

QUALITY MARK

In April 2000, the government launched the Quality Mark, which is the quality standard for all Community Legal Services. This standard aims to improve, for the public, access to quality information, advice and legal services, through local networks of services.

For organisations to be awarded the Quality Mark and to be able to display the Quality logo, they would need meet the standards required for the type of service they provide. There are 3 standards within the Quality Mark, which are:

- Information Services
- General help Services
- Specialist help Services

The Quality Mark logo would instantly identify organisations and would be recognised throughout England and Wales. The logo would demonstrate commitment to providing a quality service. So members of the public who need legal information, advice and other help can rely on receiving a quality assured service.

OFFICE SMOKING

The Government's health and safety watchdog has recently issued a code of practice which does not allow workers to smoke at their desks. The exception would be if offices had ventilation systems to clean the air of tobacco smoke, separate rooms for smokers or to prove they are protecting their workers in an effective way. Bars and restaurants will be given 2 years to comply with the regulations for office workers. This in effect would probably cause a boom in ventilation systems to avoid smoking bans. If companies do not comply with the code they will be prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive.

The new code came in response to a government White Paper 2 years ago asking for clarification of the rules on smoking at work. Employers are already required to protect their workers from tobacco smoke, but statistics show that this is not enforced.

Large studies have shown that exposure to smoke for several hours is on average equivalent to smoking less than one cigarette a day, which is enough to increase the risk of heart attack and lung cancer by a quarter.

SCOOTER ALERT

A 15 year old boy from East Sussex had the top of his finger sliced off whilst assembling a micro scooter, purchased from Woolworths. The product which is a 900 RTT model, and was imported from the Far East, was selling at £69.99 has been immediately withdrawn by Woolworths. Their customers were offered a safety guard to be fitted free of charge on all those scooters returned. The scooter is now being remodelled and Woolworths have reported they will not resell the item until it has passed new safety tests.

ONLINE BANKING

Halifax has indefinitely postponed the launch of its online Internet banking, Intelligent Finance (IF) due to technical problems. The launch is already running 2 months behind schedule. Instead, IF

has opened as a telephone banking operation.

Security and technological problems have affected other Internet banking systems, causing uncertainty amongst bank customers who are being encouraged to switch bank accounts from their traditional high street banks to online banks.

Prudential launched Egg, the first Internet Bank, which earlier this year, not long after its launch, had security problems. Customers could gain access to details of other customer accounts by error. Egg was also the target of alleged fraud over the Internet, which led to 2 arrests in August this year.

Abbey National's Internet bank, Cahoot, also had to shut down on the first day of their launch, due to high demands causing the system to crash. Barclays, UK's biggest Internet bank, was also hit by security breaches, although the bank claimed no customer lost out as a result.

Banks are under huge pressures to produce a safe and secure banking system as quickly as possible, but that might mean compromising on quality and security.

SAFER SHIPPING

New standards are being developed by ISO for the shipping industry to prevent shipwrecks and make maritime pollution clean-up operations more effective. It is thought that cost-cutting in shipbuilding and maintenance, because of the current fierce competition, has led to a decrease in safety. Shipwrecks caused by structural failures due to flawed construction and low maintenance can lead to loss of life. This is in addition to the economic, social and environmental costs of ensuing maritime and coastal pollution.

ISO 15401 defines the technical specifications for construction and repair. It should be used by shipyards building new bulk carriers and should assist in promoting quality and help in the reduction of dangerous shipbuilding practices.

ISO 15402 defines the quality of the hull structure of bulk carriers. It applies to bulk carriers on station and it is intended for everyone involved in the inspection and maintenance of hulls.

These standards include a large amount of technical data and were developed by ISO at the request of the International Maritime Organisation.

AUTOMOTIVE STANDARD ISO/TS 16949

ISO/TS 16949 is an ISO Technical Standard which when used in conjunction with ISO9002:1994, specifies the quality system requirements for the design/development, production and where relevant, installation and servicing of automotive-related products.

