



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dealers Audited For Environmental Compliance

Environmental protection is one of the pillars of Škoda Auto's policy. Some of the dealers are certainly aware of that, too, especially those that have joined the company's environmental certification programme.

Czech legislation has gone through dramatic changes after the country's EU accession. "No industrial company can avoid obligations stipulated by environmental legislation now," says Marko Kosovič, a member of the Škoda Auto Maintenance Service Centre and the initiator of the company's environmental protection consultation service. "Obviously, Škoda is no exception. The company clearly demonstrated its environmental friendliness by establishing a sophisticated environmental management system in 2001. Our long-standing objective is to offer world-class vehicles the production of which has absolutely minimum environmental impacts."

The company's environmental improvements strategy includes monitoring of authorised dealers' environmental policies. The manufacturing and, in particular, repairs of vehicles pose the risk of environmental damage caused by leakage of hazardous substances. That is why Škoda Auto established a special consultation service in 1996 with the objective of setting up a system of environmental protection management and audits at each business partner.

In cooperation with ISES, sr.o., the coordinator of the consultation service, the team of the Škoda Auto Maintenance Service Centre produced a waste management, water protection and air protection consultation service strategy for the dealer network, including an environmental compliance certification programme. "Our environmental audit checks the dealers' compliance with legislated requirements regarding waste management, water protection, air protection and soil protection, i.e., that hazardous waste is disposed of by authorised parties and that hazardous substances are prevented from leaking to underground water, sewer systems, etc., as well as compliance with environmental protection requirements set by Škoda Auto. Every dealer that meets the environmental audit criteria and eliminates all deficiencies that may be found within the audit process will receive the Environmental Compliance Certificate," says ISES Director Vladimír Klatovský. "At the end of 2005, 172 dealers of altogether 263 were certified. The current number of holders of valid Certificates is 86."

The dealers that decide to set up the system and are awarded the Certificate receive financial support from Škoda Auto and, even more importantly, get a significant competitive edge, as the number of customers who want to be sure that their suppliers' policies are environmentally friendly is apparently growing. In some major public tenders, especially those in state-owned organisations, a car dealer that fails to prove that their operation is environmentally friendly simply cannot succeed. "Everybody should do what they are good at and what they really understand, because that is the only way of working efficiently and becoming part of a good team," says Miroslav Tůma, one of the co-owners of the Auto TUKAS dealership. "We have been cooperating with ISES since 1999 when we received our first Environmental Compliance Certificate. However, the cooperation is not just about receiving the Certificate. Changing the staff's thinking and supporting them in terms of waste prevention, minimisation, sorting, etc. is even more important. The partnership also makes us feel safe in terms of checks performed by environmental authorities, provides us with good information about the facility's environmental performance, and saves our time, money, materials and other resources. And it's good to know we can seek advice from real professionals any time. With so many advertising campaigns these days that promote waste sorting, environmentally friendly behaviour, etc., also our customers want to know whether we behave environmentally friendly, and I am pleased we can tell them absolutely honestly that we do."



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mladá Boleslav
June 2006