GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Transport Control Department

GARAGE COMPLIANCE PROGRAMME

Garage Compliance Handbook

A Practical Guide for Garage Owners and Operators

LEGISLATION

Garages Licensing Act 2022

AUDIENCE

Garage Owners and Operators

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01 Welcome

This Handbook explains, in plain language, what the *Garages Licensing Act 2022* requires of your business, how to apply for and keep a license, and how TCD will support you in getting compliant. It is written for business owners, not lawyers — where we simplify legal language, the Act itself always governs. If anything in this Handbook appears to conflict with the Act, the Act applies.

ℹ TCD OPERATIONAL POLICY

TCD's approach is education before enforcement. If you are working in good faith to become compliant, contact us — we would rather help you fix a problem than fine you for it. Formal enforcement is reserved for unlicensed operation, serious safety risks, and repeated non-compliance.

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Programme status: the garage license application period is open from Tuesday, 10th November 2026 through Friday, 18th December 2026. Applications are submitted online through the Department's application portal, linked from www.tcd.bm/garage-compliance. Following the close of the application period, TCD will carry out site inspections against a standardized, published checklist. This Handbook reflects the Programme as relaunched in 2026; it will continue to be updated as the Programme progresses, including the planned public Register of Compliant Garages.

02 Purpose of the Act

The Garages Licensing Act 2022 modernizes how garages are licensed and regulated in Bermuda, replacing the "public garage" system under the Motor Car Act 1951. It sets out license categories, safety standards, technician registration requirements, inspection powers, and enforcement mechanisms. The Act has applied in law since 4 November 2022; TCD is relaunching active administration of it with a view to full compliance across the industry.

Why registration matters

- Public safety — reducing the risk of fire, falls, and equipment failure in garage workshops.
- Proper handling of mechanical repairs by verified, registered technicians.
- Fire and environmental risk mitigation.
- Transparency and accountability across the automotive industry.
- A level playing field — every licensed garage meets the same standards, and vehicle sellers without their own repair capability are required to partner with one that does (see Section 5).

§ LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT

Operating a garage without a licence is an offence under section 41 of the Act and can result in a fine of up to $8,000, in addition to the general penalty under section 45 **(up to $15,000, or $30,000 for a repeat conviction).** Licensing is not optional.

03 Benefits of Compliance

- Legal certainty — you can operate, advertise and trade without risk of enforcement action.
- Inclusion in the public Register of Garages, which builds customer trust and referral business.
- Access to TCD training, workshops and advisory support.
- Protection from unlicensed or unsafe competitors operating outside the rules.
- A documented safety record that supports insurance, financing and business growth.

04 Licence Categories

The Act allows the Director to grant six types of licence (section 3). You may hold more than one licence type if your business carries out more than one type of activity, and you must pay the fee prescribed for each licence.

Licence Type	What it covers	Act Reference
Dealer Garage Licence	Service of motor vehicles (except cycles) at a motor vehicle dealership	s.3(1)(a)
Garage Licence	Service of motor vehicles	s.3(1)(b)
Cycle Dealer Garage Licence	Service of cycles at a cycle dealership	s.3(1)(c)
Cycle Garage Licence	Service of cycles	s.3(1)(d)
Body and Paint Garage Licence	Making, repairing, painting or modifying the body of motor vehicles	s.3(1)(e)
Detailing Garage Licence	Cleaning, rustproofing or modifying vehicle appearance, including tinting and identification plate fabrication	s.3(1)(f)

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If your garage carries out more than one licensable activity — for example, general repair and body & paint work — apply for both licence types on the same application. Do not operate an activity under the wrong licence category; this creates a compliance gap TCD's inspectors are specifically trained to identify.

Dealer Garage vs. Garage — what's the difference?

A Dealer Garage Licence applies where a premises both sells motor vehicles as a dealership and services or repairs motor vehicles on the same premises — the test is functional (does the premises sell and service vehicles together), not whether you hold a formal manufacturer franchise agreement. A Garage Licence applies where a premises services or repairs vehicles but does not sell vehicles as a dealership. The same distinction applies

between Cycle Dealer Garage and Cycle Garage. A business that only sells vehicles, with no on-site service or repair function at all, falls under neither category — see Section 5.

