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How do I apply to become a SERMI Authorised Independent Operator (IO)?

To become a SERMI Authorised IO you need to:

- Complete an expression of interest form online: [Click here](#)
- You will receive a confirmation email with the following information:
 - A link to the Terms and Conditions
 - A contract to check, sign and return
 - Instructions relating to the requirements of a DBS check
 - A link to the SERMI webpage and application form
 - Payment details for Independent Operator (IO) approval (single payment or 60-month Direct Debit)
 - Payment details for Independent Operator Employee (IOE) approval (single payment). Please note the IO approval fee includes the approval of one IOE
 - Criminal Record Declaration form
 - Legitimate Business Declaration form
 - Evidence checklist
- Apply for a Basic DBS check for the IO Legal Representative (the person empowered to legally represent the IO) and all IOE's to be approved. [Click here](#)
- IO Legal Representative signs the contract and gathers the required evidence
- Complete and submit the application form online, once you have received your DBS certificates. Please don't forget to attach the following documents with your application:
 - DBS certificate for the legal representative (business owner or person with significant control)
 - DBS certificate for the technician to be approved
 - A signed Criminal Record Declaration for the legal representative and technician
 - A copy of your public liability insurance certificate showing the required levels of cover
 - Legitimate business declaration form
 - Evidence of business ownership (see examples below)
 - Evidence of working in the automotive area (see examples below)
- Once you have submitted your application form and associated evidence you will be sent an invoice for the 'approval and 5-year authorisation fee', along with a Direct Debit mandate if you have chosen to pay by direct debit.
- Upon payment of the invoice, or submission of the Direct Debit mandate, the legal representative and technician to be approved will be sent a link to verify their identity. (Please note they will need a smart phone to verify their identity and to access security-related information, once approved)
- Once your application has been reviewed, the evidence has been checked and you have verified your identity, we will send you an authorisation certificate for the garage and your technician will be sent a digital certificate. Once the technician has completed the process of registering their digital certificate, they will be able to access the manufacturer sites through the Trust Centre platform.

How do I apply to become a SERMI Authorised Independent Operator Employee (IOE)?

You can only apply to become a SERMI Authorised IO Employee once the IO has been authorised. The IO will submit your application and your authorisation will be linked to that IO only. If you leave the organisation your authorisation will be terminated, even if you are moving to another authorised IO.

To be considered for authorisation, you will need to:

- Complete and sign the [IO Employee application form](#) This includes a number of declarations including:
 - Previous authorisation has never been revoked due to misuse
 - You have a clean criminal record
 - You have an employment contract with the IO
 - You have a valid UK Identity Card, Driver's Licence or Passport (required for Digital ID verification)Your application form **must** be checked and signed by a legal representative of the IO
- Provide a [Basic DBS certificate](#) showing a clean criminal record and a [supporting self-declaration form](#)
- Provide evidence of your employment agreement

We are already accredited through the Garage Safe scheme. What do we need to do to apply to become a SERMI Authorised Independent Operator (IO)?

If you are already accredited through Garage Safe, you have already been assessed against the majority of the criteria. You will still need to complete the [IO/RSS Application form](#) and your nominated IO Employee(s) will need to complete an IO Employee Application form. However, you will not need to provide further evidence against the following, as we have already assessed against it:

- Provide documented [ownership](#) of the Independent Operator
- Provide evidence of [Public Liability](#) insurance to the required levels
- Provide evidence and a declaration of a [legitimate business](#)
- Provide evidence of working within the [automotive area](#)

Here is what you will need to do to apply:

- Complete an expression of interest form online: [Click here](#)
- You will receive a confirmation email with the following information:
 - A link to the Terms and Conditions
 - A contract to check, sign and return
 - Instructions relating to the requirements of a DBS check
 - A link to the SERMI webpage and application form
 - Payment details for Independent Operator (IO) approval (single payment or 60-month Direct Debit)
 - Payment details for Independent Operator Employee (IOE) approval (single payment). Please note the IO approval fee includes the approval of one IOE
 - Criminal Record Declaration form

