



OUR MISSION

To give the best possible service and support to assist ARCA members and customers in providing safe, effective and ethical management of asbestos, thereby safeguarding the public.

OUR VISION

We envision being an essential strategic partner, through membership of ARCA and ATaC, to all companies providing asbestos management and licensed asbestos removal services, or services to those companies, by providing solutions which contribute to the overall success of their businesses and provide reassurance to their clients.

ARCA is the association raising standards - supporting high standards delivers reassurance

To support ARCA's Mission and Vision my overarching aim, as Chairman of ARCA, is to continually improve standards across the industry. I believe this is an important role of a trade association.

Through a market research project, completed by a market research company (in 2017), ARCA gained valuable information from end-clients. 80% stated

that membership of a trade association was essential, and that they expect a trade association to maintain standards, provide reassurance and provide industry leadership.

With regard to the two trade associations representing the asbestos removal contractors in the UK, there was a 'very high spontaneous awareness' of ARCA as the asbestos industry's trade

association and ARCA was 'seen as the established principle accreditor'.

However, the market research demonstrated that clients perceived no obvious differences between ARCA and ACAD. This I can see as being good for ACAD, but not for ARCA, as ARCA has done, and continues to do, so much more for the industry.

Membership Application & Rules

As a membership organisation, how does an asbestos removal contractor become a member and what are the rules of membership?

There are a number of differences in the requirements for joining each asbestos removal contractors trade association. I think this is best shown in the adjacent table.

All membership organisations should have a set of rules, as all members should know what they need to do and what the organisation needs to do. There should be transparency as to the expectations and boundaries of membership.

The Rules of Membership of ARCA (available on the website) set out what is needed to join, and how a member needs to continue to demonstrate the required standards to maintain membership, and if these slip, what actions will be taken.

For example, asbestos removal contractor members need to follow the ARCA Site Audit Accreditation Scheme, that is undertake two

Membership Application Needs	ARCA	ACAD
A copy of HSE licence	✓	✓ ⁽ⁱ⁾
A copy of the Company Health & Safety Policy	✓	✗ ⁽ⁱ⁾
A copy of the Company Certificate of Incorporation	✓	✗ ⁽ⁱ⁾
A specimen Plan of Work	✓	✗ ⁽ⁱ⁾
Number of referees	5 Clients	1 Client & 1 Supplier ⁽ⁱ⁾
A copy of Insurance Schedule <i>(detailing Public and Employers liability insurance for work with asbestos)</i>	✓	✓ ⁽ⁱ⁾
Complete a satisfactory Office Audit <i>(all management arrangements and processes reviewed)</i>	✓	✗ ⁽ⁱ⁾
Complete a satisfactory asbestos removal Site Audit	✓	✓ ⁽ⁱ⁾

satisfactory unannounced site audits every year. If a member fails an unannounced site audit, a replacement unannounced site audit is arranged and if the member fails this audit then membership is suspended. ARCA will then arrange to meet the management team to conduct an office audit. Through this management arrangements are

reviewed, as to what is effective and where improvements are required. This support enables the contractor to amend arrangements and carry out internal audits, before another ARCA unannounced site audit is undertaken. If this audit is passed membership suspension is lifted. However, membership will be terminated if a member

company fails to meet the required standard.

On talking to some ACAD members, past and present, they have never seen any rules of membership. I could not find any on their website when writing this piece. So, it begs the question, what expectation do they have of member performance and how can clients be reassured of this.

How are membership site audits carried out?

Market research identified that clients see membership of a trade association as providing a level of reassurance. So, there is a responsibility on a trade association to meet this expectation.

ARCA takes this responsibility seriously. It was the first trade association representing asbestos removal contractors to introduce an audit scheme for all member contractors, in 2000.

ARCA recognised the value of unannounced site audits (no prior notice) so approached the HSE and negotiated access to information from the licensed contractors' notification forms (ASB5), on a weekly basis, indicating who would be removing asbestos where and when⁽ⁱⁱ⁾. Then in January 2017 ARCA took the step to support consistent high standards, by making the policy, that both site audits required every year would be unannounced (excluding Ireland).

Myself and the Association's Governing Council, believe that having two membership site audits every year, with no prior notice, makes the level of reassurance for clients so much stronger. And of course, supports member's performance and business management.

Why do we believe this?

It is all down to the difference between what 'announced/planned' and 'unannounced' means to a contractor's team on-site.

If a site audit is 'announced/planned' the contractor will know an auditor is coming, so has time (perhaps days) to prepare. Time to get all its ducks in a row!

For example, an ACAD member received an email saying; "We would like to come and carry out an ACAD membership audit and I have noticed on the HSE file that you have a job going on in <city>. Please could you confirm if we could visit this site on <specific date>?"⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

Following agreement of this audit, the member received another email informing them of the auditor's arrival time on-site and

requesting information to be sent (e.g. Plan of Work), 3 days prior to the planned audit.^(iv)

This increases the likelihood of a good result; however, it may not be a representation of the contractors' day to day performance.

'Unannounced' means there is **'no prior notice'** of an auditor coming on-site to monitor performance. No call. No email. No warning of a visit.

Therefore, the contractor is assessed on the standard on that day. They always have to be prepared to demonstrate how the job was planned and how the plan is being implemented. This gives a representative view of the contractors' day to day performance.

This huge change to the ARCA membership audit scheme has been very well supported by members. In fact, ARCA has had contractors join as they want truly unannounced site audits, they see the benefit to performance management and to future business.

The ARCA membership audit scheme is described on the website^(v), stating that members need two satisfactory site audits, both unannounced, every year to maintain membership.

