

14001 BY JULY 2010

Almost without fail, recessions generate imposters. And, even though an economic downturn of the kind we are currently suffering hasn't occurred for a few years, the 'rule' shows little sign of changing, reports the **Concrete Repair Association (CRA)**.

It occurs when a business begins to experience a decline in its traditional market sectors and start to ponder new areas in which it can direct its efforts to fulfil the company's capacity, maintain its turnover and (hopefully) contribute to its margins. Generally, as soon as the recession begins to bottom out, the imposter returns to its core activity. It can't be particularly blamed for this. After all, the company has shareholders, employees and its very existence to protect. But problems arise when it is technically incapable of undertaking and effectively resourcing (with trained labour) the specialist nature of the work in the newly chosen activity. Unfortunately, in the end, it is usually the client, structure owner and/or the specifier, who is left holding the can.

Whilst the concrete repair sector is not immune to the predicament, says the CRA, the Association and its members continue to seek ways of raising the 'standards bar' in this specialist discipline. As a result, the Association (originally established in 1988) has decided that all full members must now comply with Environmental Standard, BS EN 14001, by July 2010. From this date, compliance will become a fundamental requirement for membership.

BS EN ISO 14001 specifies the requirements for an environmental management system (EMS). It provides a framework around which an organisation can control the environmental impacts of its activities, products and services and to continually improve its environmental performance. Thus, it applies to those environmental aspects that the organisation can control and over which it can be expected to have an influence.

BS EN ISO 14001 is applicable to any organisation that wishes to (1) Implement, maintain and improve an environmental management system, (2) Assure itself of its conformance with its stated environmental policy, (3) Demonstrate such conformance to others, (4) Seek certification/registration of its environmental management system by an external organisation and (5) Make a self-determination and self-declaration of conformance with this international standard.

Demonstration of a proven track record and overall proven ability in this specialist construction sector, together with compliance to ISO 9001, the CRA codes of practice and its training initiatives, are already essential requirement for CRA membership. In addition, the vast majority of contractor members are ConstructionLine, CHAS and Exor accredited, whilst all manufacturer members products are BBA approved. As with a number of specialist activities in the construction industry, concrete repair work demands specialist know-how and technical capability. Copies of the Association's 2010 Members Directory are now available, free of charge. Tel: 01420 471615. Email: admin@cra.org.uk or visit: www.cra.org.uk

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