



INTRODUCTION

TO

VEHICLE SYSTEM
AND
COMPONENT
APPROVALS

**Vehicle Certification Agency
1, The Eastgate Centre
Eastgate Road
Bristol BS5 6XX**

Telephone: 0117 951 5151
E-mail: enquiries@vca.gov.uk
Website: www.vca.gov.uk



INTRODUCTION TO VEHICLE SYSTEM AND COMPONENT APPROVALS

OUR GOAL – TO GIVE YOU THE SERVICE YOU WANT

VCA wants to provide you, the customer, with a quick, efficient and trouble free approval service. To help us to achieve this aim, we need a basic amount of information when you first open a VCA “System and Component” job. To avoid possible confusion and delays during the approval process, we wish to be certain right at the start of the job, exactly what you want and when you want it. We also need to agree at the outset if possible, the terms and conditions for the provision of the approval service, for instance; is a test required or will a paperwork assessment suffice, where is the product manufactured and does the plant have CoP clearance, what facilities will be used for any proposed tests and are they already accepted by VCA?

GETTING THE RIGHT INFORMATION AT THE START

The best way of ensuring that we are provided with this basic information is by asking you to fill out an application form. This is common practice with many service organisations, if you were applying for any type of insurance for example, you would expect to supply details to the insurance company on an application form simply to obtain a quotation. An application form also helps us to satisfy the contract review element of the customary quality standards, such as ISO 9001 Clause 4.3.2, which requires suppliers to ensure that all contractual matters are agreed with the customer before the acceptance of an order.

TEST JOBS

For approvals which require test work, the final details and the fees are agreed at the worst case meeting, which may be a formal meeting at one of our offices for complex programmes, or could be handled with a phone call, fax or e-mail for straightforward individual tests. However it is still beneficial for all parties if VCA is provided with the basic information when the job is first opened, even if this may change later, so that provisional test dates can be entered on our planning chart for example.

APPLICATION FORM

We have designed a form for this purpose and hopefully it is fairly self-explanatory, but we would ask you to read through the separate guidance notes before completing the form for the first time and keep them handy for future reference. For most of our regular customers, the bulk of the information required will remain the same for each application, so it may be convenient for you to retype the form as a standard letter, fax or e-mail on your own headed paper, fax or e-mail template. There is no need to stick to the exact layout of our standard form, we would simply ask you to supply all the requested information and most importantly, complete the VCA signature box. APPLICATIONS TO AGENTS OR VCA OVERSEAS OFFICES

If you wish to obtain approvals through one of our appointed technical services (BSI, ITS, TÜV, RFI, LPC) or through one of our offices around the



world, then please apply directly in the appropriate format required by the respective organisation. SPECIALIST SUBJECTS

Some subjects; tyres, vehicle security and EMC, do not fit neatly into our standard procedures and we have prepared additional guidance notes for the benefit of applicants requiring these approvals. These notes are available in PDF format from our website.

THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The Framework Directive (70/156/EEC - as amended), provides information on submission of technical information, but for new customers, who may not necessarily be familiar with the type approval process, a few words clarifying the purpose of the “technical information document” may not go amiss.

Most recent Directives and Regulations contain an annex which specifies the technical information to be provided by the applicant to support the approval (e.g. Directive 91/441/EEC Annex II). Some of the older legislation has not yet been brought into line with modern practice and it is then necessary to refer to VCA for advice on obtaining a copy of the model form for the particular subject.

The information provided is used at the time of test to verify the specification of the sample vehicle, system or component. Once the final version of this document has been checked and agreed by the VCA engineer, it becomes the back-up for the approval certificate and in effect, fixes the technical specification of the product. This technical information is variously known as; “the manufacturer’s submission documents”, “the manufacturer’s information documents”, “the manufacturer’s application documents” and possibly by other terms. The technical information document may be attached to the initial approval application when the job is first opened if you wish, but its status must be clearly indicated (e.g. draft or final).

VCA JOB NUMBERS

To enable us to track a particular application, and to aid in the calculation and invoicing of approval fees, VCA allocates a unique “job number” to each subject application as it is received. This job number can be made available on request by either fax or email. It is vital to quote this job number on all correspondence relating to the application and when making telephone enquiries. It also helps us if the technical information document bears the VCA job number.

TEST JOBS; THE WORST CASE MEETING AND FEES

The main purpose of the “worst case” meeting is to determine the specification of the vehicle or component to be tested, in order to cover the entire range of products with the minimum test work. We wish to ensure that the specification selected can truly represent the entire product range and is the “worst case” - so that if this sample passes we can be confident that all others will also pass. At the “worst case” meeting, we also agree all other aspects of the test programme, such as location, timing and the fees. (Please also see our Terms and Conditions).

PAYMENT OF FEES FOR TEST JOBS

Our fees for witnessing tests and / or carrying out paperwork assessments, along with all other charges levied by VCA are published in a Statutory Instrument (currently 2004 No. 2106), a copy of which can be obtained from ‘The Stationery Office’. At present we operate an hourly charging system, where in most cases, the fees are payable after completion of the work with the invoice being sent out shortly after all test work has been completed, or more typically following issue of the approval certificate. We do however, reserve the right



on occasion to request payment of fees in advance of testing. This will most usually be requested when delays from referees are expected and will ensure that there are no delays in releasing the final approval package. For further information about invoicing procedures, or for details of our pre-funding account service, please speak to our Finance Department on 0117 9524152.

PAPERWORK ASSESSMENTS

We will review your application and advise if the evidence you have submitted with the application is sufficient to grant a new approval or an extension to an existing approval on a paperwork assessment basis. You may then submit the final documentation (and in certain cases if agreed, an in-house test report) at your own convenience.

VCA will normally process the approval within a period of four weeks from the date of receipt of the final documentation package. In exceptional circumstances we may not be able to meet this turn-round time, but our past track record proves that we will usually exceed this target by a considerable margin. If a quicker turn-round is required, then please inform us when you submit the package and we will do our best to meet your requirements. If you state a specific target issue date in the initial application, we will endeavour to meet it. Please note that we cannot issue the approval until you have submitted your final package, with all the correct necessary information, so please allow sufficient time after submitting for us to complete the work.

NUMBER OF APPROVALS PER JOB

For both test jobs and paperwork assessments, we would ask you to limit the number of certificates to eight per job number, as this assists our internal administrative procedures. Please note: it is always necessary to open a separate job for each approval subject except:

- diesel engine power, smoke and emissions - can be combined on one job number,
- emissions and fuel consumption (for M1 or N1 vehicles) - can be combined on one job number.

ADVANCE APPROVAL NUMBERS

In certain special circumstances, e.g. where the approval number must be marked on the component, VCA can issue the approval number in advance of certification, (provided the test work is successful) to enable labels to be printed or tooling to be manufactured. If you require the approval number in advance, please make this clear in your initial approval application and give your justification.

CONFORMITY OF PRODUCTION CLEARANCE (COP)

Approvals cannot be issued until the manufacturing plant or plants concerned have received CoP clearance. For a detailed information pack please contact COP VCA Midlands Centre 02476 642589 / 642588

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SUPPLY OF TYPE APPROVAL SERVICES

VCA's standard terms and conditions of supply of type approval services apply to all type approval work performed by VCA



HOW TO CONTACT US

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us by mail, E-mail or telephone (go to <http://www.vca.gov.uk/vehicletype/system-component-app.asp> for further details).

These notes have been prepared for your information and guidance. VCA reserves the right to amend its procedures as and when appropriate. If you have any comments or suggestions relating to this document, the application form or the guidance notes for completing the application form, please contact us on 0117 9524112.