The other trade association representing asbestos removal contractors, ACAD, is a little vague about its membership audit scheme. As on its website it states, "We carry out audits of member sites, both planned, and unannounced."^(vi)

What does that really mean? What level of reassurance does it provide?

Although, ACAD receives the same information from the HSE as ARCA, I cannot see that it uses it in the same way.

Also, we have been advised that ACAD only carry out one membership site audit every year. I cannot see that one audit, when the contractor may know an auditor is coming on-site, is sufficient to demonstrate

that high standards are continuously demonstrated.

ARCA has a team managing the membership audit scheme (two audits per year for all member asbestos removal contractors), and in-house auditors, to make sure the scheme runs smoothly. Successful management of the audit scheme is crucial as ARCA membership depends on it.

As ARCA audits are unannounced and the information from the HSE is limited, inevitably some sites are not at a stage for an audit to be conducted, for whatever reason. However, ARCA is willing to take that financial hit^(vii) (time and resource), as the underlying reason for the unannounced audit scheme is to maintain high standards across membership.

How does ACAD manage its audit scheme?

I raise this question, particularly after I saw a news piece on the ACAD website - 10 May 2019: "Have you had your ACAD audit yet? ... Please contact <name> to arrange yours."

Posting news on their website, notifying members of an audit^(iv), checking with a member that an auditor can come on-site⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾, requesting information prior to an audit^(iv), and only one-member site audit per year^(viii), leads me to question the credibility of the ACAD audit scheme.

Also, some of their members were not audited at all in 2018.^(viii)

This leads me to say that I cannot see how clients can gain any reassurance from ACAD membership.

If this trade association really does want to support the standards in the asbestos removal industry, I believe it needs to start to put words into actions.

ARCA will continue to run, what I believe is an unrivalled audit scheme, so maintaining high standards across membership and providing clients with a high level of reassurance.

Membership Support

Another role of a trade association is to support membership and as asbestos removal is a licensed industry I feel this role has even more importance.

ARCA has developed a range of support services for its member contractors, from producing guidance notes on specific regulated topics to developing an app for members to use when undertaking their own internal site audits.

Audits are for monitoring performance,

yet they are also a method of supporting member contractors by highlighting areas where improvement could be made. To further support this, ARCA recently enhanced its unique auditing App, used to record and report on membership audits. Now the App collates any non-conformities within a separate corrective action report. Meaning any improvements are highlighted clearly in importance and available to the member immediately^(ix) after the site audit is

completed, so any action can be taken without delay.

The team is also available to support when it comes to licence renewal applications. A number of members have asked for help and have seen positive results.

ARCA's certification to ISO 9001 for its membership, training and auditing services provides an additional level of reassurance for members and customers.

Another ARCA initiative to support the industry

ARCA has a membership of around 190 asbestos removal contractors, almost half of all the contractors in the UK, and they have told us that their **biggest issue is the quality of labour**. By quality, they mean the capability, knowledge, skills and behaviour.

How can ARCA support?

ARCA already delivers training, and has developed and provides qualifications. In fact, ARCA provides all the asbestos training and qualifications a removal operative, supervisor and manager, are required to have.

The short-term labour workforce still has a poor reputation within the industry. How can all parties; contractor, agencies and operatives, be supported to raise the overall quality?

Following discussions with some member contractors and labour supply agencies ARCA

has taken the initiative to resource the development of a performance feedback app. This will enable ARCA member contractors to rate operatives (from a member agency) on a number of specific capabilities, as well as behaviour and attitude. An operative's overall rating (which will usually be from a number of contractors over a number of jobs) will be available to be seen by all contractors using the app, before selecting the operatives proposed by an agency for a job. I believe this will be a great support tool for contractors in future selection of short-term operatives, and also for the operatives, as they can gain recognition for good work and identify training needs to improve their skill set.

ARCA is also taking another step to support the agency operatives by making free training available.

A number of years ago asbestos removal labour agencies needed a licence. However, this requirement was taken away, making it easier for labour agencies to operate in the asbestos removal industry. Shortly after this in January 2015, ARCA created a 'Labour Supply' membership category, whereby agencies supplying operatives to the industry need to undertake an office audit every year. By this I mean an ARCA auditor, would check that all their management systems, including certificate management, were sufficient and reliable. To continue to promote standards and improvement, the rules of membership for these members are being revised, so that from January 2020 they will undertake two office audits every year.

Over the years ARCA has introduced a number of initiatives to support both members and end-clients. From developing qualifications to managing an unrivalled membership audit scheme^(x).

In this hazardous and licensed industry, we all need to work to support continuous improvement of standards across the industry.

ARCA is now undertaking further initiatives. To support these we will look at

forging better relationships with some organisations and also develop new relationships.

**Jason Davy,
Chairman of ARCA**

NOTES

- (i) Information taken from ACAD Membership Application document at https://tica-acad.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ACAD-Application-Form_Mar19.pdf viewed 11 June 2019
- (ii) ARCA negotiated with the HSE to obtain basic information from the ASB5 notification forms (from January 2016) and later ACAD began receiving this information
- (iii) Information taken from an ACAD email to an ACAD member dated October 2018
- (iv) Information taken from an ACAD email to an ACAD member dated October 2018
- (v) Reference the ARCA website at <https://www.arca.org.uk/asbestos-removal-contractors-association-audits> viewed 11 June 2019
- (vi) Reference the ACAD website at <https://tica-acad.co.uk/audits-acad/> viewed 11 June 2019
- (vii) With the basic information received ARCA auditors can arrive at some sites which are not at a stage of removal work suitable for auditing – in 2018 this was around 25% of site visits
- (viii) Information taken from an ACAD email to ACAD member dated December 2018
- (ix) Via email, signal dependant
- (x) ARCA believes that the Association is the only trade association to run this type of audit scheme across any premissioning regime.