

ICAT Scheme Management, Operation and Training

Many will now know of the Institute's initiative in launching the Industrial Coating Applicator Training & Certification Scheme. ICATS is becoming the 'buzz' word in many sectors of the industry.

It is fair to say that most of the drive behind the scheme has come by virtue of the fact that the major structural steel asset holders have been calling for improved training of industrial coating applicators for a considerable time. Calls have been made for not merely better training, but a simple method for the ultimate employers to be able to verify that contractors' staff have indeed been trained. It is now clear that the Highways Agency and other major asset owners, intend to use ICATS as a mechanism for delivering improved quality. Furthermore, once the Scheme has produced a sufficient pool of certificated persons, no untrained operative will be permitted on-site.

It is appreciated that there have been various attempts by a number of organisations in the past to introduce various artisan training schemes. Most failed because, whilst their aims were laudable, the concept upon which most were based was unworkable. Any scheme, which is based upon contractors having to send applicators away to sit in a classroom for one or more

weeks, is simply totally uneconomic. I am cognizant that one or two of the big contractor organisations have, in the past, carried out significant in-house training of their own employees. This has not been without cost and such organisations have often become dispirited when their initiatives have not been recognised at tender stage and they have lost work to firms who have paid scant regard to training or improving standards of workmanship. The main virtue of ICATS is that it is the most economic, workable, national scheme from the contractors' viewpoint and satisfies the requirements of their main customers. This means that from now on, and for the first time, there is a national scheme that puts all participating contractors on a 'level playing field'.

Figure 1 illustrates the concept of the scheme and shows that once trained by an ICATS Trainer and certificated as 'Industrial Coatings Applicator', candidates can progress, if they so wish, to the specialist modules embracing abrasive blast cleaning operator, paint sprayer etc.

Since the scheme was introduced a little less than a year ago, almost 20 companies (essentially all the major contractors) have registered in the scheme and already some

37 of their core staff have been trained and qualified as ICATS Trainers by attending (now two-day) courses at Argyll-Ruane Ltd, Rotherham. These certificated Trainers are now passing on their skills and experience in a structured, controlled manner to their applicator colleagues in the workplace. Training of the candidates can be done in a manner and over a time-frame that best suits the candidates' work commitments. There is no fixed period in which the training must be completed. At the end of their training, the Applicators will be certificated by the Institute and registered on the scheme database. Currently almost 100 paint applicators are undergoing workplace training. It is expected that this number will rise very substantially over the next 18 months.

There is an ongoing schedule of two-day courses for Trainers at Rotherham. The programme for the rest of the year is –

Monday and Tuesday, 1 May, 2 May.

Monday and Tuesday, 19 June, 20 June.

Monday and Tuesday, 18 September, 19 September.

Monday and Tuesday, 13 November, 14 November.

ICAT Scheme Management, Operation and Training continued...

The actual Scheme teaching is centred on a specially developed, innovative, computer-based programme. The programme may be operated from a lap-top computer, ideal for one-to-one or small group training sessions, or via a lap-top projector to larger groups of candidates. All the images contained in the software are also available in hard-copy A5 binders making the method of teaching extremely flexible.

An essential element of the control of the Scheme is monitoring the performance of the registered ICATS Trainer once operating in the field. The Trainer's integrity and abilities are crucial to the effectiveness of the Scheme. Not only must the Trainers act properly and objectively, but they must at all times be seen to be acting in a professional manner. Thus, the creditability of the individual ICATS Trainers underpins the entire Scheme. The Scheme is controlled by a documented Quality Management System which accords with ISO 9001-2000. Procedures lay down how the Scheme is administered and how the performance of the ICATS Trainers and their employers is monitored by periodic audit.

As the recently appointed Scheme Manager for ICATS, I have been very happy to contribute these few paragraphs describing some of the background. One of my main roles is to see that all participants, and those enquirers seeking information, are aware of the help that is available. Both the Institute's website at www.correx.org and Argyll-Ruane's home pages at www.ruanetpo.com carry information, application forms and news releases about the Scheme. For purely admin enquiries, verification of qualifications held and certification distribution, the ICATS Administrator can be contacted through Correx Ltd, which is the trading subsidiary of the Institute of Corrosion, at Corrosion House in Leighton Buzzard (01525 851771). To make a booking for the ICATS Trainer courses, or to check availability of places, please contact David Betts on 01797 560459. For all other information, and assistance, I may be contacted at 01709 550999 or if I am not there, on 07768 298 398 at any time.

There are many individuals who go largely unsung yet have made major contributions to bringing the Scheme where it stands

today. It would be remiss of me were I not to record my appreciation of the efforts and expertise of some of the most significant contributors to the Scheme; in my view, the Scheme would not have come about were it not for their enthusiasm and efforts. Roger Hudson has been the ICATS Task Group Chairman since inception of the Scheme in 2002, Brendan Fitzsimons almost single-handedly has designed and developed the innovative software the Scheme relies upon and my own colleagues at Argyll-Ruane Ltd, the Scheme Providers, have supported me in every way. Finally, the scheme is supervised by the Governing Board for Certification and Training Schemes of the Institute of Corrosion and managed via Correx Ltd, the trading subsidiary of the Institute of Corrosion.

