

Garage and Workshop Safety

Implementation guide · MOT bays, servicing, repair, bodyshops, tyre bays and engineering workshops

This pack is for vehicle repair garages, MOT stations, tyre and exhaust bays, bodyshops and small engineering workshops. These are mostly micro businesses with a handful of staff, a lift or two, a compressor, welding kit and a great deal of accumulated habit.

Scope and limitations — read before use

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1. The particular problem with garages

A garage combines almost every category of hazard in one small building: vehicles moving in confined space, heavy loads held above people's heads, compressed air, electricity, hot work, chemicals, dust and noise. Most of them have no written risk assessment at all, and the owner is usually one of the people under the car.

What makes it worse	Consequence
Very small teams, often family businesses	No dedicated safety person and no cover when the owner is the injured one
Very old buildings and equipment	Lifts, compressors and wiring installed decades ago and never formally examined
Work done under time pressure on a customer's car	Shortcuts become the normal method
Members of the public on the premises	You owe a duty under section 3 of the Act to customers walking into the workshop
Agency and apprentice labour	Young and inexperienced people around lifts and hot work
Electric and hybrid vehicles now routine	High voltage systems that will kill an untrained technician

2. What is in the pack

Ref	Document	Covers
GAR-00	Implementation guide	This document
GAR-01	Vehicle lifts, jacks and working under vehicles	The one that kills people in this trade
GAR-02	Workshop equipment and compressed air	Tyre machines, presses, compressors, abrasive wheels, PUWER duties
GAR-03	Hazardous substances and fumes	Exhaust fumes, brake dust, solvents, paint, oils, welding fume, LEV

GAR-04	Electrical safety and electric vehicles	Workshop electrics, portable equipment and EV high voltage systems
GAR-05	Toolbox talks and forms	Briefings, inspections, records

3. The legal framework

Regulation	Duty	Where it bites in a garage
HSWA 1974 s.2, s.3	Protect employees and anybody else affected	Customers in the workshop, and the apprentice
PUWER 1998	Suitable, maintained, inspected equipment and adequate training	Lifts, presses, tyre machines, grinders, compressors
LOLER 1998	Lifting equipment thoroughly examined	VEHICLE LIFTS — at least every 6 months where the equipment can lift a person, otherwise at least 12 months, or per an examination scheme. Take competent advice on the right interval for your lift.
COSHH 2002	Assess and control substances hazardous to health	Brake dust, solvents, paints, welding fume, exhaust fumes, oils
Control of Noise at Work 2005	Assess and control noise	Air tools, grinders, panel work
Control of Vibration at Work 2005	Assess and control vibration	Impact wrenches, grinders, sanders
Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000	Written scheme of examination for pressure systems	THE AIR COMPRESSOR AND RECEIVER — routinely overlooked
Electricity at Work 1989	Safe electrical systems and work	Workshop wiring, portable equipment, EV systems
Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	Fire risk assessment	Flammable liquids, hot work, waste oil, tyres
Manual Handling 1992	Avoid, assess, reduce	Wheels, batteries, gearboxes, engines

The two most commonly missed in a small garage are the LOLER thorough examination of the vehicle lift, and the written scheme of examination for the compressed air receiver. Both are specific legal requirements with paperwork attached, and both are easy for an inspector to ask for.