

PRESS RELEASE

IAAF successfully challenges BMW under Block Exemption

Trade body questions German manufacturer's warranty ruling

The Independent Automotive Aftermarket Federation (IAAF) has successfully challenged BMW after the car-making giant refused to honour the warranty on a vehicle that was serviced and repaired outside of the BMW main dealer network.

The BMW 318i, which was less than three years old, was presented to a BMW dealership in Hampshire after it broke down due to a problem caused by the oil filter overheating the engine. After inspecting the damage, BMW said it would not repair the vehicle because the oil filter was a non-manufacturer part and it didn't have any record of the vehicle ever being serviced within the manufacturer network.

The vehicle owner pointed out to BMW that under current Block Exemption legislation, the manufacturer had a duty to honour the vehicle's warranty. But when the owner received an unsatisfactory response, he turned to the IAAF for help.

Wendy Williamson, IAAF chief executive, said: "The vehicle owner had come up against a brick wall with BMW. When they came to the IAAF asking for assistance, we looked at all the paperwork supplied by the owner and quickly came to the conclusion that BMW's stance was completely wrong and against current BER legislation."

The IAAF wrote a letter to BMW UK pointing out that under the provision of the Block Exemption Regulation, the fact that non-OE parts had been used on the vehicle was insufficient reason for the warranty to be declared invalid and that full details of the servicing schedule and parts had been supplied to the German manufacturer.

Williamson added. "Within a week, we were advised that the vehicle would be repaired under warranty. It was a quick and pleasing U-turn from BMW."

The IAAF's successful intervention has been heralded as a significant success for the automotive aftermarket. Williamson said: "The lack of understanding and co-operation shown by BMW was disappointing and totally against what Block Exemption stands for.

"I'm pleased that we managed to bring resolution to a difficult situation, but this should serve as a warning to everyone that some motor manufacturers are clearly putting unnecessary obstacles in front of vehicle owners and questioning the validity of warranties when there is no reason to do so."