Dave Griffiths

Manager- ICorr Training & Certification Scheme.

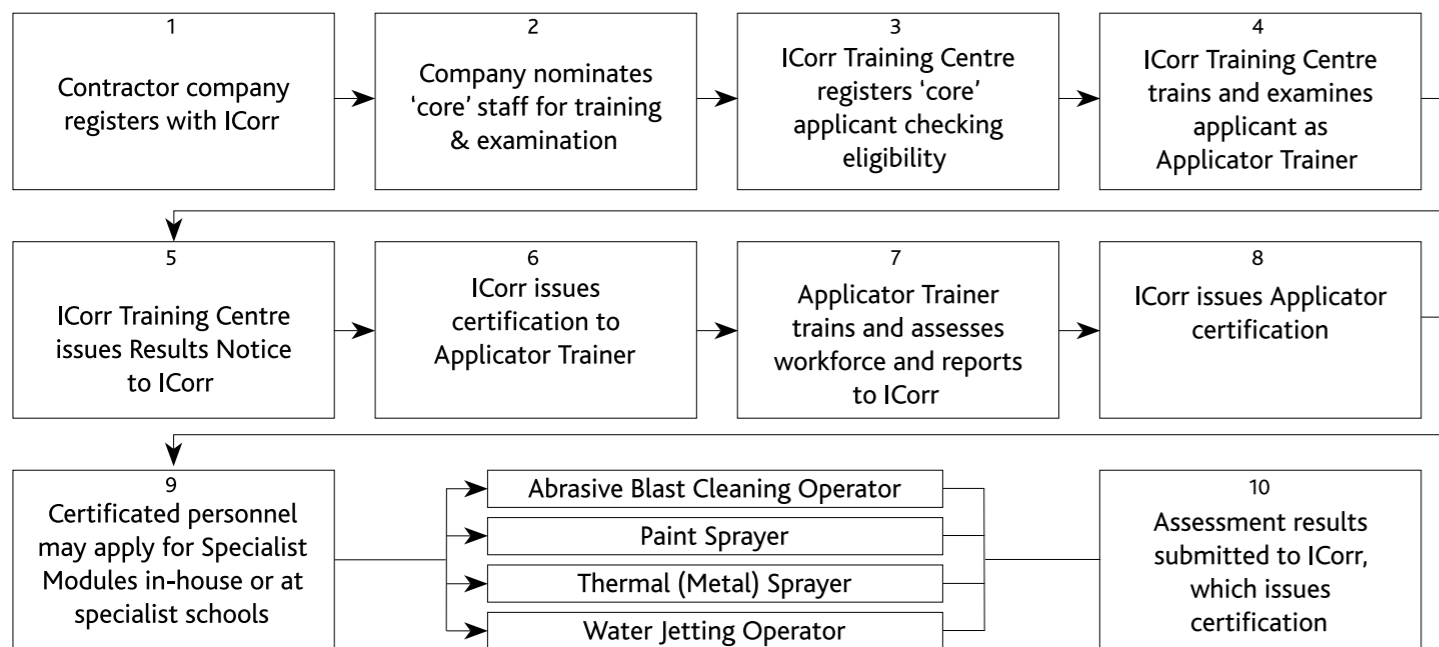


Figure 1. The ICATS certification and training flowsheet

WHAT AN OFFER!!!!

The idea to run a promotion whereby companies signing up for ICATS are entitled to a year's FREE Sustaining Membership has proven to be very popular.

Most companies have been only too pleased to take advantage of this excellent offer, which is worth £280 and gives organisations potential new business opportunities by being publicised through the Institute of Corrosion's website and Corrosion Management magazine.

Heather Rutter, Sustaining Member Liaison Officer says "I am delighted with the response and 'take up' this initiative has generated and many of the newly signed up Sustaining Member companies have already had Case Studies or Company News published in Corrosion Management. All have nominated their quota of

representatives who automatically become Individual Members of the Institute of Corrosion (see page 6).

"There are many benefits available once a company becomes a Sustaining Member and I hope that those who took advantage of their first FREE year continue to support the Institute in this way for years to come."

Duncan MacLean of Clean Streets Ltd says, "We were delighted to become the first company to acquire Sustaining Membership under the ICATS promotion offer and already are taking advantage of the benefits available.

"For 26 years I have been training painters to prepare substrates and apply coatings properly and therefore had no hesitation in registering with the ICATS program."

For anyone thinking of signing up for the ICAT Scheme the Sustaining Membership promotion entitles them to one year's FREE Standard Sustaining Membership if not already a Member, upgrade to GOLD Sustaining Membership if they are already an existing Standard Member or £280 off the ICATS registration cost if they are already an existing GOLD member. All three of these offers are worth £280!!!!

Anyone planning to attend the next ICATS registration meeting please make sure you collect your Sustaining Membership application leaflet, fill in the details and post to Heather Rutter at The Institute of Corrosion, Corrosion House, Vimy Road, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 1FG.