
RAC Service and Repair Code of Practice

Approved Consumer Code

Audit September 2025

Background Information

The RAC Service and Repair Code of Practice has 1,085 members. The members of the code are mainly smaller independent garages. The code has members spread across the UK. RAC Accredited Repairers come under the same regime as Approved Garages.

Members of the code are judged not just on their ability to carry out the service and repair work, but also on the wider breadth of their services including such things as customer service reception areas, customer car-parking facilities etc.

Audit Process

The audit was carried out remotely on behalf of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute by a Chartered Trading Standards Practitioner on 16th September 2025.

The audit focused on the following areas:

1. Member application process including checks carried out on prospective members
2. Member auditing-content and process (including general compliance with the code, staff training and dealing with consumer complaints)
3. Sanctions for non-compliant members
4. Marketing and advertising by member businesses - terms and conditions and pre-contractual information (including cancellation rights, deposits, delivery times and guarantees and warranties)
5. Customer service provisions (including support for vulnerable consumers).
6. Consumer complaints process (including ADR)
7. Customer satisfaction, information/complaints from enforcement agencies, and how this information is used to develop and improve the code.

Audit Summary

The audit examined:

- The application process for new members
- The records of audit of existing members
- Complaint procedure including Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
- Process for unauthorised use of the RAC logo/membership

Member Application Process

RAC has a comprehensive member database, with all records kept electronically.

Since the last audit an additional 177 garages have applied to join the RAC and there is a waiting list, 292 members have left. RAC don't accept garages for membership if there is already coverage in the area.

The application process remains unchanged since the last audit.

Firstly the premises are viewed to ensure the garage/repairer is suitable and that they meet RAC's requirements for consumers i.e. to include consumer facilities e.g. toilets.

Then after an application is submitted by the garage/repairer, due diligence checks are completed including credit history checks and Companies House checks.

Upon joining, the garage is asked to complete a self-declaration questionnaire and upload documents and images including copies of their insurance certificates, waste consignment notes, H&S risk assessments, fire risk assessments and training records.

New members are assigned an account manager and an onsite audit is carried out to ensure that the garage meets requirements. The garage is visited initially monthly to ensure that any changes recommended prior to acceptance for RAC Code membership are implemented and that standards are being upheld. Where a garage/repairer doesn't quite meet the required standards, an action plan is agreed to achieve the appropriate standard.

Details of two applications were reviewed from July 2025 and the first audit reports were reviewed for the two new members. These were found to be comprehensive and thorough. The websites of both garages were examined and the RAC Approved Repairer logo was not present on either of the websites.

Existing Members Inspections/Audit

The RAC aim to carry out an onsite audit of each garage, once a year. Over the last 12 months 95% of the network has been audited, with the remaining 5% are currently being booked in by the Inspections Team.

RAC Inspection Services carried out 1,138 inspection audits of RAC Approved Garages within the last 12 months. Visits are carried out by an RAC engineer. Any garage scoring below the benchmark score of 80% are set up with an action plan within the week to ensure improvements are quickly made, 228 action plans were issued within the last 12 months. The action plan details the changes or amendments that are needed. Some audit items, such as insurance, are minimum compliance requirements, so would trigger an action plan even if the overall score was high. Where any areas are identified of the garage is failing to meet the standards, RAC engineers will carry out training on site where possible.

The average score of these inspection audits was 92% against a benchmark of 80%, this is an increase from 90% last year. There were 12 garages who failed to meet the standards agreed and, once results were reviewed, RAC took the decision to remove them from the scheme. A further five were removed as they would not allow the RAC inspector to carry out their annual inspection.

Five audits were examined in their entirety. All audits had been completed according to the RAC's monitoring commitments.

All garages have access to the RAC portal. This contains the Code of Conduct and details of what is expected from them as a code member in each aspect of the code. The RAC portal also contains briefings and acts as a point of reference for members.