- Legitimate Business Declaration form
 - Evidence checklist
- Apply for a Basic DBS check for the IO Legal Representative (the person empowered to legally represent the IO) and all IOE's to be approved. [Click here](#)
- IO Legal Representative signs the contract and gathers the required evidence
- Complete and submit the application form online, once you have received your DBS certificates. Please don't forget to attach the following documents with your application:
 - DBS certificate for the legal representative (business owner or person with significant control)
 - DBS certificate for the technician to be approved
 - A signed Criminal Record Declaration for the legal representative and technician
 - A copy of your public liability insurance certificate showing the required levels of cover
 - Legitimate business declaration form
- Once you have submitted your application form and associated evidence you will be sent an invoice for the 'approval and 5-year authorisation fee', along with a Direct Debit mandate if you have chosen to pay by direct debit.
- Upon payment of the invoice, or submission of the Direct Debit mandate, the legal representative and technician to be approved will be sent a link to verify their identity. (Please note they will need a smart phone to verify their identity and to access security-related information, once approved)
- Once your application has been reviewed, the evidence has been checked and you have verified your identity, we will send you an authorisation certificate for the garage and your technician will be sent a digital certificate. Once the technician has completed the process of registering their digital certificate, they will be able to access the manufacturer sites through the Trust Centre platform.

We are already accredited through the Garage Safe scheme. What do I need to do to apply to become a SERMI Authorised IO Employee?

To become a SERMI authorised IO Employee you will need to:

- Complete and sign the [IO Employee application form](#) This includes a number of declarations including:
 - Previous authorisation has never been revoked due to misuse
 - You have a clean criminal record
 - You have an employment contract with the IO
 - You have a valid UK Identity Card, Driver's Licence or Passport (required for Digital ID verification)

Your application form **must** be checked and signed by a legal representative of the IO

- Provide a [Basic DBS certificate](#) showing a clean criminal record and a supporting [self-declaration form](#)
- Provide evidence of your employment agreement

What is acceptable evidence of business ownership?

Sole Trader:

- A copy of your tax return with the Schedule C included
- A copy of the DBA (Doing Business As) proving that the individual established the alternative business name
- A business bank statement (dated within the last three months)
- A utility bill listing the business name (dated within the last three months)
- An invoice from a supplier (dated within the last three months)
- A letter addressed to RMISC (RMI Standards and Certifications) from an accountant acting on behalf of the business
- Correspondence from HMRC listing the business name (dated within the last 12 months)
- If you are unable to provide any of the above, we can visit your business premises to verify it is an established business (a fee will apply)

Partnership:

- An existing business bank statement (dated within the last three months)
- A utility bill listing the business name (dated within the last three months)
- An invoice from a supplier (dated within the last three months)
- A letter addressed to RMISC (RMI Standards and Certifications) from an accountant acting on behalf of the business
- Correspondence from HMRC listing the business name (dated within the last 12 months)
- A business premises rates bill (dated within the last 12 months)
- If you are unable to provide any of the above we can visit your business premises to verify it is an established business (a fee will apply)

Corporation Ownership (S Corporation):

- A copy of your personal tax return
- The articles of incorporation with the stock information included

Corporation Ownership (C Corporation):

- Stock ownership documents
- Share certificates issued by the corporation
- Documents such as financial contributions and contract agreements for smaller businesses without share certificates

Limited Liability Company Ownership:

- Companies House registration number
- Articles of organisation

Not-For-Profit Organisation:

- Charity Commission number

What is acceptable evidence of working in the automotive area?

