

TRENDS

CLAMPING DOWN ON NON-COMPLIANCE



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.

Just last month the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (NMBM) Traffic Department held a raid operation in the North end of the CBD focusing on mechanic workshops that have been causing road obstructions by carrying out mechanical work on the road and spray painting on the sidewalk. Just from this one operation 29 vehicles were impounded; 86 fines were issued (46 for unlicensed unregistered vehicles, 20 for vehicles parked on the sidewalk and 20 for obstruction.)

Dewald Ranft, Chairman of the Motor Industry Workshop Association (MIWA), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation, applauds the NMBM traffic officials for their proactive approach saying the increase in the number of these non-compliant businesses in the sector is a growing problem nationally. "This type of operation poses an increasing risk to consumers," 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 practises being followed," he says.

Ranft says it is essential the authorities check for non-compliant workshops as well as these pavement vendors in the interests of safety. "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 are the consumer's guarantee that the job will be done correctly and according to stringent industry standards," Ranft says.