

Information for Consumers

Why choose a QAA Member for your installation?

Established in 1996, The Quality Assurance Association (QAA) has successfully helped thousands of UK businesses, from many different industries, achieve the recognition they deserve through their membership of QAA.

These businesses wish to independently demonstrate their quality of service, integrity and customer service. Many consumers, local authorities and professional buyers specify QAA Membership before placing valuable contracts.

Customers confidently award contracts to members in the knowledge that they have been vetted prior to acceptance and that there exists an independent Ombudsman Scheme to investigate any complaints.

QAA has protected hundreds of thousands of consumers through the QA Ombudsman Scheme and also its Insurance Backed Guarantee provision provided by its partner organisations.

The QA Ombudsman Scheme

QAA is a founder member of the Quality Assurance Ombudsman Scheme (QAOS). This gives customers access to a robust and legally binding complaints procedure should they have the need to complain about any QAA member.

The Quality Assurance Ombudsman Scheme (QAOS) was established because of a need in the commercial business sector for an independent body to handle complaints about businesses which may not be covered by some other regulating body or Ombudsman Scheme.

QAOS provides both a means of redress for justified complaints, together with some limited protection to organisations within the Scheme who may suffer from 'professional complainers'. As a direct result of member organisations having set higher standards compared to those of their competitors, they can gain enhanced public image and improved levels of customer confidence and satisfaction.

Members of the QAA sign The Quality Assurance Charter on application for membership of the scheme. This is a legally binding document stating that in the event of a dispute or complaint, the member will agree to the investigation process of QAOS and abide by any decisions made.

For more detailed information visit:
www.theqaa.co.uk/ombudsman.htm

QA Ombudsman Scheme
Manchester Legal Centre, 3rd Floor,
64 Bridge Street, Manchester M3 3BN
Tel: 0870 901 5581



Information for QAA Members

How to set up the IBG facility

QAA members wishing to use the IBG facilities must:

- ◆ Supply a copy of their written guarantee and receive approval from QAA and the administrators before offering to customers.
- ◆ Submit to credit checks on their business
- ◆ Pay a nominal annual set up fee to the insurance administrators
- ◆ Obtain a price list from the administrators and include the policy premiums within their estimate/quotation to customers.
- ◆ Inform the administrators of each customer contact that requires an insurance policy.
- ◆ Pay the premiums when requested to the administrators.

How long does it take to set up a facility?

The process of setting up an Insurance Backed Guarantee facility for QAA members normally takes approx 7-10 days from receipt of guarantee wording from installer.

To set up the facility for your business call:

01257 - 270700



The Quality Assurance Association

Astley House, 29 Queens Road,
Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1JU

Tel: 01257 270700

Fax: 01257 274987
e-mail: info@theqaa.co.uk
www.theqaa.co.uk



Insurance Backed Guarantee Information

Protection for Home Improvement & Commercial Installations

Credibility | Promotion | Protection

What is an Insurance Backed Guarantee (IBG)?

An Insurance Backed Guarantee is a policy issued by an insurance company (to the owner of the property) to underwrite an original guarantee provided by an installer.

It only comes into force if the customer makes a claim on the installer's guarantee and the installer is no longer trading and therefore not in a position to honour the guarantee.

The insurance company then takes over responsibility for the guarantee and is obliged to honour any bone-fide claims made on that guarantee for the remainder of the term.

What is Deposit Protection Insurance?

Customers are often asked to pay a deposit when they place orders for home improvements. This is normal practice for most installation companies as this helps safeguard them against manufacturing products they probably will not be able to use elsewhere should the customer cancel the order.

However, some people find themselves having paid deposits only to discover the company ceases to trade before the installation has begun. In these cases, most times, the customer loses their deposit and is in the unfortunate position of having to find another contractor and negotiate a new price and pay another deposit before the work can commence.

Using a QAA installer that has in place deposit indemnity protection can help give the customer peace of mind when handing over deposits.

How much of the deposit can the policy normally cover?

Policies will normally cover deposits paid by consumers to installers up to a maximum percentage of the total contract price. This is normally in the region of 15-25% of the contract price and often has a ceiling on the amount of cover (ie the maximum deposit coverage).