To apply to become an Independent Operator (IO) you must provide evidence of working in the automotive area. This can be demonstrated by providing one of the following from the list below:

- Companies House registration number with 'Nature of Business (SIC)' stated as:
 - 45111 – Sale of new cars and light motor vehicles
 - 45112 – Sale of used cars and light motor vehicles
 - 45200 – Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles
 - 45310 – Wholesale trade of motor vehicle parts and accessories
 - 45320 – Retail trade of motor vehicle parts and accessories
 - 45400 - Sale, maintenance and repair of motorcycles and related parts and accessories
 - 52290 – Other transportation support activities
 - 96090 – Other service activities not elsewhere classified
- A requested selection of invoices from your last three months of trading demonstrating repair and maintenance of motor vehicles
- Current membership of an approved Motor Trade quality assurance organisation. This **MUST** be an organisation that visits your premises to carry out an approval/re-approval audit and encompasses a strict Code of Conduct or Code of Practice. Examples include, but not limited to:
 - IGA (Independent Garage Association)
 - TMG (Trust My Garage)
 - Bosch Car Centre

What is acceptable evidence to prove a legitimate business?

As part of the application process, you will be required to sign and return a declaration certifying that the garage pursues 'a legitimate business activity'. In accordance with the SERMI Standard, this means that the business does not offer services which would 'negatively impact the emissions performance of a vehicle'. This includes:

- Deactivating or removing pollution control devices or emission control systems, or degrading their performance or concealing their malfunction
- Installing defeat devices (any element of design which senses temperature, vehicle speed, engine speed (RPM), transmission gear, manifold vacuum or any other parameter for the purpose of activating, modulating, delaying or deactivating the operation of any part of the emission control system, that reduces the effectiveness of the emission control system under conditions which may reasonably be expected to be encountered in normal vehicle operation and use)
- Installing defeat strategies (an emission control strategy that reduces the effectiveness of the emission controls under ambient or engine operating conditions encountered either during normal vehicle operation or outside the type-approval test procedures)
- Deactivating, removing or tampering with devices for the monitoring of the consumption of fuel or electric energy, or tampering with odometer readings
- Tampering with the engine control unit, including the rated engine power

Business activity will be audited as part of the initial application process and throughout your period of authorisation. Evidence found relating to any of the points above will result in your authorisation not being approved or an existing authorisation being terminated.

Who is the IO Legal Representative?

This is the natural person, within the organisation, empowered to legally represent the IO in all aspects of access to vehicle repair and maintenance information (RMI).

Which DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check do I need to do?

There are currently four types of DBS checks. These are:

- Basic
- Standard
- Enhanced
- Enhanced with Barred List(s)

To satisfy the requirements of the SERMI Scheme to access vehicle security information, you will need to prove you have a clean criminal record. To do this you will need to provide us with a '**Basic**' DBS check, which has been completed within 3 months of the date of application. In addition to this we also require a self-declaration document completing, signing and submitting, listing all/any previous 'spent' convictions. A copy of the DBS certificate and the completed self-declaration will need to be submitted at the same time as your application form to become an approved employee.

Information relating to a 'Basic' DBS check can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/basic-dbs-checks-guidance>

The current cost (June 2023) of a Basic DBS check is £18.

You can apply for a Basic DBS check online here: <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>

You can also apply for a Basic DBS check through a Responsible Organisation. This can be done by the individual or their employer. A list of Responsible Organisations can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/responsible-organisations>

Which convictions will stop me becoming an authorised IO employee?

Any 'unspent' convictions, listed on your DBS check will prevent your application to become an authorised IO employee progressing. Once 'spent' the nature of the conviction will influence the decision to progress your application.

There are a number of 'spent' convictions which will prevent your application to become an authorised IO employee progressing. Although each 'spent' conviction will be reviewed on a 'case by case' basis, the following two conviction types will generally prevent your access to the SERMI Scheme:

- Automotive related crimes (example being Taking Without Owner's Consent (TWOC). This does not include speeding offences)
- Any conviction relating to fraud or fraudulent activity

Can I apply if we do engine or emissions mapping?