Membership Withdrawal and Sanctions for Non-Compliant Member Businesses

In many instances of non-compliance, the initial response from the RAC is to attempt to assist the garage to improve their business practices by enhancing their standards and sustaining consumer protection. In cases where this is resisted, the issues that have arisen are endemic in the business or are too fundamental to resolve, members face a range of sanctions including formal warning or expulsion.

Once three complaints are upheld against the member these are reviewed for trends and action taken if necessary. The RAC have sanctions in place to dismiss a member business within one month, with immediate dismissal from the scheme if circumstances require. The member is removed immediately from the RAC website and the list of garages that can be used by RAC patrols.

Where RAC Patrols, random checks and reports from members of the public have highlighted misuse of the RAC logo, enforcement Notices are sent by RAC Legal if the garage persists in using the RAC logo. RAC Patrols are notified about garages that have left the RAC, they will check for the use of the logo whilst in the area.

In the year since the last audit 284 members have left. Three exit letters were examined and the websites for the ex-members checked. None were found to be still using the RAC and/or CTSI logo.

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No members are currently in the RAC disciplinary process.

Marketing and Advertising by Member Businesses

All approved garages have access to RAC Approved Garage branding. RAC supply the branding to garages so it's fully controlled and the RAC engineer will ensure the branding is being used correctly during the onsite annual audit. Any instances of incorrect use of branding are picked up with the garage as soon as RAC is aware.

RAC Roadside Patrols also raise any issues of garages they observe who are displaying RAC branding but aren't part of the network. RAC then follow this up with the garage concerned to ensure this branding is removed. The RAC Legal team provide assistance where necessary. This process is also followed when a consumer makes us aware of a garage advertising as RAC approved when they're not part of the Code.

There were no issues of concern with marketing and advertising by members of the code.

Terms and Conditions and other Pre-Contractual Information

Terms and conditions and other pre-contractual information is required by the code to be visible to consumer prior to contract, this is checked by RAC auditors as part of the regular onsite audits.

RAC have a set of standard terms and conditions for code members to use, these were agreed with Kent Trading Standards (previously Primary Authority for RAC). They are provided to the garage at the time of audit if they do not have suitable Ts&Cs.

Customer Service Provisions

A high level of customer service is fundamental to the RAC and it places the same high expectation of customer service on its code members.

The RAC considers that all breakdown customers are, at that point in time, vulnerable and therefore requires them to be treated by their members with due care and consideration. The code requires that no entrapments methods are used e.g. retaining of keys due to alleged issues with vehicle's brakes. Unauthorised repairs can be an issue so this is carefully monitored during visits, member audits and in the content of any complaints. If the RAC receives three or more complaints about any member this triggers a report and investigation. However, one single complaint that highlights issues about the customer care culture within the business can cause removal of the member from the RAC Code.

Consumer Complaints Process

RAC provide their own ADR, Complaints and Conciliation are managed by a dedicated customer support team within RAC. Within the last 12 months RAC ADR have assisted 48 consumers. Of these 11 were upheld against the garage, in these cases the RAC secured additional repairs or refunds for the consumers.

If any trends are identified, RAC issue recommendations to the network.

Customer Satisfaction and Feedback

In December 2024 the RAC moved their reviews in-house. RAC send a review invitation to every customer who is referred to an RAC approved garage or accredited repairer by their roadside patrols. This requests feedback on the level of service received. The RAC will look at all the feedback received and where necessary, take internal action to improve the service being provided by members of the network.

However this information isn't yet available online for customers. RAC are in the process of creating a new portal to allow them to manage compliance and integrate all current databases. Once this is live, the feedback received from customers will automatically be available for customers to view on the main RAC website.

Customers are also able to leave feedback by numerous other means, including by phone, email, via our website and social media channels, and via the ADR team.

Conclusions

The RAC brand is an iconic name within the motoring industry and garages using the name gain instant credibility. The RAC works hard to protect its brand and this is demonstrated in their constant review and improvement in ways to ensure that the customer is treated well and fairly by its member businesses.

Reporting on the new in-house review system is still not available. Hopefully it will be included in next year's audit.