05 Vehicle Sellers & Importers Without On-Site Repair Facilities

Some businesses in Bermuda import and sell motor vehicles but do not operate any service, repair, or maintenance facility of their own — for example, businesses that import and sell vehicles directly to the public without an associated workshop. Because these businesses perform no service or repair activity, they do not fit any of the six garage licence categories in Section 4, and cannot be required to hold a garage licence.

If your business imports or sells vehicles and you are unsure whether this applies to you, or you would like guidance on entering into a Partnership Agreement with a licensed garage, contact TCD using the details in Section 20.

06 Eligibility

Who may apply

- A registered Bermuda business entity
- A sole proprietor
- A company incorporated in Bermuda
- A dealership operating motor vehicle sales and servicing

Who is disqualified from applying (s.3(4))

- Anyone under 18 years of age
- An undischarged bankrupt, or anyone who has entered into a composition or arrangement with creditors within the last 5 years
- Anyone convicted, in Bermuda or elsewhere, of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty

Where you can operate

A licence is granted for a specific premises only (s.3(3)). Your premises must be lawfully zoned for garage activity, comply with the Development and Planning Act 1974, not contravene any Municipal ordinance, and not conflict with the Fire Safety Act 2014. The Act does not override these other statutory requirements — you need to satisfy all of them, not just the Garages Licensing Act. If you are uncertain whether your premises is correctly zoned, confirm with the Department of Planning (planningfrontdesk@gov.bm) before applying.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT

A licence is also required for a repair/service place attached to a licensed fuel retail site, and for a repair/service place attached to a licensed livery (s.3(5)) — being part of another licensed business does not exempt you from needing a garage licence.

07 Required Documents

Mandatory (required by the Act, s.4)

- A completed TCD Application Form, submitted through the application portal
- The non-refundable application fee (to be paid at the end)
- A Fire Certificate issued under the Fire Safety Act 2014, or written confirmation from the Chief Fire Officer that a fire safety survey has concluded (contact Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service at bfrsinfo@gov.bm — see Section 9)
- Premises layout plans

Additional documents TCD requires operationally

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These strengthen regulatory oversight and align with existing TCD practice, but are not individually named in the Act itself: valid Business Licence (or any other verification of the business eg. Letter from Tax, Social Insurance or a Certificate of Incorporation); proof of public liability insurance; proof of property insurance (if applicable); Department of Environment and Natural Resources certificate/consent code (pollutioncontrol@gov.bm) for spray booths; Department of Planning confirmation, if your use or premises requires it (planningfrontdesk@gov.bm) ; a solicitor's letter, or an equivalent current signed lease plus a brief confirming letter, confirming your legal right to occupy the premises.

If your garage handles hazardous materials or does body & paint / spray work

- Spray booth specifications
- Ventilation compliance documentation
- Waste disposal agreement for oils, solvents and similar materials (TCD is confirming documentation requirements with DENR — pollutioncontrol@gov.bm — and will not treat this as a hard blocker on applications in the interim)

Cycle garages

- Confirmation of auxiliary bicycle compliance

Dealer garages

- Proof of dealership registration — a letter or certificate from the manufacturer confirming your authorized dealer status is sufficient; you do not need to submit a full dealership agreement, and should redact any commercial/financial terms if you do submit one

08 The Application Process

1. Pre-Application Consultation (optional but recommended) — meet with TCD to confirm licence type, safety requirements and required documentation. This reduces the risk of delay or refusal under section 5.
2. Submit your application with all required documents, through the application portal.
3. TCD reviews your documents for completeness. If information is missing, you will receive written notice requesting corrections (s.4(3)); the clock pauses until you respond.
4. Once your application is complete, TCD schedules and conducts a site inspection.
5. The Director issues a written Decision Notice (s.6): approval (pay the licence fee to receive your licence) or refusal (with reasons).
6. If approved, your licence is issued specifying the premises name, address, type, any conditions, and expiry date — valid for one year (s.8).
7. Your garage is added to the public Register of Garages (s.11).

Fees

All fees are set by Schedule 1 of the Act and are non-refundable.

Fee	Amount
Application Fee (non-refundable)	$500
Renewal Application Fee (non-refundable)	$250

Licence Category	New Licence Fee	Renewal Fee
Dealer Garage	$6,000	$3,000
Garage	$3,000	$1,500
Cycle Dealer Garage	$3,000	$1,500
Cycle Garage	$2,000	$1,000
Body and Paint Garage	$5,000	$2,500
Detailing Garage	$2,000	$1,000

09 Fire Certificate Requirements

Every application (other than a Detailing Garage Licence under s.3(1)(f)) must be accompanied by a Fire Certificate issued under section 13 of the Fire Safety Act 2014, or written confirmation from the Bermuda Fire & Rescue that fire safety requirements under Part 4 of that Act have been surveyed and concluded.

