MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
To the House of Assembly

By

The Hon. Owen K. Darrell, JP, MP
Minister of Tourism & Transport, Culture & Sport
GARAGE COMPLIANCE PROGRAMME
Friday, 5th November 2026

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform this Honourable House and the public about the Government's Garage Compliance Programme, and the steps the Transport Control Department is taking to strengthen safety standards and accountability across Bermuda's garage industry.

Every garage, service station, body shop, detailing shop and cycle repair business operating in Bermuda provides a service the public depends on. Residents trust these businesses with their vehicles, and in many cases with their safety, every single day. It is Government's responsibility to ensure that trust is well placed.

Mr. Speaker, the Garages Licensing Act 2022 became operative on 4th November 2022. It established, for the first time, a comprehensive statutory framework for the licensing and regulation of garages in Bermuda, covering six distinct categories of license: Dealer Garage, Garage, Cycle Dealer Garage, Cycle Garage, Body and Paint Garage, and Detailing Garage.

This initiative is first and foremost a public safety measure, **Mr. Speaker**. The Act sets clear, specific standards for the equipment and conditions found in a working garage: the stop-chocks and locking safety legs required on vehicle lifts, the covers and guard rails required on service pits, the partitioning and ventilation required of spray-painting rooms,

and the fire precautions, extinguishing apparatus, and first aid equipment every licensed premises must maintain.

The Act also requires every automotive and cycle service technician working in this industry to be registered with the Director of the Department. **Mr. Speaker,** these requirements exist for a simple reason: to protect the people who work in these premises every day, and the members of the public who rely on them.

Mr. Speaker, by ensuring that every garage operating in Bermuda is subject to consistent standards of licensing, inspection, and accountability, we are taking practical steps to create a safer environment for garage workers, for customers, and for the wider public.

I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that the Department will open the application period for garage licensing on Tuesday, 10th November, and will remain open until Friday, 18th December. Garage operators may apply online through the Department's website, where full guidance on the requirements, the application process, and supporting documentation is also available.

Mr. Speaker, the Government's approach throughout this process is, and will continue to be, one of collaboration rather than confrontation. We recognise that some operators will need time to prepare for inspections, obtain documentation, or make adjustments to their premises. The Department's intention is to work with garage operators, providing clear guidance and a reasonable opportunity to meet their obligations, rather than treating this as a purely punitive exercise.

Following the close of the application period, the Department will carry out site inspections against a standardised, published inspection checklist, so that every applicant is assessed consistently and fairly, regardless of the size or nature of their operation. Where an inspection identifies a deficiency, the Department's first response will be guidance

and a reasonable timeframe for correction, consistent with the measured, education-first approach I have just described.

Mr. Speaker, every licensed garage must display its licence prominently at its premises, so that any member of the public can see at a glance that the business they are dealing with meets Bermuda's licensing and safety standards. To build on this, the Department is also developing a public register of compliant garages, which will allow members of the public to confirm, directly and independently, that a garage is properly licensed.

This register is about more than compliance for its own sake, **Mr. Speaker**. It is intended to elevate professionalism across the industry, to give the public greater confidence when choosing where to take their vehicle, and to ensure that the many garage operators who already meet, or are working to meet, these standards are recognised for doing so.

Mr. Speaker, the Department has also received a number of enquiries and concerns from members of the public regarding garages operating below the standard expected under the Act. This Programme is, in part, a direct response to those concerns. A clear compliance framework, applied consistently across the industry, is the fairest way to address them — fair to the public, and fair to the many responsible operators already meeting the standard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear about what Government is asking of garage operators at this stage. Operators should:

- review the requirements of the Garages Licensing Act 2022 and the guidance published on the Department's website;
- gather the supporting documentation needed for their application & license, including evidence of fire safety compliance, insurance, and technician registration; and

- submit their application within the current application period, closing on 18th December.

Mr. Speaker, the Department remains available to assist any operator with questions about the process, and will continue to publish guidance and respond directly to enquiries as the Programme progresses.

This initiative reflects the Government's wider commitment to modernising regulatory processes, strengthening oversight, and ensuring that standards are applied consistently across industry, **Mr. Speaker**. It is also, fundamentally, about public confidence: ensuring that when a member of the public takes their vehicle to a licensed garage in Bermuda, they can do so with confidence that the business meets established safety and professional standards.

Mr. Speaker, Government looks forward to working constructively with the garage industry as this Programme moves forward, and thanks garage operators in advance for their cooperation in helping us achieve consistent compliance standards across Bermuda.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.