

Approved Biomass Maintenance Scheme Customer FAQ's

Ref: introduction of the new scheme in biomass servicing

Version 1.5



The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have introduced a new Scheme aimed at increasing the efficiency of the performance of biomass boilers and reducing harmful emissions. The Scheme, entitled the Approved Biomass Maintenance Scheme is accredited by HETAS. You may see it referred to as HABMS for short.

It is now a requirement of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), that recipients of the RHI payment must ensure that their boiler is serviced at least once a year by a business accredited by HETAS.

These FAQs are to help answer any questions you may have about the HETAS Approved Biomass Maintenance Scheme, but as the Scheme has only just launched inevitably some aspects are still being worked through. AMP will regularly review and update these FAQs and remain committed to updating you as this Scheme develops.

What is the HETAS Approved Biomass Maintenance Scheme?

The Scheme sets an accredited standard for the servicing and maintenance of Non-Domestic RHI eligible biomass boilers.

In 2019 BEIS commissioned research led by KIWA to evaluate the performance of biomass boilers in situ. This independent research conclusively proved that biomass boiler efficiency could be increased, and harmful emissions reduced. It recommended that an annual service, at a minimum, by an accredited business could help to improve biomass boiler performance and reduce harmful emissions.

The biomass industry, with the support of Micro Certification Scheme (MCS) and HETAS, consulted and created a Standard (MCS040), which details criteria for businesses conducting Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM) of biomass boilers to adhere to. HETAS was appointed to administer the Scheme. Only businesses achieving this Standard gain accreditation.

As well as increasing the efficiency of the boiler and reducing the levels of emissions, the Scheme also provides assurance for RHI recipients that their boilers have been serviced to the right standard by fully qualified engineers who intimately understand the workings of the biomass boiler.

When does the Scheme come into force and is compliance a legal requirement?

Implementation of the regulations became effective in April 2022. Ofgem will start mandating evidence from you in April 2023, however, Ofgem could request this evidence at any time since the introduction of the scheme.

Compliance is not a legal requirement, but if you are unable to provide evidence of an annual service conducted by an accredited business then you will not qualify for RHI payments going forwards.

Do I have to get my biomass installation serviced by a HETAS accredited service engineer to continue receiving RHI payments?

Yes, the RHI Regulations have been amended and now require you to complete an annual service in each payment year. This must be conducted by a business or engineer that is registered with the Scheme.

What do I need to do to comply with the Scheme?

You need to provide evidence to Ofgem that your boiler has been serviced by an accredited business to continue receiving RHI payments. Please ensure that you have your RHI number to hand as you will need to reference this at your next boiler service to continue receiving payments. Ofgem will be able to provide you with your RHI number if you cannot find it.

HETAS will issue you with an automated notification once your service is conducted that you can use as evidence of an annual service.

An accredited business will have a registration number and their engineers will carry cards which demonstrate this.

What does a biomass heat business need to do to comply with the new scheme?

A business that wants to register with the Scheme will be assessed as to whether its servicing and maintenance offering, its engineers, and other staff, meet the standard that has been laid down by the Scheme. The assessment also includes a review of a business' HSEQ criteria and Quality Management.

Has AMP been accredited through the Scheme? If so, does that mean all its engineers are accredited too?

AMP has gained the accreditation which means that all of our 30 + engineers throughout Great Britain have met the required standard. We are one of the few nationwide service provider organisations and have one of the largest networks of specialist biomass engineers throughout the country. We invest in ongoing training and professional development to ensure our team of engineers are the best in class.

What is the process for recording that a boiler has been maintained (and met the Scheme requirements) and how do you do this?

At this moment in time, the process works as follows:

- The appointed service engineer will conduct the Planned Preventative Maintenance service and provide you with a copy of their findings
- The service provider will register the service on the HETAS portal, and an automated notification will be sent to you which can be provided as evidence of the service to claim your RHI

Does my service need to be conducted by the original installer?

No, any business accredited under the HETAS Approved Biomass Maintenance Scheme can conduct your boiler service.

Is an annual service enough to ensure the best performance of a biomass installation?

Regular servicing and maintenance is the best way to ensure your boiler performs at its best, which in turn maximises your RHI payments.

Every biomass boiler is different and the number of services per year depends on the nature of your heat requirements and your installation. AMP can advise you on the frequency of boiler servicing.

At AMP we offer a range of Service and Maintenance plans which are tailored to each individual organisation. We recommend a biannual service plan for most of our customers, but others with larger installations may need more regular planned maintenance. All our plans include round-the-clock support for your boiler. Our expert engineers can work on the vast majority of biomass boilers whether AMP has installed them or not.