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Contact Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service early at bfrsinfo@gov.bm — this is often the longest lead-time item in your application.

10 Technician Registration

Automotive service technicians and cycle service technicians working in a licensed garage must be registered with the Director (Part 4 of the Act).

- Technicians apply directly to the Department of Workforce Development for entry on the Register of Automotive Service Technicians (s.28), using a national occupational certificate granted under the National Occupational Certification Act 2004. The list will be shared with the Director of TCD.
- The Register is published annually in the Gazette and is publicly available (s.27); it excludes anyone currently suspended.
- The Director may suspend a registered technician who is not practicing to a good-practice standard, or who has not practiced the trade for a substantial period (s.29). A suspended technician must surrender their certificate within 7 days.
- It is an offence to practice as, or purport to be, a registered technician without being one, or while suspended (ss.29(2), 31).

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As the garage owner, you are responsible for verifying that every technician you employ is currently registered and not suspended before they carry out work. Keep a copy of each technician's registration on file and check the published Register annually. TCD's Application Package includes a Technician Schedule for this purpose. For questions about technician registration, contact the Department of Workforce Development at dkbean@gov.bm or sjlewis@gov.bm .

11 Environmental Responsibilities

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The Act does not itself set out detailed environmental rules, but TCD requires evidence of responsible environmental practice as part of licensing, working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). This is TCD operational policy, not a section of the Act. For environmental/pollution control guidance, contact DENR at pollutioncontrol@gov.bm .

- Store inflammable substances (petrol, solvents, spray coatings) only in closed, purpose-built containers (a statutory requirement under s.37).
- Keep oily waste and oily rags in a proper container (s.37(2)).

- Maintain a waste disposal agreement for used oils, solvents and similar materials.
- Provide environmental compliance documentation if your garage handles hazardous materials.

12 Safety Requirements (Part 5 of the Act)

These are legal requirements, not recommendations. Breaching any of them is an offence with a specific penalty under Schedule 2.

Section	Requirement	What it means
s.32	Elevating-type vehicle lifts	Stop chocks fitted and placed before the lift is elevated
s.33	Safety devices for elevating-type lifts	Locking safety leg (except nut-and-screw four-post lifts); trip line outside the line of vertical travel
s.34	Safety of pits	Covered or guarded by rails not less than 42 inches high whenever not in use / no vehicle standing above
s.35	Spray painting	Fully partitioned room, adequately ventilated, non-sparking exhaust fans where the Director requires
s.36	Fire extinguishing apparatus	Suitable, efficient, positioned/charged for ready use; type, capacity and quantity as directed by the Director after consulting the Chief Fire Officer
s.37	Inflammable substances	Kept only in closed, purpose-designed, leak-free containers; oily waste/rags in a proper container
s.38	Fire precautions when filling	No fuelling with the engine running or within 50 feet of a naked flame or light
s.39	Smoking	Prohibited anywhere on the premises or inside any building/structure forming part of it
s.40	First aid equipment	Type and quantity appropriate for the operation; kept in good order and available for immediate use; confirmed at inspection, not pre-approved separately

13 Renewal Process

- Licences are valid for one year and may be renewed annually if you are not in breach of your licence's terms and conditions (s.9).
- Submit your renewal application, in the form TCD determines, together with the renewal fee, before your licence expires.
- Renew early — operating on an expired licence is treated the same as operating without one (s.41).

14 Compliance Obligations While Licensed

- Display your licence prominently at the premises so it is readily seen on entry (s.10). Failure to display is an offence.
- Notify the Director in writing before changing your registered address (s.16).
- Keep all safety systems (lifts, pits, spray rooms, fire equipment, first aid) compliant at all times, not just at inspection.
- Ensure every technician you employ is registered and not suspended.
- Cooperate with inspectors exercising their right of entry under section 18.
- Comply with any conditions attached to your licence.

Records TCD recommends you keep on-site

✓ BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION

A copy of your current licence and Fire Certificate; technician registration verification; equipment maintenance logs; safety inspection logs; and incident reports, if applicable. These are not individually mandated by the Act, but they are exactly what an inspector will ask to see, and they are your best evidence of good-faith compliance.

