

MIO UPDATE

Newsletter for the Motor Industry Ombudsman of South Africa Issue 1 Volume 7 May 2010

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Car Service City adopts TPP



The Car Service City team from left above:

Gill Nathan - Chief Operating Officer; Danny Khumalo - Operations and Training Manager; Grant Brady - Chief Executive Officer;

Gerrie van Niekerk - Franchise owner of Randburg Car Service City and Bennie van Rensburg - Franchise Manager.

We asked Car Service City why it joined the Transaction Protected Project of the Ombudsman. Here is the reply from Gill Nathan, Chief Operating Officer:

Car Service City is a company dedicated to offering quality service to our current and new customers on a national level. Due to the nature of the business one will find that there could be disputes between Car Service City and our customers. Because of our commitment to customer service, we decided to subscribe to the Transaction Protected Project of the Motor Industry Ombudsman. As an *continued on page 2*

Ombud's Report pinpoints major complaints

During 2009 19 700 vehicle owners called on the Motor Industry Ombudsman of South Africa (MIO) to assist in resolving problems being experienced with their vehicles. The value assigned to these cases rose by 16 percent from 2008 to R128 489 299.

In its 10th annual report the MIO states that the rise in value is attributable to the rising cost of labour and spares and also the large scale of road construction and the deterioration of roads around the country.

The main complaints related to tyres (10,7%) , poor service (10%) and engine problems (7,5%). Also significant were problems with wheels and cooling systems.

As in the past these complaints were dominated by external factors such as congestion, ongoing road works and the general deterioration of the roads system.

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High visibility promotions for the brand.

independent organisation with qualified adjudicators and technical experts, we believe the Ombudsman the correct avenue to pursue, should there be a unfortunate dispute between Car Service City and one of our customers.

We believe the major benefit in belonging to the MIO is that an independent party will become involved in queries from our customers. This allows for an unbiased and fair outcome. Since its inception the office of the Ombudsman has set itself apart as an organisation that not only looks after the industry, but

importantly, allows for objective and fair resolutions. Car Service City is committed to excel in customer service and subscribing to the MIO is a natural result. We see our association with the MIO as a benefit to our organisation and to our credibility as a company that prides itself in delivering the best possible service when working on a customer's vehicle.

We've ensured that our network of 24 franchises nationally are aware of our involvement with the MIO and have issued them all with marketing material and posters to be set-up in their workshops and front office areas for our customers to see that we subscribe to the MIO. In addition to this, all our point of sale material, brochures and flyers contain the MIO logo to advertise this fact.

All Car Service City staff have been made aware of our subscription through our internal communications process. Specifically managers, technical staff and secretaries have been made aware of our membership and will continually be made aware of the advantages of subscribing to the TPP.

Ombudsman targets "Smash and Grab" safety film fitters

A concerted campaign to canvass the support of the so-called "smash and grab" safety film fitters to motor vehicles, is being launched by the Motor Industry Ombudsman, in an effort to ensure sufficient levels of customer care and fitment standards.

'Because of the high level of smash and grab incidents occurring in especially the country's larger centres, more and

more motorists are fitting safety film to the windows of their vehicles in order to prevent them being broken by roadside thieves", says a spokesman for the Ombudsman's office.

"Unfortunately, contrary to popular belief, the fitment of this safety film is not a fool-proof assurance that a vehicle window cannot be broken. Rather, it acts as a deterrent because it makes it more dif-

ficult for thieves to break the windows. Also, there are various thicknesses of the film that determines the effectiveness of the film.

"In addition, there are requirements that the motor dealer and the motorist should be made aware of to ensure maximum effectiveness. For example, the windows should not be operated for a specific period after fitment and the

Ombud warns on number plates

Many vehicle owners and even dealerships seem not to be aware of the vehicle number plate regulations now in operation, according to the Office of the Motor Industry Ombudsman.

The new national regulations regarding number plates makes it illegal to print any form of advertising on number plates or number plate holders. This includes the printing of the name and location of the selling dealer, whether it is a new or a used vehicle. No ornamentation, figure or letter that is not a component of the standard equipment or construction of a vehicle, may appear within 150 millimetres of the vehicle's license number", says Ombudsman Johan van Vreden.

"Contravention of this regulation makes the vehicle not roadworthy and the vehicle owner liable to prosecution and applicable fines.

degree to which a window is closed must in certain cases be controlled.

"Motorists having the film fitted, must insist that the fitment centre or the dealer give them written assurance on the strength of the film and also the necessary instructions to maintain and ensure the most effective use thereof. These are not issues that the customer should become aware of only when an attack by way of the vehicles windows occurs. Not knowing the facts can be lethally dangerous.

"By submitting to the customer care requirements of the Ombudsman's office both customers and members of the industry will be ensured of acceptable standards being implemented and also have recourse to totally independent dispute resolution in the event of problems with smash and grab fitments occurring," says the spokesman.

"Since the start of this year specific requirements regarding the sizes of vehicle number plates have also come into force and these also hold the road user liable if not conformed to. The only legally acceptable sizes of number plates for vehicles registered from 1 January 2010, are 520 X 113 mm, 250 X 205 mm and 205 X 165 mm.

"When buying a new or used vehicle, purchasers should insist that the above legal requirements are implemented by the dealer before taking delivery of a vehicle," says Van Vreden.

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The recession impacted on consumers as well resulting in non-compliance with service schedules, warranty terms and conditions, and failing to honour monthly instalments.

The turnaround time for repairs and services continued to improve despite the severe shortage of skilled technicians. A contributing factor to this improvement was a cutback in the waiting period for spare parts as the year progressed; this while the motor industry has to support more than 2 000 derivatives. However, consumer frustration with poor service still rated high.

The Consumer Protection Act is going to impact on the motor industry in a big way. The Department of Trade and Industries has requested the MIO to coordinate the drafting of a consumer code of practise to ensure that the industry is geared for the implementation of the Act in October 2010.