Under Annex X of Regulation (EU) 2018/858 it states that ‘operators shall not be considered to pursue a legitimate business where they advertise or offer repair or maintenance operations that would negatively impact the engine performance of a vehicle’. This includes:

- Deactivating or removing pollution control devices or emission control systems, or degrading their performance or concealing their malfunction
- Installing default devices (any element of design which senses temperature, vehicle speed, engine speed (RPM), transmission gear, manifold vacuum or any other parameter for the purpose of activating, modulating, delaying or deactivating the operation of any part of the emission control system, that reduces the effectiveness of the emission control system under conditions which may reasonably be expected to be encountered in normal vehicle operation and use)
- Installing defeat strategies (an emission control strategy that reduces the effectiveness of the emission controls under ambient or engine operating conditions encountered either during normal vehicle operation or outside the type-approval test procedures)
- Deactivating, removing or tampering with devices for the monitoring of the consumption of fuel or electric energy, or tampering with odometer readings
- Tampering with the engine control unit, including the rated engine power

What does my employee need to demonstrate/provide to become authorised?

For an employee to apply to become ‘authorised’ under the SERMI Scheme they will need to provide the following:

- A ‘basic’ DBS check with an accompanying self-declaration statement relating to ‘spent’ convictions
- An employment agreement/contract between the employee and the business
- UK proof of identity (one of the following):
 - UK Driving Licence
 - UK Passport
 - UK Identity Card
- A completed application form, counter signed by a ‘legal representative’ of your organisation

What is an Approval Inspection Certificate?

This is the certificate issued by the CAB (Conformity Assessment Body) to the IO (Independent Operator) and confirms that the IO is approved and that the IO Employees can request the authorisation to access security-related repair and maintenance information (RMI).

What is an Authorisation Inspection Certificate?

This is the certificate issued by the CAB (Conformity Assessment Body) to the IO Employee which confirms that the employee is authorised to access security-related repair and maintenance information (RMI) on the website of a vehicle manufacturer.

What level of insurance do I need?

To become a SERMI Authorised Independent Operator you will need public liability insurance with a minimum of:

- 1 million Euros (equivalent in GBP) coverage for bodily injury and
- 0.5 million Euros (equivalent in GBP) coverage for property damage

As an Independent Operator (IO) do I need to verify the vehicle and customer identity?

Yes. As the 'repairer' you **MUST** verify the vehicle identity and the customer identity before requesting any security related RMI (Repair and Maintenance Information) or carrying out any security related software updates.

How do I check and verify the vehicle identity?

You will need to check and verify that the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) of the vehicle matches that stated on the vehicle registration document. You will need to see **all** the following to confirm this, and evidence of this check must be recorded and kept for audit purposes (this can be recorded on the repair order):

- Vehicle registration document showing the VIN
- The vehicle with a legible VIN

You **MUST** record the following customer information from the vehicle registration document:

- Registered keeper's first name
- Registered keeper's surname(s) or business name
- Registered keeper's address
- Date of issue

Where a customer is unable to produce a vehicle registration document, due to it being held by a fleet, lease, rental or loan company you **MUST** request one of the following additional documents:

- Fleet management agreement or appropriate letter-headed evidence
- Rental car agreement or appropriate letter-headed evidence
- Lease agreement or appropriate letter-headed evidence
- Loan agreement or appropriate letter-headed evidence

The above evidence **MUST** be kept for a minimum period of 5 years following the repair.

How do I check and verify the customer identity?

The customer identity can be confirmed by one of the following documents and this needs to be recorded and kept for audit purposes:

- Identity card (note the card number on the vehicle repair order)
- Passport (note the passport number on the vehicle repair order)
- Driver's licence (note the driver's licence number on the vehicle repair order)
- Roadside membership card (note the membership card type and number on the vehicle repair order)

You **MUST** record the following customer information from their identification:

- First name
- Surname
- Type of ID checked and the associated number (see list above)

If the vehicle is a fleet, lease or rental vehicle you **MUST** also record the following information:

- Fleet management or rental car company name
- Contact name at the respective company
- Address of the respective company
- Telephone number of the respective company
- Driver's company identification (if available)

The above evidence **MUST** be kept for a minimum period of 5 years following the repair.

