

Tyre Technician Professional Development Scheme launch a major success for NTDA

As tyres are the only part of a vehicle in contact with the road, one could excuse motorists for assuming that stringent enforcement of fitting standards is in place to protect their safety, when actually there is currently nothing to stop a totally unqualified and inexperienced individual setting up a tyre fitting business today and as we know, **they often do!**

The NTDA believes that this lack of professional standards has contributed significantly to the growth of unregulated part worn tyre dealers and the untrained 'man with a van' mobile fitting services.



Michelin Training Instructor Stephane Bonnard with trainee David Potts of A One Tyres

NTDA Chief Executive Stefan Hay argues that this must change and that the NTDA's Tyre Technician Professional Development Scheme is the way forward: *"I've read countless Trading Standards Officer reports of untrained individuals fitting part worn tyres, which in addition to being non-compliant with the regulations or unsafe, are often mis-matched on make, type, load index and speed ratings. Also, despite the fact that we have now many highly professional mobile fitting companies within NTDA membership, and will always welcome those who do it right, we've continued to receive numerous complaints about inexperienced and untrained mobile fitters starting up their own businesses with very poor knowledge of some of the basic principles of fitting and repair, technology such as TPMS, and without possessing the required fitting equipment and PPE."*

Back in 2011, and in response to the then growing number of commercial tyre technician fatalities at the roadside, the NTDA introduced the REACT scheme and the resulting Licence to Work Safely at the Roadside. At the time of going to print, close to 5000 commercial tyre technicians had been trained, assessed as competent and issued with a REACT licence and thankfully there have been no further fatalities. Building on this success, the NTDA launched the Tyre Technician Professional Development Scheme, at its annual Tyre Industry Conference in October 2017, which resulted in the introduction of three further licences for Retail Tyre Technicians, Vehicle Service Technicians and Commercial Tyre Technicians.

Leading industry training providers such as Michelin, Bridgestone, PFTP Ltd, Roadside Safety Ltd, and GTG Ltd now offer the training courses and assessments to support the new licences and a growing number of NTDA tyre distributor member companies are joining the scheme in order to train and assess their own technicians internally. Already more than 170 technicians across the UK and in the Republic of Ireland, have obtained the new Commercial Tyre Technician licence with many being trained and assessed not only for Truck tyre fitting, but also in more specialist fitting skills for Industrial, Agricultural and Earthmover tyres.

On Wednesday 13th June, immediately following the NTDA's AGM, the NTDA Executive Officers, joined by Sophie Bailey the Sales Director of NTDA member company Westgate Tyres in Morecambe, met with the Michelin team and the first cadre of technicians undertaking the training and assessments for the Retail Tyre Technician licence at Michelin's state of the art Training and Information Centre in Stoke on Trent. The technicians, who came from across the UK and



NTDA Executive Officers visit meet trainees at Michelin's Training and Information Centre in Stoke on Trent

Ireland, were Sean Burton of Milestones Garage, Alex Evans of Heath Tyre Auto Centre, Matthew Frazer of Carryduff Tyre Centre, Paul Hamilton of Crewe Tyres and Exhaust, Zac Palmer of Downton Tyre and Autocare, John Roberts of Saracens Tyres Ltd, Dylan Lewis of Teiars Huw Lewis and David Potts of A One Tyres.

Carl Williams, Michelin Training and Information Centre Manager, said: *"For a long time, commercial tyre fitters have had a licence to work, but there's never been anything for car tyre fitters working in retail garages. We've worked quickly to develop a specific training course to meet the NTDA's brief, allowing technicians to be assessed as competent professionals with the relevant knowledge for fitting tyres safely and efficiently to cars, 4x4s and light vans."*

The first course was fully booked and according to Carl, so is the July course, but luckily due to the immediate popularity and demand, further courses will be run every month throughout 2018. Stefan Hay concluded: *"We are aware that many professional bodies within the automotive aftercare sector, such as the IMI for example, believe that licensing schemes are necessary to increase professionalism and ensure consumer confidence and safety and we naturally support their efforts. It is unfortunate that so many companies don't understand the benefits of belonging to professional trade bodies such as the NTDA, are doing the bare minimum and operating at such a low level, often not investing in the skills of their technicians or following industry best practice and regulations. We therefore applaud those companies who are engaging with the Association, are investing in their people and in so doing, are giving motorists and other customers the confidence that their tyres are in the hands of properly qualified technicians."*

For further information on the Tyre Technician Professional Development Scheme, approved training providers, or to join the NTDA, contact the team on T: **01296 482128** on E: **info@ntda.co.uk**

New NTDA members add interesting new dynamic to the membership

The NTDA has had another busy couple of months of membership enquiries with a number of new members adding both geographical and product diversity to the Association. Firstly, **Exhaust & Tyre Shetland Limited** of Lerwick joined as a full member.

Lerwick is the most northerly and most easterly town in the British Isles and is the Shetland Island's only town, with a population of about 7,500, although about half of the islands' 22,000 people also live within a 10-mile radius of the town.

The business is now owned by Ian Manson who purchased it just over a year ago. In that short time, he has completely refurbished the depot and has already built an excellent reputation within the local community.



Banner Batteries (GB) Ltd has joined as a supplier member. Banner Batteries (GB) Ltd was founded in 1997, with its Austrian parent company having traded since 1937. Banner is an independent, family-owned, company and an international player, which in the third generation is now managed by Andreas and Thomas Bawart. The company has long-term experience in the manufacture and sale of starter batteries, industrial batteries, battery accessories and wheel weights.

Smart Garage Solutions Ltd has also joined as a supplier member. It provides car dealers and garages with innovative software and equipment to create, review and send personalised customer videos. It offers two solutions; *My Sales Trust* for car sales and *My Service Trust* for car servicing. Both use its secure online Garage Dashboard and App.

SmartGarageSolutions
Innovative Customer Service

The NTDA team looks forward to working with, and for, all of its new members!