Customers should check the insurance documentation/ paperwork provided by the installer to inspect these limitations and ensure that they receive a receipt for the amount of their deposit from their installation company. These documents should be kept in a safe place.

How long will the deposit cover last?

Deposit indemnity policies will normally last for 3 months from the date of the receipt of payment of the deposit, or until the start of the works or until cancellation of the contract whichever is the sooner.

A claim can usually be made by contacting the insurance provider directly in writing within 30 days of learning of the ceasing of trading of the installer. The customer will need to provide suitable proof of payment and a copy of the Insurance documentation.

Customers should check the insurance terms & conditions within the documentation/paperwork provided by the installer to confirm the above as terms may vary with different insurers. If unsure customers should contact the insurers directly.

Why do customers need an Insurance Backed Guarantee?

Thousands of contractors, large and small, cease to trade each year for a multitude of different reasons. Guarantee periods can be as long as 10 years in some industries and much can happen to any business in that time, regardless of current stature. This is particularly true in today's volatile business environment.

If your chosen installer were to cease trading you could be left with faulty goods, a guarantee of absolutely no value and a potential bill of thousands of pounds to rectify your problems.

All QAA members are obliged to issue a written guarantee to customers and can apply to use the insurance backed guarantee facilities available to members.

Consumers should check current membership with QAA and confirm if an IBG facility has been set up by individual members.

What can normally be covered by an Insurance Backed Guarantee?

- ◆ Workmanship by the contractor*
- ◆ Materials used by the contractor*
- ◆ Recovery of deposit payments made to contractor (usually up to 25% of the contract value)*
- ◆ Assistance in finding a new contractor to commence the project if the original contractor fails to start*
- ◆ All of the terms provided under the contractor's guarantee should they cease to trade upon completion of the project*
- ◆ Transfer of the policy to any new owner of the property provided the contractor's guarantee is also transferable.*

** All the above points are subject to the insurers master policy, the type of trade and if deposit protection is named on the insurance certificate/ documentation. Any questions on these points should be directed to the insurance provider.*

What are the normal exclusions & limitations of these policies?

- ◆ Any damages or defects insurable under normal household insurance
- ◆ Any loss of use or consequential loss
- ◆ Damage or defects not directly caused by faulty workmanship or materials that could be recovered under the contractor's own guarantee
- ◆ Loss or damage caused by sunlight, storm, wear and tear
- ◆ Defects arising from alterations, modifications, lack of maintenance or additions to the work after completion.
- ◆ Rectification work carried out without the insurers consent
- ◆ Excess (as normally stated on the Certificate Of Insurance)

A copy of the full terms and conditions should be made available by the insurers upon request.

Ask to see the Installers Guarantee and IBG before placing an order

Many home improvement businesses claim to offer guarantees. **It is important to see a copy of any Guarantee and Insurance Backed Guarantee before placing an order** and put your mind at rest that you are being offered a professional guarantee.

After completion it is a well known fact that many consumers never actually see a Guarantee or an IBG making it almost impossible to make a claim and get any rectification work done once the work has been paid for and the installer leaves the site.

What industries are covered?

The following industries can have IBG's and deposit protection insurance issued:

Extensions	Burglar Alarms	Timber Treatment
Double Glazing	Kitchens	Wall Ties
Conservatories	Fascias & Soffits	Wall Coverings
Roofing	Bathrooms	Underpinning
Block Paving	Bedrooms	Flooring
Patterned Concrete	Damp Proofing	Central Heating
Loft Conversions	Garage Doors	Blinds

The length of the guarantee will be subject to installers guarantee wording.

The length of the insurance policy will be subject to the insurers terms and conditions and rules in force at the time of issuing the policy.

The installer should provide copies of the guarantee and information on the length of the insurance cover to the customer.

If in doubt please check with the insurers for length of policy cover on each of the above industries.

Can QAA Members provide IBG's & Deposit Protection Insurance?

QAA have facilities in place for members through our 'QAA Approved Partner Scheme'.

However, consumers should double check with QAA before placing an order with a contractor to ensure the QAA supplier has registered with one of our approved schemes.

QAA Members wishing to set up a facility should read 'How to set up the IBG facility' on the back page of this leaflet or call:

Tel: 01257 270700