As an Independent Operator (IO) what evidence do I need to keep following a security related repair?

As an IO you must produce and keep a customer signed repair order for a minimum of 5 years for every security related RMI (Repair and Maintenance Information) transaction (Digital copies of the repair order are permitted). The repair order **MUST** include, as a minimum:

- Vehicle registration number
- Vehicle make
- Vehicle model
- Recorded vehicle mileage
- The reason for the repair
- A customer signature (owner and/or the person presenting the vehicle)

You also need to keep evidence of the vehicle identification check and the customer identification check. This can be included on the repair order or through other auditable means. This information needs to be retained for a minimum period of 5 years.



What does the approval and the ongoing monitoring process look like?

Once you have submitted your [IO/RSS application form](#) with one named IO Employee (IOE), RMISC (RMI Standards and Certification), acting as the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB), will review your application and check all the required documentation has been attached. Once this has been confirmed we will review your application and all associated evidence against the SERMI required standards. In most cases, this review process will be a desktop exercise and will not require a site visit.

Once we have approved authorisation of the IO and at least one IO Employee we will notify the Trust Centre (TC). The Trust Centre will then create an authorisation record and issue security credentials (a Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) solution based on a digital certificate containing details that will allow the IO Employee to be uniquely identifiable to the Vehicle Manufacturer (VM) Repair and Maintenance (RMI) website). The MFA with the digital certificate is provided to the individual IO Employee by the Trust Centre.

Before the IO Employee can use the VM RMI website, they will need to register their credentials and make any VM payment in accordance with the VM RMI's Terms and Conditions.

Only the authorised IO Employees will be able to access, download and install security related information and software. Sharing of your login credentials will result in your authorisation being revoked under the terms of 'misuse'.

Once approved, the IO will be authorised for a period of 60 months and the IO Employee will be authorised for the remainder of the IO's authorisation period. During this period the CAB will carry out a minimum of one random unannounced inspection to audit the site, employees and [documentation](#). There will also be one planned inspection, within the last 6 months of authorisation. This inspection is based on an application from the IO and acts as a re-approval audit. Failure to schedule this inspection will result in the IO and IO Employee/s authorisation being terminated, once the 60-month period expires. Access to the VM RMI will be revoked until a new application and authorisation is processed.

How much does it cost?

To support the independent garage sector, RMISC is offering the SERMI Scheme on a not-for-profit basis. As an independent garage you can choose to pay a one-off payment of £1500 or spread the cost across the five-year authorisation period and pay £25 per month. You can also add additional technicians for a one-off fee of £75 each, giving them authorised access for up to five years.

When can I apply?

The SERMI Scheme will 'go live' 1st October 2023. You can submit an '[Expression of Interest](#)' now and you will be invited to complete your application once your expression of interest has been processed. Please remember you will need valid (completed within 3 months of the application date) DBS certificates for the legal representative and any technicians requiring approval.

Abbreviations and Definitions

Abbreviation	Full Name	Definition
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The organisation responsible for carrying out the DBS checks (previously known as CRB checks (Criminal Records Checks))
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body	The body responsible for the inspection and approval of IOs. For the UK this is RMI Standards and Certification
IO	Independent Operator	A garage or workshop seeking access to security-related repair and maintenance information
IOE	Independent Operator Employee	An employee of the IO, authorised to access security-related repair and maintenance information
	Legal Representative	The person within the IO empowered to legally represent the business
RMI	Repair and Maintenance Information	Manufacturer specific repair and maintenance information
RMISC	RMI Standards and Certification	The only UK approved conformity assessment body for the SERMI Scheme
RSS	Remote Services Supplier	A service provider offering remote technical services to an IO
SERMI	Forum for Access to Security-Related Vehicle RMI	The entity in charge of the SERMI Scheme
TC	Trust Centre	The body designated by SERMI to approve CABs and issue digital credentials to IO Employees
VM	Vehicle Manufacturer	The vehicle manufacturer responsible for providing access to security-related RMI to all authorised IO Employees