It was written by the International Automotive Task force (IATF), which consists of an International group of vehicle manufacturers including Ford, Chrysler and General Motors as well as many automotive trade organisations.

It is planned that this standard will be integrated with the new ISO 9001:2000 and it will be accepted in addition to current automotive standards such as QS 9000 and VDA 6.1. There are no plans yet for these national plans to be withdrawn.

The benefits of ISO/TS 16949 for clients that provide automotive products to international markets are that they will now have the option of maintaining one quality system registration to meet multiple customer quality requirements. In addition to avoiding multiple certification audits, ISO/TS 16949 has been designed to improve product and process quality while increasing efficiency and reducing variation.

Following the success of developing ISO/TS 16949 for the automotive industry, the big 3 motor manufacturing organisations are now having discussion with healthcare establishments to encourage them to use ISO 9001:2000 as a foundation for their criteria, so that healthcare providers and programmes will no longer need multiple accreditation/certifications. These companies, as major employers have a strong interest in healthcare programmes. The aim would be to improve the quality of care and patient safety whilst reducing cost.

Quality Management & Training can provide training and support for ISO/TS 16949 standard. If interested contact help@qmt.co.uk.

ROLLER COASTER CRASHES

More than twenty people were injured last month when two carriages on the world's tallest roller coaster collided at Blackpool's pleasure beach. The accident occurred on the £12 million Pepsi Mac Big One roller coaster which rises 235ft above the resort. It will remain closed at a cost of £20,000 a day until technicians discover why its computers allowed two trains to collide. Despite this accident, holiday makers continue to ride on the other attractions at the park.

TICKIT AUDITOR CERTIFICATION

IRCA has revised and re-issued IRCA/162: Becoming a TickIT Auditor: Requirements for Certification.

The main amendments relate to structure and clarity. The structure of the document has been changed to conform to that used in other IRCA certification criteria. The sections relating to maintenance of competence and renewal of certification have been rearranged to make the requirements more obvious. This revised criteria also reflect the change (made generally to all IRCA certification schemes) to the requirement for auditing experience for initial certification.

CLEANER RIVERS

Rivers are now cleaner than at any time since the Industrial Revolution. Huge, multi-billion pound investments in sewage treatment and the reduction in industrial waste with tougher enforcement means that 95% of river and canals are now good or fair. A further £7 billion will be spent on further improvements over the next 5 years. The Government has made river water quality one of 15 headline indicators of the quality of life (others include health, jobs, educational achievements, wildlife and economic prosperity). The Quality of Life Index is intended as a barometer of government action towards sustainable development.

GOVERNMENT SECURITY

The security division of the Cabinet Office is to recommend that all Government departments work towards BS7799. Departments should be looking at all their systems to see which of the business

objectives are the most important and also provide assurance that protective measures are in use. Those departments wanting a higher level of assurance will work towards C:CURE.

YOUNG ENGINEER OF BRITAIN 2000

Louise Elliot, a 17 year old from Harrogate has been awarded the title of Young Engineer of Britain 2000 for her design of an electric buggy for disabled children. The 'Bug' improves the mobility of these children and shows the huge contribution engineering can make to improving the quality of life of disabled people. The project was inspired by an 8 year old girl with Cerebral Palsy and was entered into the competition by her school. The school has been awarded £2,500 for new engineering equipment.

DIARY DATES

7-9 November 2000	Tooling 2000, NEC, Birmingham Contact: Tooling 2000 Press Office, Tel: 020 7729 1577
13-14 November 2000	Measuring Uncertainty, Honolulu Contact: American Association for Lab. Accreditation Tel: 001 301 644 3235
21-24 November 2000	MTQ 8 th Trade Fair for QA Systems Contact: Germany Tel: 00 49 2311204521

TOTAL WORDS 1550

Contacting QM&T

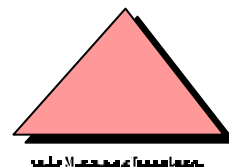
If you would like to learn more about either of the above or any other quality issue, please contact Edda Saunders at the following address:

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