

In October, 2003 European Union legislation, 'Block Exemption Regulations 1400/2002' (BER) came into force.

The ruling gave motorists more freedom in their decision as to who could repair and service their vehicles. Any garage can be used to service your car without invalidating the manufacturer's warranty (subject to certain conditions).

Aimed at safeguarding free competition in the entire market for vehicle spare parts, service and repair. These meant:

- parts distributors can supply parts of the appropriate quality to dealers and authorised repairers without the vehicle manufacturer / assembler using 'dealer / repairer contracts' or other means to prevent them.
- parts manufacturers can no longer be forced by their original equipment (OE) contract to limit supply of parts to the vehicle manufacturer / assembler.
- parts manufacturers can supply OE products under their own brand so motorists and repairers will not feel they have to go to a main dealer for a certain part.
- anyone with a legitimate need for technical information has a right of access to it in a usable form and at a reasonable cost.

Independent repairers can carry out normal maintenance and repair services during a vehicle's warranty period without invalidating the warranty conditions provided that:

- the service is carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's servicing schedules and is recorded as such.
- any parts used are of 'appropriate quality' and are recorded.

If you require any further information or if you have any evidence of vehicle manufacturers or their dealers infringing these rules, then please contact the ADF office www.adf.org.uk