



MLA and Thatcham setting standards for EU ruling

A European Union (EU) ruling which could give greater access to the security codes required to start modern vehicles has undergone a security check as three of the UK's leading security names join forces to trial a proposed vetting system.

Vehicle security codes are held in micro-chips in vehicle keys, fobs or cards and are required to start engine management systems. Designed to provide an extra element of vehicle security, the codes have been compulsory in all new European cars since 1998.

The Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) alongside the Auto Locksmiths Association (ALA) and Motor Insurance Repair and Research Centre - Thatcham have launched the Thatcham Registered Auto Locksmith (TRAL) Scheme. The scheme ensures UK vehicle security is not compromised by an EU ruling which would make the security data needed to start cars more readily available.

The Euro 5 emissions directive regulation passed in 2009 states that car manufacturers "must ensure that independent operators have easy, restriction-free and standardised... access via the internet to information on the repair and upkeep of vehicles". The ruling was created to boost consumer choice and give supplier access to information on elements such as emission levels, on-board diagnostic systems, testing equipment and vehicle security codes.

Although the ruling has not yet been implemented, the MLA, ALA and Thatcham are trialling their suggested scheme to ensure those given access to security data meet an advanced standard and to counteract any concerns over who has access to this valuable information.

The trio hopes that the TRAL Scheme – which recommends that only approved individuals should be given access to this sensitive data – is implemented on a European scale when the ruling does come into force later this year.

Successful applicants will be permitted to use the Thatcham Registered Auto Locksmith (TRAL) Scheme logo and will be listed on the Thatcham website. The list will provide

mechanics, body repair specialists and vehicle owners with a guide to qualified and respectable automotive locksmiths in their area.

The scheme will see the three companies carry out triple accreditation on auto security specialists it believes should be given access to the data. Applicants will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, pass an auto locksmithing competency exam and agree to a strict code of conduct.

Justin Freeman, technical manager from the MLA said: "The MLA is deeply concerned about the potential dangers this ruling could have on vehicle security – in effect it is the same as giving home alarm codes to anyone who asks for them irrespective of their background and motive.

"The UK's vehicle crime rate was once considered as one of the highest in the world and while significant investment in technology has substantially helped to reduce this figure, the EU ruling could potentially undo a lot of the good work.

"Our solution with Thatcham and the ALA will ensure only licensed and fully trained security professionals will have access to this data, meaning the public and car manufacturers are protected from the risks we feel this new ruling may pose.

"Although we agree with the principles of the ruling which will offer greater choice to consumers we have developed the TRAL Scheme to offer a safe solution to this one element we fear could compromise security."

UK car manufacturers and insurers are also getting behind the campaign as they strive to ensure the billions of pounds they spend every year on developing security technology is not compromised by this ruling.

"As the chip inside keys are required to start modern vehicles, releasing the security data without thoroughly checking why an individual requires the information could mean criminals are able to more readily create the codes to produce a new key for a stolen car," added Justin Freeman.

"Although there are of course very respectable and trustworthy specialists out there who will be responsible with the data, the MLA fear that without some sort of formal vetting procedure

there will be much greater risk of rogue individuals taking advantage of the system and a potential increase in car crime.”

Mike Briggs, Thatcham's vehicle security manager said: “The Thatcham Registered Auto Locksmith scheme will provide for the first time a secure service for the replacement of lost or missing keys both for individual motorists and for businesses.”

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Notes to Editor

Issued on behalf of the Master Locksmiths Association by Karol Marketing Group. For further information, pictures or to set up interviews please contact Hayley Ford on 0191 265 7765 or email hayley@karolmarketing.com

About the MLA

The Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) was established over 50 years ago to set and promote standards of conduct, practice and materials within locksmithing. The MLA is recognised as the authoritative body for locksmithing by the police, home office and other leading organisations such as the British Standards Institute.

As a not for profit association, the MLA ensure its member companies undergo strict vetting procedures so the public, government and industry receive the appropriate service and advice. MLA members share the ethos that ‘skill and integrity’ remain paramount in locksmithing and are able to provide sound advice based on knowledge and experience.

A list of approved MLA companies are listed on the MLA website, for further information please visit: www.locksmiths.co.uk

About the ALA

The Auto Locksmith Association was formed in 1998 by the coming together of like minded individuals who saw a need for a specialised branch of auto locksmithing experts.

The organisation helps auto locksmiths assess and work with the ever increasing technology being used to secure motor vehicles.

Membership of the association requires the completion of the auto locksmith industry examination of competence, proof of trade, criminal record disclosure and adherence to the organisation's code of practice. Many of the measures have been implemented with the help of the Master Locksmith Association with whom the ALA work closely.

About Thatcham

The Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre, or 'Thatcham' as it is widely known, was formed in 1969 by British Insurers. The Centre is independently operated and has its own Board of Directors. Its main aim is to carry out research targeted at containing or reducing the cost of motor insurance claims, whilst maintaining safety standards. Thatcham provides products and services for a number of functional areas within the collision repair industry: Insurers; Motor Manufacturers; Equipment Manufacturers and Suppliers.

Employing over 167 members of staff, Thatcham has an established reputation as an automotive standard setter and a proven capability in delivering an array of totally unique, high quality, ready to use and bespoke products and services to the automotive industry, on a global stage.