



Dealers face workshop chaos and customer anger if they don't prepare now for new MOT rules on recalls

Some are already tracing lapsed customers to avoid sudden workshop pressure

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MILLIONS of vehicles could soon fail their MOT due to unresolved safety recalls - overwhelming workshops and leaving frustrated customers scrambling for repairs.

That's the warning from data experts ADS, who say that cars may soon be failed if a recall has been missed.

ADS points out that the most recent figures from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency suggest that abrupt implementation of a new MOT failure or advisory rule relating to outstanding recalls would see dealers overwhelmed with workshop demand - and countless customers off the road.

More than five million cars are potentially affected because franchise dealers have lost contact with their owners or customers have failed to respond to initial contact, according to the most recent figures from the DVSA.

In 2021 alone, more than 2.7 million cars were recalled, with less than 800,000 rectified by the dealer.

ADS believes that with recalls becoming increasingly common, the total number of cars overdue a dealer appointment is now likely to significantly exceed five million.

It is known that the previous government was working on bringing outstanding recalls into MOT testing criteria, and the new administration is expected to implement the change, but timing remains unclear.

Dealers who don't act now risk being caught off guard when new rules take effect - losing customers and damaging trust in the process.

A sudden rule change, says ADS, introducing an advisory - or even automatic MOT failure - for unresolved recalls could trigger a 'nightmare scenario', with millions of customers rushing for repairs at once.

Dealer workshops would be overwhelmed, parts supply strained, and thousands of drivers left unable to use their vehicles - ultimately threatening dealer reputation and brand loyalty.

One manufacturer has already launched a project partnering with ADS to get ahead of the curve. It has begun tracing the backlog of outstanding safety recalls so that its dealers can manage the pipeline of work more smoothly.

ADS specialises in helping franchise dealers to keep track of customers who have moved on to independent service providers, changed address, or sold their car. And with over 50% of dealer databases typically containing outdated customer details, ADS urges dealers to act now.

The company says that dealer database analyses consistently show that around one in five lapsed customers of this kind are currently driving cars subject to an outstanding safety recall.

"Successive governments have had a poor track record on decision-making and responsible communications that avoid causing chaos for the automotive industry, so it is wise to get ahead of this problem immediately," said Jon Sheard, Operations Director of ADS.

"If they don't, depending on how the government chooses to implement the change, dealers could be overwhelmed by unforeseen demands for new parts and workshop time - leaving large numbers of customers potentially inconvenienced or even off the road."

As well as signalling a potential duty of care issue for dealers, ADS analysis of dealer databases also shows that massive revenue opportunities are missed when the dealer/customer relationship lapses.

One senior executive at a major franchise dealer group confidentially told ADS: "We know recalls are a growing issue, and if this change happens overnight, we'll face weeks of backlog just trying to clear MOT failures - let alone routine servicing.

"But beyond the immediate pressure, this is also an opportunity to reconnect with customers who haven't visited us in years. By acting now, we can encourage them to book in for servicing alongside recall work, strengthening relationships and ensuring they return to us in the future."

ADS stresses that the potential problem can be transformed into a dealer revenue opportunity, highlighting data demonstrating that recall appointments generate an average £309 per visit in additional servicing and repair work.

Jon Sheard added: "Re-engaging lapsed customers now ensures a steady flow of business rather than a sudden influx of urgent, unplanned repairs.

"Instead of reacting when it happens, we strongly encourage dealers to get ahead of this issue now, reconnect with lapsed customers and ensure their workshops remain in control when the change comes."

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ABOUT ADS

ADS - Auto Data Solutions - connects motor retail businesses with market and customer data that increases efficiency and boosts revenue. Working with franchised and independent dealers, ADS (Auto Data Solutions), specialises as a 'hub' bringing together significant data sources for customers across the industry. In a fast-moving and fluid market its focus is on helping to prevent dealers from losing track of customers so that they can build stronger and more loyal relationships.

Founded by a team of former senior CAP-HPI managers, ADS partners with all of the leading data and system providers to provide a unique set of services designed to drive growth and profitability for dealers.