

Quarries National Joint Advisory Committee (QNJAC)

Information Sheet in Support of:

Quarry Operator and Contractor Code of Conduct

Competence for Contractors

(version 1: December 2016, review 2021)



This information sheet has been developed by the Quarries National Joint Advisory Committee (QNJAC) to help quarry operators, contractors, managers and others make health and safety improvements in the quarry industry. This guidance may go further than the minimum you need to do to comply with the law.

QNJAC Contractors Working Group Guidance in support of the Quarry Operator/Contractor Code of Conduct

COMPETENCE FOR CONTRACTORS

The Contractors Code of Conduct states:

Competency

It is the duty of the contractor to demonstrate to the quarry operator that sufficiently competent persons supported by appropriate site based competency checks are provided. It is strongly recommended that contractors maintain a valid safety passport to underpin hazard awareness knowledge.

Guidance

Although it is the Quarry Operator who has the legal duty to ensure that all those working in the quarry are competent to do the work they are being asked to do (or they are training under someone who is competent), it makes sense for the contractor to make sure that they can demonstrate the competence of their employees to the Quarry Operator. How else are they to bid for work?

Contractors should aim to achieve at least same levels of competence for any given task that the Quarry Operator would achieve for one of their own employees.

The law recognises the need for people to acquire new competences, so this is built in. A person working in a quarry has to be either competent themselves to undertake the task they are engaged in, or under the supervision of someone who is competent to give training and to provide supervision in that task.

What is competence?

There is a legal definition, it says competence is when someone has sufficient training, experience, knowledge and other qualities to enable them to undertake the duties assigned to them. The QNJAC has guidance on competence and competence assurance at: <http://qnjac.co.uk/qnjac-guidance/quarries-legislation/qnjac-guidance-on-competence-assurance/> or <http://www.safequarry.com/qnjac.aspx>.

It is important to understand that training alone does not provide competence; it provides underpinning knowledge, that combines with relevant knowledge gained from elsewhere to provide the knowledge element



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of competence. The experience element is the application of relevant knowledge over time to acquire experience. The most difficult element to understand is that of 'other qualities.' What is meant by 'other qualities'? An example of an 'other quality' might be the recognition of the limits of one's own competence and when to seek further specialist advice.

How do you demonstrate competence?

There are National Occupational Standards (NOS) for many trades and professions. Vocational Qualifications (VQ) are available based on those NOS.

It follows that those holding the relevant VQ awarded by a recognised awarding body will have demonstrated competence in that field to an independent accredited assessor.

It is not a legal requirement to have a VQ, but it is hard to think of a better way to demonstrate competence. The awarding body for the extractives industry is the Minerals Products Qualifications Council (MPQC).

What about continued competence?

Just because somebody achieved a VQ a number of years ago does not mean that they remain competent. There should be continued professional development in place to prove that the person has kept up their competence by continued learning. This can range from being shown an up to date operators passport for mobile plant operators, along with evidence that they have operated the plant in question on a regular basis, right up to evidence of attendance at relevant training courses and seminars etc. for people such as electricians, blasting contractors etc..



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QNJAC Contractors

Essential Health & Safety Guidance for Quarries



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