15 Inspection Process

TCD inspectors (examiners or traffic officers acting under s.18) may enter your premises at any reasonable time to inspect it or to see how it is being used. If entry is refused, TCD may apply to a magistrate for a warrant.

Inspection Result	What happens next
Compliant	You continue operating; your next inspection is at renewal or on a routine schedule.
Minor deficiency	You receive an Advisory Notice with a correction timeline and a follow-up inspection.
Serious breach	A Stop Order may be issued (s.19), requiring you to immediately stop the contravening activity until it is corrected.

16 Appeals

You have the right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 14 days of being notified of certain decisions:

- A refusal to grant or renew your licence (s.17(1))
- A decision to revoke, suspend or vary a term or condition of your licence (s.17(2))

- A Stop Order (s.22)
- A decision affecting your technician registration (s.30)

The Court may make any order it thinks fit, including an order for costs.

17 Suspension

The Director may suspend or vary your licence, either at your own request or if you have contravened a term or condition of your licence, the Act, or any regulations made under it (s.13). Before doing so, the Director must give you written notice of the grounds and 7 days to object in writing (s.14). Suspension takes effect 7 days after the notice is served, unless you appeal. A suspended licence is not on the register and operating while suspended is itself an offence carrying a $4,000 penalty (s.13(3)).

18 Revocation

The Director may revoke your licence if satisfied that you made a false declaration or submitted false information or documentation, failed to comply with a term or condition of your licence or the Act, are no longer a fit and proper person, or the premises are no longer being used as a garage (s.12). The same 7-day notice and objection process applies (s.14), and revocation is published in the Gazette.

19 Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a licence if I already have a Business Licence?

Yes. A Business Licence from the Department of Workforce Development (or any other form of business legitimacy) is a separate requirement from a garage licence under this Act. You need both.

My garage has operated for years without a licence under this Act — am I already breaking the law?

The Act has applied since November 2022. TCD's relaunched Programme gives you a structured, supportive path to full compliance during 2026, with education before enforcement. Contact TCD now rather than waiting for an inspection.

I only import and sell vehicles — I don't service them. Do I need a garage licence?

No — none of the six garage licences apply to a business that only sells or imports vehicles with no on-site service or repair function. TCD's policy position is that you should hold a Service & Repair Partnership Agreement with a licensed garage instead, so your customers have a named garage for service and warranty support. See Section 5 and the Dealer & Vehicle Seller Framework for detail.

Can I operate more than one garage location on one licence?

No. A licence is granted in respect of a specific premises only (s.3(3)). Each location needs its own licence.

What happens if I sell my garage business?

Licences cannot be transferred (s.44 — transferring or borrowing a licence is an offence).

What if I disagree with an inspection finding?

Discuss it with the inspector and the Garages Licensing Unit first. If a formal decision is made against you (refusal, suspension, revocation, or a Stop Order), you have a statutory right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 14 days.

20 Key Stakeholders & Contacts

Depending on the stage of your application and the nature of your garage, you may need to contact more than one Government department. The table below summarizes who to contact and why.

Stakeholder	Purpose	Contact
Transport Control Department — Garages Licensing Unit	Garage licence applications, inspections, renewals, general programme queries	tcd@gov.bm · (441) 292-1271
Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS)	Fire Certificate / fire safety survey (required for most licence categories, see Section 9)	bfrsinfo@gov.bm
Department of Planning	Zoning / planning confirmation, where your premises or proposed use requires it (see Section 6)	planningfrontdesk@gov.bm
Department of Workforce Development	Automotive and cycle service technician registration (Part 4 of the Act, see Section 10)	dkbean@gov.bm · sjlewis@gov.bm
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Environmental/pollution control guidance, including waste disposal agreements (see Section 11)	pollutioncontrol@gov.bm

Transport Control Department

Channel	Detail
Department	Transport Control Department — Garages Licensing Unit
Address	#17 North Street, Hamilton
Telephone	(441) 292-1271
Email	tcd@gov.bm
Website	www.tcd.bm

Channel	Detail
Online Application Portal	www.tcd.bm/garage-compliance or transportcontrol.gov.bm/Applications/List-of-Applications/pagesize/10?pagesize=10
Office Hours	8:30am – 4:30pm