



Safety - A Fitting Approach

AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY IS A BROAD SUBJECT, AND COVERS MANY FACETS. QUALITY OF PRODUCT PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN VEHICLE SAFETY, AND THE ONUS FOR THIS FALLS ON THE MANUFACTURER. BUT QUALITY OF PRODUCT IS ONLY THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE. THE CORRECT FITMENT OF PARTS IS ALSO VITAL. YOU COULD HAVE THE BEST BRAKE PADS IN THE WORLD, BUT IF THE TECHNICIAN HAS FITTED THEM INCORRECTLY, YOUR LIFE IS AT STAKE. THIS APPLIES TO MOST VEHICLE PARTS, AND THE INDUSTRY AND THE CONSUMER HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN ENSURING THAT FITMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF HIGH QUALITY PARTS ARE ALWAYS TOP OF MIND. AN OVERSIGHT ROLE IS ALSO CRITICAL, AND THIS IS WHERE THE SABS PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

Windcreens are a case in point. Most motorists are aware of the importance of fitting a quality windscreen. They may not be aware of all the aspects behind windscreen safety, but they are sufficiently safety-conscious to insist on automotive glass approved by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). For the lucky few that never have to replace a windscreen the glass in front of their faces is little more than a means to keep out the elements, a surface on which to stick their license disk – and an expensive item to replace should it get cracked or broken. When replacement is necessary, motorists tend to go to their nearest glass fitment centre, or follow the advice of their insurers. But how often do they consider the quality of the workmanship that goes into fitment of the new windscreen? This is the second line of defence for the safety-conscious motorist, and they need guidance as to where they can get this assurance. Not many people know that the SABS also certifies service and fitment, but Gilo Da Silva, Managing Director of Commercial Auto Glass, has always been ahead of the curve.

“The quality of the glass is but one aspect of the replacement. The windscreen must also be fitted correctly,” Gilo emphasises. “That involves several factors such as the beading, the cowling, the quality of the polyurethane glue and the competence of the workmen themselves. If the replacement windshield is not fitted correctly, the glass will be under stress. So when a stone hits the windshield, it will be more likely to crack. In the event of an accident, a poorly fitted windscreen can pop out under impact. As the windscreen forms an important part of the vehicle’s structural integrity, this obviously has serious safety implications.” Since founding

Commercial Auto Glass in 1999, Da Silva has pursued a policy of ensuring that his company offers materials and workmanship to the highest standards. He was the first auto glass importer in South Africa to have his products tested and approved by the SABS. In August 2006, Commercial Auto Glass became the first vehicle glass fitment centre certified by the SABS to SANS 10240:2005, the National Standard that addresses the installation of replacement auto glass in motor vehicles by the direct glazing method.

“The standard addresses four main areas: Building and Site, Equipment, Quality Manual, and Procedures and Personnel,” explains Gerrie Kriek, Managing Director of the SABS Transportation cluster. “Certification to the standard means that the product or service is fit for purpose and offers redress. Certified companies are audited annually to ensure continued compliance and the certification must be renewed every three years. It is an ongoing process to ensure that quality management is sustained for the customer’s peace of mind.”

Da Silva agrees that the aims of the standard are carried through into practice. “Due to the procedures written into the standard, I now have a comprehensive and effective job card system. So if there are any comebacks from the customer, I can trace and correct the fault quickly. My workers undergo training twice a year to upgrade their skills, and there is a tangible commitment to professionalism and quality management throughout the chain.” Commercial Auto Glass currently has nine branches in South Africa, located in Johannesburg (Selby), Pretoria, Boksburg,



Left to right: Thinus Rautenbach (Shop Manager Commercial Auto Glass), Johan Gouws (Vehicle Test Station Manager SABS), Desmond Govender (Transportation Manager- SABS), Danie Liebenberg (Lead Auditor-SABS) & Gilo da Silva (Managing Director Commercial Auto Glass).

Vereeniging, Springs, Durban, Rustenburg, and Bellville and Salt River in Cape Town. In addition, there are two Commercial Auto Glass branches across the border in Gaborone and Francistown in Botswana. Da Silva plans to open further branches in Polokwane and Nelspruit during 2010, and then to expand to other major cities in South Africa.

“All of my branches are certified to SANS 10240:2005, and all of the new branches will undergo certification as well. Of approximately 500-600 vehicle glass fitment centres in South Africa, we are proud to be the first and, so far, the only fitment centres to be certified,” explains Da Silva. The truly inspiring story within the story is that Da Silva is not afraid to lose his unique competitive advantage when it comes to glass fitment. He encourages other glass fitment centres to follow his example and seek certification. “I’m all for it, in the bigger picture of national safety,” says Gilo. “In fact, I’ll go further and help them by advising them, based on my own experiences and learning curve during the certification process. More fitment centres becoming certified means better service that we, as an industry, will be providing to the South African public. That’s good for everybody. I’d also like to see insurance companies making SANS 10240 certification a requirement. Currently, they insist only on certified glass being used. But the best quality windscreen also needs to be fitted correctly. Quality management must apply throughout the whole process.”

Leading from the front, Commercial Auto Glass successfully renewed its SANS 10240:2005 certification during August 2009. “The SABS congratulates Commercial Auto Glass on its commitment to quality management. The SANS certification offers customers the assurance that they are receiving not just a safe and approved product, but a quality service as well,” Gerrie Kriek enthusiastically states. For further enquiries regarding SANS 10240:2005 certification, interested parties may contact Desmond Govender, Manager Transportation Certification, SABS at 012 428 6697. Cell 083 789 8834, e-mail govendd@sabs.co.za



Looking for quality automotive glass and a professional replacement service?

Look no further than Commercial Auto Glass for both approved product and approved fitment! Commercial Auto Glass stands for Innovation, Leadership, and Commitment to the Industry.

All products supplied by Commercial Auto Glass meet with the highest possible standards as established by the international market and domestic standards authority.

CAG supplies glass which meets with the internationally recognised ISO9001, ISO9002, ISO9003 and QSV9000 standards, and carry the “E” mark (European Specification) and the “DOT” mark (American Specification).

The domestic market is assured that all glass supplied is shatterproof, laminated, high penetration resistant glass, as certified by the SABS.

In addition, all of Commercial Auto Glass staff have received thorough training and certification.

Branches

Selby, JHB: cnr Trump and Westex Street
 East Rand, Gauteng: 5 Edgar Road, Elandsfontein
 Springs: 20 1st Street
 Vereeniging: 31 Rhodes Avenue
 Pretoria: 90 Soutter Street
 Durban: 926 Umgeni Road
 Cape Town: 9 Durham Avenue, Salt River
 138 Durban Road, Bellville
 Botswana: Nelson Mandela Drive, Gaborone
 1540 Sam Nujoma Avenue, Francistown



**For a Fitment Centre nearest to you,
 phone 0861 57 57 57**