

Kitemark® Working Group NEWSLETTER

Competence for Vehicle Damage Assessor (Estimator)

Thatcham's B47 Advanced Estimating course is valid until 31st December 2008 as proof of competence for Kitemark® assessments. From 1st January 2009, all initial Kitemark® inspections will be required to have ATA Vehicle Damage assessor in place. For surveillance inspections (i.e. businesses that already have Kitemark®), a minor non-conformity will be raised if only B47 is in place. The business will then be given a specified time to correct and achieve VDA ATA. The respective BSI inspector will advise of this time line.

Special attention should also be given to the competence ratios laid down in PAS125. Any further queries on this should be directed to the businesses' BSI Client Manager/ Inspector.

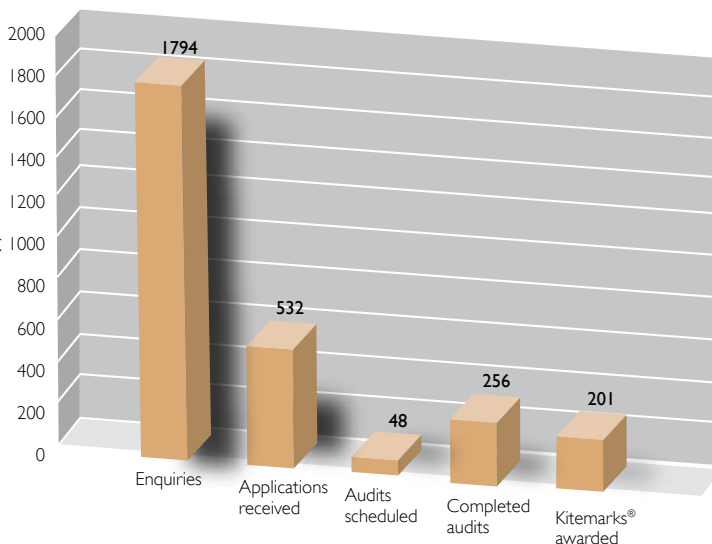
Applications update

Thatcham BSI
 Kitemark® Scheme
 Statistics November
 2008

BSI reported that some repairers are reluctant to commit to audit dates, claiming that dates and/or training and assessment dates are not available. BSI reported that there are no resource issues within BSI, audit dates are available.

Similarly, Thatcham confirmed that training and assessment dates are available at Thatcham's Automotive Academies at both Berkshire and Nuneaton.

Experience of working with the Esure approved repairer network had been extremely challenging, specifically in getting repairers to commit to audit dates, despite being informed that work would no longer be provided if the Kitemark® was not achieved.



Thatcham suggested that a case study could be produced from an insurer perspective on assisting an approved network in achieving Kitemark® compliance. A draft will be produced for the next meeting.

The KMWG felt that it was necessary for the Insurers to re-publish their deadlines for network Kitemark® approval, in order for the scheme to gain further momentum. ABP agreed to invite Insurers to the next ABP meeting to do this.

Scheme Issues

BSI reported the following issues that have been raised during Kitemark® audits:

Methods

Repairers are not following methods for all types of repair. Collating and using the correct M.E.T. methods and data seems to occur more frequently than with panel repair/replacement.

Parts

Where safety related replacement parts and panels are concerned, BSI is currently accepting OE, OES or parts supplied under an accreditation scheme (Thatcham, TUV, CZ or Capa).

The subject of e-marking (head lamps) was discussed at length. No conclusion was reached as to whether individual e-marking would provide demonstrable evidence that a part was equivalent to OE, OES or approved through a third party scheme as above. The conclusion was that changes would be made to the criteria laid down in PAS125 during the steering group review in November.

Competence

Structural aluminium, composite and bonding competence is being demonstrated through VM training, as ATA does not currently cover these areas of repair. This is perfectly acceptable.

Where there is crossover between Panel and M.E.T. operations, the relevant methods must be used and the work must be signed off by the qualified/competent person.

Employees undertaking final inspection/sign off must be competent to carry out this task. Are they checking the quality of the repair work undertaken, or are they checking signatures of those who signed off the work? The process for this must be defined by the repairer and evidence of suitable competence must be available.



ATA update

The number of centres approved to run ATA assessments is as follows:

Paint: 15, Panel: 14, M.E.T: 13, Glazing: 3, VDA: 2

Thatcham Automotive Academies at Berkshire and Nuneaton are still the only centres approved to run ATA VDA Assessments, one other centre is working towards approval.

The IMI presented ATA figures, which showed a total of 2,367 ATA cards issued across the Body disciplines to 16th September 2008. (VDA, M.E.T., Panel, Paint, Glazing).

IMI also presented a summary on the situation regarding funding of training and qualifications:

IMI have been successful in securing both Train to Gain and apprenticeship funding in England in the last Learning & Skills Council tendering round.

This funding will be rolled out via the IMI Delivery Partnership in order to support learners within the automotive retail sector.

What types of providers can apply for funding from IMI?

Any providers who are able to deliver suitable qualifications and who do not already contract directly with the Regional LSC where funding is sought.

What are suitable qualifications?

