

AGRSS: Your Friend or Foe?

by Tim Smale

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL Standards Institute's standard for safe auto glass replacement installations (ANSI/AGRSS 002-2002 Automotive Glass Replacement Safety Standard), also known as the AGRSS standard, has reached a milestone. The AGRSS Council, is now registering AGR business.

How Registration Works

AGRSS registration is a process by which your company self-certifies that it follows the ANSI standard.

The AGRSS application requires a "yes" or "no" response to whether you follow each criteria of the standard. If you answer "yes" to every question and AGRSS accepts your registration, you will receive a letter of acceptance, certificate of registration to display in your stores, listing on the AGRSS website and the right to use the AGRSS materials and logo in your marketing.

Registration vs. Certification

The AGRSS standard requires that your technicians are trained properly and qualified to perform auto glass replacement and have passed a training course successfully. This includes certification or a course that is administered by an adhesive manufacturer, professional trainer or other industry trainers that test the skills learned with a final exam.

Many independents have asked me how AGRSS registration is different from professional or individual certification. Certification and AGRSS registration are not at odds with each other; in fact, they are complementary. Certification applies to a technician; AGRSS regis-

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tration applies to the company that employs the technician. Certification indicates that your employee has passed a test that is designed to mimic the knowledge that a technician should have to be qualified to perform auto glass installations.

Liability

AGRSS registration of compliance with the AGRSS standard indicates that your company meets the conditions in the standard, which should result in more proper and safe installations. In effect, AGRSS registration goes beyond certification because it encompasses the testing component of certification, but adds a great deal of other steps a company must follow.

The level of detail within the standard is impressive, yet registering with AGRSS is simple and easy. The hard part is tearing into your company with a fine-toothed comb to investigate your current practices, determine where you don't meet the standard, create an action plan to improve and then finally achieve compliance with the standard.

The other question many independents ask me is how AGRSS will affect their liability. Both our IGA attorney and the attorney for the AGRSS Council have told me that registering compliance with the ANSI standard will likely reduce a

company's liability.

Let's look at a hypothetical situation to illustrate my point: What if one of your technicians performs an installation that fails in an accident and your customer is injured? You'll be pulled into court and the prosecuting attorney will question you about your method of auto glass installation.

You'll be asked if your company follows the industry's ANSI standard. If you say you are not aware of the standard, the attorney on the other side will argue that it's incumbent upon you to investigate and follow industry standards. If you knew about the ANSI standard but failed to follow it, you will likely be open to increased liability.

On the other hand, if your company has registered its compliance to the ANSI standard with the AGRSS Council, you will likely reduce your legal exposure.

To learn more about the AGRSS registration process and procedure, visit www.agrss.com or contact AGRSS at 800 Roosevelt Road, Bldg. C, Suite 20, Glen Ellyn, IL, 60137. ■

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