



# KEEP YOUR COOL

Following a recent directive, technicians who work on air conditioning systems will soon have to ensure they have the correct qualifications, or they may miss out on future work. CVW speaks to S&B Automotive Academy in Bristol about the issues involved.



**A** recent directive from the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) that all technicians who work on air con systems will have to be Automotive Technician Accredited (ATA) registered by July 2010. The warning comes from Jon Winter, chief executive of S&B Automotive Academy in Bristol, who says that technicians who are not ATA registered will find less and less work coming their way as people and businesses look to use those who are properly qualified.

### How do I achieve it?

To become ATA registered, technicians must pass a series of practical assessments and an on-line multiple choice test, which is available at S&B Automotive Academy. For the ATA Air Conditioning route there are three levels which meet the minimum requirements as set out in EC Regulation (EC) No. 307/2008:

- Refrigerant Handler.
- Air Conditioning Service Technician.
- Air Conditioning Diagnostic Technician.

### What do I need?

To be eligible for ATA assessment, technicians must possess a minimum level of industry experience, in an appropriate role, as follows:

- Refrigerant handler 3 months
- Service technician 1 year
- Diagnostic technician 2 years

### Or

Hold a relevant national qualification at the same level and have a minimum level of post qualification experience in an appropriate role, as follows:

- Refrigerant handler 3 months
- Service technician 6 months
- Diagnostic technician 1 year

### What will I be tested on?

The assessment includes practical tasks in a variety of areas, which must be completed in the allotted time. During each task, technicians are observed by an ATA approved assessor, who will make a judgement on the competence of the person being tested.

### Refrigerant handler

Two practical assessments at Technician level will measure competence in the following:

- Refrigerant handling.
- Cylinder handling.

### Air Conditioning Service Technician

Two practical assessments at Service Technician level will measure competence in the following:

- Refrigerant handling.
- AC system servicing.

### Air Conditioning Diagnostic Technician

Five practical assessments at Diagnostic Technician level will measure competence in the following:

- Refrigerant handling.
- AC system servicing.
- Fault finding (3 faults).

Jon comments: "The ATA initiative identifies those technicians who have not only proven their current competence but also signed a professional code of conduct. It's a bit like an MOT test for a technician's skills, demonstrating they are up to the job and committed to remaining competent."

With S&B Automotive Academy being the only provider in the country of ATA Air Conditioning training, Jon is strongly advising those in the sector to make plans now before it's too late.

Jon added: "It will be surprising how quickly the July deadline comes round so technicians who work on air con or garages that provide air con repair need to get themselves enrolled on a course now. Those that act will then be well placed to provide the right service required by the industry."

**For more information on the directive and the course circle 149 on the readerlink card**