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The European Driver Training Directive

Introduction

This new European Driver Training Directive will result in a Certificate of Professional Competence for Professional Lorry Drivers.

The QPA Transport Committee has reviewed the directive and sets out in this guidance a summary of how this will affect your business from 10 September 2009.

This new qualification for professional lorry drivers, the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), has been given the Government go-ahead. From 10 September 2009 just holding a vocational driving licence will no longer be sufficient for someone who wishes to drive LGV's for a living. The Driving Standards Agency will be responsible for introducing the new scheme within the UK and for the issue of renewal certificates which will be required every five years.

The Driver CPC is being introduced to improve the knowledge and skills of lorry drivers, to help improve road safety and reduce road casualties. The Driver CPC will also bring an improved professional and positive image to the profession, attracting more people to drive lorries for a living. It is aimed not only at improving the knowledge and skills of LGV drivers when they start work but also ensuring these skills are maintained and developed throughout their working life. This in turn will help the environment through reduced fuel consumption and vehicle wear and tear.

A Driver CPC will require all category C and D licence holders (including C1 and D1) to take part in 35 hours training every 5 years in order to maintain their Driver CPC. It also introduces a new initial qualification process that new drivers must complete before they can drive professionally. For new entrants the 2 hour practical driving test would serve LGV licence

acquisition and CPC purposes. A driver who holds a category C and D licence on or before 9 September 2009 will not need to initially qualify to obtain a Driver CPC as this will be automatically granted by Acquired Rights. All professional vocational drivers must undertake periodic training in order to maintain their Driver CPC.

Drivers will have to complete a minimum of 35 hours of approved training every 5 years. Each training course must be of a minimum length of 7 hours, with the 7 hours being defined as contact time with the trainer. Each training course must be delivered within a 24 hours period.

All training must be taken at an approved training centre and on an approved training course. Records of training undertaken by drivers will be kept centrally. All approved training centres and training courses will be subject to audit and approval may be withdrawn if it is found that centres or courses are not complying with the approval criteria.

Drivers who are deemed to hold Driver CPC by Acquired Rights must complete their periodic training within 5 years of the introduction of Driver CPC i.e. by 10 September 2014.

Drivers who gain their Driver CPC by completing the initial qualification must

complete their first cycle of periodic training within 5 years of the date they acquired their Driver CPC.

Drivers who do not maintain their Driver CPC, i.e. because they leave the industries, but who want to start working as a professional driver again, must complete 35 hours of periodic training in order to regain their Driver CPC. They must complete the training before they can resume working professionally.

A new Driver CPC will be acquired by completing 4 hours of theory testing and 2 hours of practical tests. The tests can be taken in modules that will support drivers who may be exempt from Driver CPC, or who were exempt and now need their CPC. The estimated fee for completing modules 1-4 as detailed below is £205.

	Module 1 Theory Test	Module 2 Case Studies	Module 3 Practical Test	Module 3 CPC Practical Test
Licence Acquisition only	•		•	
Full CPC	•	•	•	•
Upgrade to CPC		•		•

The modules will be:

- 1 2.1/2 hours theory test
- 2 1.1/2 hours theory test (case studies)
- 3 1.1/2 hours practical test
- 4 1/2 hour practical demonstration of vehicle safety

The table illustrates the modular approach to acquiring a vocational licence and/or Driver CPC.

Modules 1 and 2 can be taken in any order, as can modules 3 and 4.

Candidates must complete module 1 before they can take module 3 and must complete module 2 before they can take module 4. Driver CPC will be evidenced by issuing drivers with a Driver Qualification Card (DQC), similar to the driving licence. The DQC will be issued by DVLA. It will be mandatory for drivers to carry evidence that they hold Driver CPC when they are driving professionally.

Drivers with acquired rights will not be issued with a DQC until they have completed their first 5 years of periodic training. They will be able to show they have acquired rights by the date on their driving licence showing when they acquired their vocational driving licence.

Non compliance with the Driver CPC rules will attract similar penalties to those currently in force for driving/encouraging driving without an appropriate driving licence.

The above summarises the European Driver Training Directive, further detail will be supplied once the final form of the new legislation is published. Members wishing to obtain more detailed advice can either contact QPA or check trade publications and

www.dsa.gov.uk/cpc to keep in touch with developments. In addition there will be regular updates in 'Despatch' - DSA's magazine for the driver training industry.

(The QPA and EPIC are working to ensure that the EPIC Drivers Skillcard is included within the scope of the CPC requirements.)

If you have any further questions or would like information updates on Driver CPC please email your details to drivercpc@dsa.gsi.gov.uk.