

## **NFDA Member briefing**

*25 March 2020*

### **Workshops are entitled to open through COVID-19 emergency, but they are not obliged to do so**

The Government has said that garage/dealership workshops (repair and maintenance facilities and connected parts storage and distribution operations) **can** remain open for the repair and maintenance of vehicles to ensure their safety and roadworthiness, but they are not obliged to do so.

By the same token, many garage/dealership workshops remaining open will, if they are faced with limited throughput, localised risks or staff shortages, choose to run restricted services or focus on essential vehicle repairs for key workers and vehicles carrying food, drugs, meals etc. It is entirely reasonable to prioritise this work and reflects a commitment, as an industry, to keep the country moving at this time of crisis.

Circumstances will differ based on individual workshops and it is up to each NFDA member to decide independently whether they wish to continue to operate repair and maintenance services and on what basis.

The continuation of repair and maintenance services will involve dealers identifying the key aftersales staff (parts & service) that will need to carry out this essential work and adopting working practices and patterns to help protect workers and customers. Further guidance can be found [here](#).

Customer communication is also a vital part of this exercise and phone (and email enquiry) systems may need to be adapted to inform and guide callers to relevant aftersales locations and departments.

It is worth noting that physical retail operations (showrooms) should close temporarily in line with Government guidance (this will be reviewed mid-April), albeit online retail operations can carry on (although further guidance may need to be developed to ensure the safety of staff and customers with regard to any delivery, collection and hand-over service arising from online sales)

Signage will have to be put up at sites where workshops are located explaining that only the aftersales departments are open, together with any precautions that staff and customers need to follow (e.g. for vehicle booking and vehicle hand-over procedures). Simple steps such as giving clear directions to the workshop or service/repair desk will be important, as will not allowing customers to roam freely around closed showroom facilities at dealerships.

#### **[See template notice by way of example.](#)**

It is advised that all enquiries, bookings and instructions are carried out by phone or email, and keys, parts and vehicles are sanitised at hand-over. A clean procedure will need to be established to ensure payment methods are clean and not likely to transmit the virus.