



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Sandy Burgess
Chief Executive, SMTA

Email: sandy.burgess@smta.co.uk
CC: karen.thompson@smta.co.uk

Your Ref: Opening of Car Showrooms in Phase Two

08 June 2020

Dear Sandy,

Thank you for your recent correspondence including your letter of 2 June in which you relay your concerns and those expressed by SMTA members regarding plans for re-opening vehicle showrooms in Scotland. I hope that the information provided will offer clarity.

Firstly, please be assured I am very much aware of the significant impact that the pandemic is having on the automotive industry at this time. COVID-19 presents a significant risk to global and domestic economic activity, impacting across many sectors of the economy and we are working hard to support businesses across Scotland.

The Scottish Government has acted quickly to make funds available and has formed an Advisory Group on Economic Recovery to provide independent and expert advice on our response to the long-term impacts of coronavirus. The Group will engage directly with those affected by the crisis, and listen to those who are crucial for rebuilding a resilient economy, providing expert advice on Scotland's economic recovery once the immediate health emergency, has subsided. I would welcome your input.

For the moment, the primary objective of the Scottish Government remains to contain and suppress the virus in order to minimise the harm it can do. We continue to listen to the best scientific advice throughout this difficult time and will apply our best judgements to ensure we can continue to reduce the transmission of coronavirus and save lives. Our approach is tailored to Scotland's public health needs.

With respect to automotive retail, I can confirm that there are no regulations which prevent motor vehicles being distance sold and delivered in Scotland. It is only showrooms which must remain closed, as detailed in the Scottish Government [guidelines](#). All retailers including dealerships may open for 'click & collect', providing collection does not involve entering the showroom. This has been the case throughout lockdown and many outlets have operated on that basis, including adaptation of parking areas to permit physical distancing across their whole site. Of course, any distance selling and delivery of motor vehicles must be undertaken while strictly adhering to physical distancing guidelines which can be found [here](#).

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On 21 May, the First Minister set out the steps and phases by which the Scottish Government will aim to ease current lockdown measures. As detailed in the [route map](#) published, our actions will be gradual and incremental and will be matched with careful monitoring of the virus. In addition to the route map, the Scottish Government published [retail sectoral guidance](#) on 26 May. We have worked with employers and trade unions to ensure that this guidance is evidence-based, fair and ethical, clear and realistic.

This guidance states that retailers may open up to 800m² of their sales area, permitting some larger retail outlets such as car showrooms to re-open in Phase 2. Retail units larger than 800m² will be permitted to open in Phase 3. Each business will need to translate this guidance into the specific actions it needs to take depending on the nature of their business (i.e. the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated). Our guidance has been designed to be applied to cover the spectrum of different retailers in Scotland and we have prepared an operational guide for retailers which includes a downloadable checklist with actions to consider.

As you can appreciate, this is a rapidly evolving situation and our guidance will be updated and reviewed every three weeks in line with the Scottish Government's lockdown review.

Kind regards
Fiona Hyslop

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