



# Safety in Motor Vehicle Sales & Repair

The following details highlight some of the hazards and risks that might exist in motor vehicles sales and repair centres. They are by no means exhaustive and will vary depending on your own particular business. As a starting point, use the blank sheet provided in this pack and carry out your own simple risk assessment.

## Main Types of Hazard

## Managing the Risk

### Sales Area

Risks in the sales area arise from:  
movement of vehicles  
exposure to exhaust gases  
oil/fuel spillages leading to slips and falls.

- Devise a safe system for moving vehicles into and out of the showroom.
- Provide adequate ventilation and ensure that engines are not allowed to run for longer than necessary.
- Ensure that all spillages of oil or fuel are cleaned up immediately. Absorbent materials should be readily available for this purpose.

### Lifting Equipment

Misuse or failure of equipment such as hoists, cranes and jacks, has led to extremely serious injuries.

- Have all lifting equipment including jacks regularly inspected and carry out the necessary repairs immediately.
- Ensure that maximum working loads are never exceeded.
- Hoists should be fitted with "dead mans" controls, toe protection and automatic chocking. Never allow raised platforms to be used as working areas unless proper guard rails are fitted.
- Ensure that axle props are used to support raised vehicles, never allow anyone to work beneath a vehicle supported only by jacks.
- Train all staff in the safe use of all lifting equipment

### Vehicle Inspection Pits

Flammable vapours from petrol, paints and solvents can build up to explosive concentrations in such pits. People may also be injured by falling into unguarded pits.

- Vehicle inspection pits should be phased out in favour of purpose built vehicle lifts. If pits are currently in use, then you should ensure that all electrical equipment (including lighting and electric hand tools) is "explosion protected". Pits should be fenced or boarded when not in use.

### Compressed Air Equipment

Injuries, occasionally fatal, have been caused by accidental or deliberate injection into the body.

- Have the air receiver and air powered equipment examined regularly by a competent person.
- Ensure that hand tools operate at a pressure which is compatible with that of the supply line.
- Never use compressed air to clean up and ban horse play with this equipment.

### Petrol

Spillages of petrol, due to damage to fuel lines or the use of unsuitable containers, can lead to a serious risk of fire.

- Assess whether petrol needs to be removed, e.g. if welding next to a fuel line, and, if so, use a fuel receiver to avoid spillages.
- Work in a well ventilated area away from sources of ignition.

### Used Engine Oils

Frequent, prolonged contact with used engine oils may cause dermatitis and other skin disorders, including skin cancer.

- Ensure that protective clothing is worn and that it is cleaned and replaced regularly.
- Dispose of waste oils safely in lidded metal containers.

### Exhaust Fumes

Vehicle exhaust fumes are toxic.

- Provide extract or exhaust ventilation, preferably by direct coupling to the vehicle exhaust (use even where catalytic converters have been fitted). Ensure that all couplings and flexible connections are maintained in good condition.

### Battery Charging

During and after charging, batteries give off hydrogen, an easily ignited and explosive gas.

- Carry out charging in a well ventilated area and follow individual manufacturer charging instructions.
- Switch off the battery charger before connecting and disconnecting the clips.

### Brakes and Clutch Linings

Some brake and clutch linings still contain asbestos. The dust created when working with these parts could be harmful if inhaled.

- Never blow dust from brake drums or clutch housings using an airline. Use properly designed drum cleaning equipment and wet rags. Ensure that proper overalls and masks are worn. Use grinding and drilling machines with integral exhaust ventilation.
- Provided a special vacuum (Type H) for dust removal.



### Wheels and Tyres

Air blasts from over inflation of car tyres can cause injuries. Contact with rotating wheels during wheel balancing may cause friction burns.

- Raise and support vehicles safely.
- Remove the valve core to deflate tyres.
- Use an airline with a "dead mans" handle and ensure pressure gauges are reading accurately.
- Ensure wheel balancing machines are fitted with a fully interlocked cover.

### Rolling Roads/Brake Testing

Serious injuries have been caused by operators attempting to make adjustments to vehicles under test.

- Ensure only fully trained operators use equipment.
- Fit guards to the sides of exposed rolls and provide dead mans controls.

### Vehicle Valeting

Proprietary Cleaners often contain toxic and flammable solvents.

- Use the least hazardous materials available.
- Wear personal protective equipment, including eye protection and rubber gloves.
- Keep the valeting area free from sources of ignition and ventilate the car.

### Steam Cleaning

Because all or part of the machine is often in a wet environment there is a risk of electric shock.

- Protect the circuit supplying these machines with a 30mA Residual Current Device (RCD) and establish a system of routine maintenance, testing and repair for the installation and safety devices.

### Welding and Flame Cutting

Risks include; burns, eye damage due to metal fragments or electromagnetic radiation, harmful fumes from paints etc. and fire caused by ignition of materials such as petrol or carpets.

- For arc welding equipment provide fuse protection and earth the work piece.
- Use welding screens and eye protection.
- Control fumes using local exhaust ventilation and prevent fires by removing flammable materials first.
- Ensure all oxyacetylene equipment has a flashback flame arrestor and a non return valve. Store cylinders upright and protect using racks or trolleys.

### Body Filling and Preparation

Mixing, applying and finishing fillers may generate toxic fumes. Some materials can also cause dermatitis.

Grinding operations can cause excessive noise levels that may damage hearing.

- Use least harmful material available and ensure that respiratory protection and protective clothing are worn.
- Provide ear protection if necessary
- Carry out body work in a mechanically ventilated booth fitted with dust tight lighting.
- Use tools with integral dust extraction.

### Painting and Spraying

Many paints and solvents used in vehicle finishing give off vapours which are readily ignited and often toxic.

- Store paints in a fire resisting store.
- To minimise spillages decant over a tray and use work benches with edging lips. Soak up spillages with absorbent material immediately.
- Seek advice of an occupational doctor if using 2-pack paints.
- Locate paint mixing unit in a fire resisting separate room and exclude ignition sources.
- Spray only in mechanically ventilated booths.
- Use only mechanically ventilated ovens for accelerating curing.
- Ensure breathing apparatus, gloves, eye protection and overalls are worn when mixing and spraying.

### Electrical Safety

Electric shock or fire can be caused by poor electrical standards.

- Ensure that the electrical system and all equipment is regularly inspected and maintained in good condition.
- Protect cables against mechanical damage.
- In workshops all parts of the fixed installation should be 1 metre above floor level to reduce risk of ignition.
- Hand lamps and other electric hand tools should be supplied by reduced voltages or should be "all insulated" or "double insulated".



### ■ For Further Information:

*Health and Safety in Motor Vehicle Repair*  
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