Suitable qualifications will be listed on the Learning Aim Database as being suitable for Train to Gain, or any existing apprenticeship framework at Level 2/3.

Additional requirements

Learning providers will be required to:

- 1.** Join the IMI Delivery Network
- 2.** Be Matrix Accredited – or use an accredited provider if not
- 3.** Begin Training Quality Standard Accreditation – if not already achieved
- 4.** Attend a Delivery Partnership Workshop.

Interested providers should complete the 'Expression of Interest' form and return it to Andy Moore (andym@motor.org.uk).

Welding update

Equipment that meets the guidelines suggested in TL838 is available on most modern equipment and will be plated accordingly. These levels are not essential, however are incorporated for the following reasons:

- The welder post 2,000 recommended amperages are provided as the likely power levels required to carry out resistance spot welding on any modern vehicle based on materials used by current manufacturers (this means that one purchase will cover all eventualities).
- The majority of repairs can be carried out at much lower amperages, therefore the equipment is working well within its capacity providing efficient repeatability.
- The higher amperages are often required as part of the pre-weld process in modern equipment.
- To accommodate vehicle manufacturer programmes.

The important factor is the type, gauge and stack of the material that is being considered for resistance spot welding, relevant to the equipment selected.

- Amperage and tip pressure requirements will vary relevant to time – the skill of the operator by setting equipment parameters can control these

As stated within TL838, test coupons/ stacks with good weld integrity produced from the same material is the only way to be sure that the equipment is set up correctly and capable of creating the suitable resistance spot welds required.

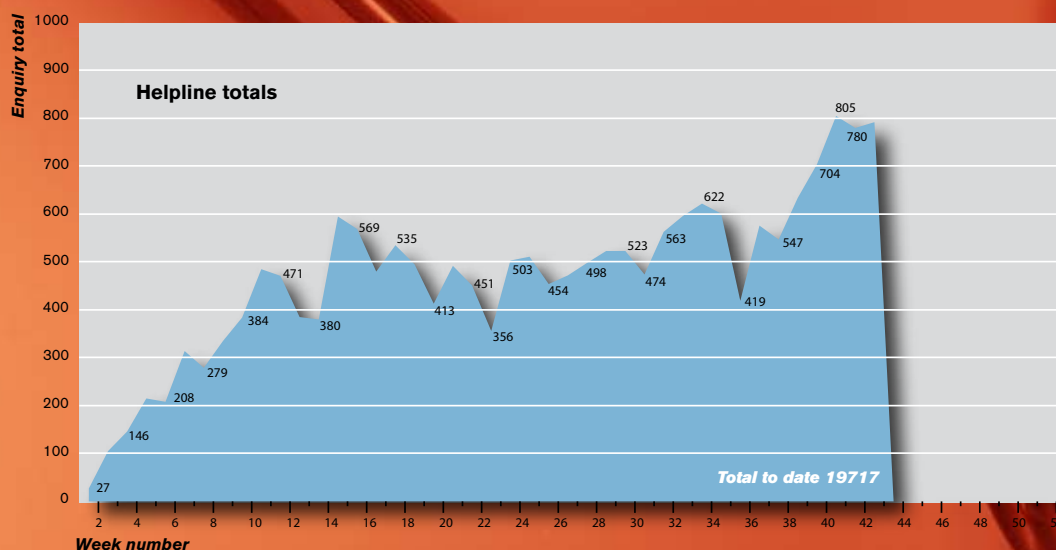
This is encouraged as standard practice by Thatcham and within ATA practical tests, therefore being the best way of checking if operators have considered the equipment relevant to material and the joint required.

Methods and technical information

By the new year, Thatcham will be adding some new technical newsletters to describe, namely definitions regarding safety related parts and the use/compatibility on bonding and adhesives.

Thatcham report that there has been another upturn in the numbers of Technical Helpline calls received, making September the busiest month (at the time of writing) of the year so far. (See graph below)

Helpline request numbers have increased to an average of 140 a day with the Helpline team maintaining a 2 day average turn around time. This increase appears to be in line with the number of additional Kitemarked bodyshops coming online. Work has progressed with the development of an interactive web based system and visits to two pilot sites, which have been testing the system from the customer's viewpoint, have taken place this month.



Annual PAS125 document review process

A review of PAS125 was held on 6th November 2008. This was chaired and managed by BSI standards. Approximately 100 comments were received from the industry of which the steering group discussed. The review was felt to be very successful by steering group members as several inconsistencies and ambiguous clauses were able to be clarified. The final draft will be released by late November with a view to the republication of PAS125 in January 2009.

Any other business

Thatcham reported that the public launch of the Vehicle Body Repair Kitemark® was to be in February 2009, which marked the second anniversary of the scheme commencing. However, it was agreed that 500 licensees should be achieved before the public launch, which should now take place during Triple Focus in June 2009 by which time BSI have predicted that a much closer figure to 500 will have been achieved.

David Cresswell enquired as to the average time between initial audit and Kitemark® License issue, BSI reported this to be 6 weeks, if no non-conformities were found.

Next meeting

25th November – Venue: Thatcham