protect the South African motorist," concludes Ranft.

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