

GOLD SEAL CUSTOMER SERVICE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Certification Committee had a huge year in 2021 with adding the Electric Vehicle standard to the Certified Auto Recyclers (CAR) program. In fact, 2020 was a big year too. The new online tracking system was rolled out during the pandemic start and then enhanced in 2021 with high voltage vehicle safety standards. So of course, 2022 is planning to be big as well!

At convention the Certification Committee stated the goal of adding “resources” to the Gold Seal program for quality assurance standards. Often members are intimidated by the Gold Seal Standard of Excellence set forth. But as with the CAR program standards for environmental and safety the Committee is committed to making the Gold Seal program easy to understand with clear standards and support documents for the Resource Library being developed.

Resources will include sample templates for written procedures, signs, and posters to easily convey the professional way member facilities are managed. The Gold Seal Standards have stood the test of time for high customer service and part quality with added enhancements for contemporary issues such as recalls and electronic recordkeeping. The basic principle is a set of criteria by which to measure good ROE parts being delivered to happy customers.

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Gold Seal facilities have clean parts. ROE Parts should be cleaned, if necessary, before being delivered, shipped, or brought to the customer at the counter to ensure “NO SURPRISES UPON DELIVERY”.

Gold Seal facilities require designated personnel to perform quality and cleanliness checks using inspection and testing procedures that lay out an inspection process for parts as the part flows through facility following the dismantling process to verify **and** update their condition in the Inventory Management System.

Specifics on Inspections:

- ✓ ROE parts should be prepared to ensure that connectors are unplugged or disconnected cleanly.
- ✓ Parts sold from flood vehicles may only be sold as allowable by state law. The facility should have a process to ensure that ROE parts from flood vehicles are carefully inspected and tested prior to sale.
- ✓ Major drivetrain must be evaluated by one or more of the following methods: Cross contamination Fluid test, Compression/Leak Down test, or Bench/Run Test. The results of this testing must be documented.
- ✓ ROE safety components that are determined to be defective should be altered in a way that prevents their reuse or resale and removed from the Inventory Management System. Other ROE safety components should be stored in a manner that prevents damage or degradation.
- ✓ ROE Tires should be inspected and sold in a condition that complies with all regulations for safe usage.

Gold Seal facilities have trackable recordkeeping. All vehicles are assigned a unique stock number that is applied to the vehicle and its’ ROE parts. Ideally, the Inventory Management System maintain data

that includes VIN, source, odometer, critical dates (purchased, dismantled, scrapped) for all unique vehicle records that provides traceability from the part source to the scrapping, coring, destruction, disposing, or sales destination. The source VIN should be listed on invoices too, including brokered parts. Most importantly, ROE Parts must be accurately described in inventory using the ARA Parts Standards and Codes guide. This is vital to the “no surprises upon deliver” code.

Gold Seal facilities address safety recall parts. The written RECALL policy should require that recalled Parts may not be sold, other than to factory authorized collectors, or for litigation purposes. The policy must address how to handle recall notifications from manufacturers, how to notify any buyers of Parts, and when to destroy or return in stock inventory. Finally, the facility should maintain a written record of all handled recalls and actions taken.

Gold Seal facilities delivery quality ROE parts. Does your business implement and manage delivery process procedures and standards to ensure on-time delivery without any surprises? Do you report delivery delays to the customer? Do your price quotes include delivery costs? The answers should be YES! Couple those good process management techniques with a procedure to ensure the accurate loading of parts into company delivery vehicles and contracted carriers and your customers will be happy with their quality ROE parts.

Gold Seal facilities stand behind their parts. Return Policies and Warranty Statements should be in writing and available at the time of purchase either in store or via eCommerce with reference on the invoice.

Return Policy should include a minimum of 30 days for at least store credit or exchange. For ROE sheet metal parts customers should be offered a limited warranty against rust and corrosion for a one-year period from the date of purchase. For ROE mechanical parts the warranty should include a minimum 90-day warranty on parts. Customers buying mechanical parts should also be offered to purchase an extended warranty for at least one year on parts and limited labor. And of course, brokered ROE Parts have the same Return Policy and Warranty as the facility's ROE Parts policy.

Therein lies the nuts and bolts of the Gold Seal certification program for customer satisfaction and quality assurance. In the coming year resources will be developed to help clarify the exact standards and provide samples or templates for written procedures discussed in this article and for enhanced quality assurance criteria previously developed by the ARA Certification Committee.

