



Plant Operator

Plant Training

In accordance with the Health and Safety legislation, the employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees receive “such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure” their health and safety at work.

It is therefore essential that plant operators are given sufficient training and information to enable them to know how to operate and check the safe operation of the machine.

The following should be implemented by companies that hire or use contractor’s plant in relation to the training of operators.

All operators of contractors plant must receive adequate basic training. They should also receive specific job training under supervision in relation to the actual machine/s operated, the products handled by those machines and the environment where the machine/s will be used. The operator also needs job familiarisation training to also cover these areas without direct supervision but through observation. If the company is satisfied by the standard of the operator to use the equipment then authorisation to drive these machines should be given.

Please note that authorisation should be given for a specific period and should include the make and model of machine that can be operated by the operator, this authorisation should be removed by the company if they are not satisfied by the continuing competence of the operator.

Job specific training should also cover quick hitches, attachments and any other specialist equipment that is required to be used. If an operator has not operated a machine for some time then they may require refresher training or time on the machine to adapt before operating in live situations, this would also apply to operating a different make of machine which may require a form of conversion training or time to read through the operators handbook to familiarise themselves with the machine differences before attempting live work.

All authorisations to drive equipment should preferably be in writing.

Those people who are authorised to use equipment should be displayed on a register, issued with keys from a recorded system or machines could be fitted with immobiliser that prevents non authorised driver usage.

Operators or potential operators will require different periods and stages of training depending on experience and machine knowledge.

Qualifications

Companies should also support plant operators in gaining a nationally recognised qualification such as an NVQ Level 2 in Plant Operations covering the type of machine/s used as this is the standard now required on most construction sites in the UK and on some construction projects worldwide.

Qualification assessment methods

Experienced Worker Practical Assessment Route (EWPAP) is available at level 2 and is normally delivered over 1-2 day period. On Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) is available at Level 2 and usually takes 2 – 3 months to complete from induction to completing the qualification

Other recommended training

Plant Operators may require other training throughout their career, such as: Plant safety awareness, training on specific equipment, attachment training, training on machinery carriers - low-loaders, working at heights, ladders, fall arrest, excavations, power & hand tools, safe use of abrasive, confined spaces, cable avoidance tool, mobile towers, harnesses, preventing dermatitis, manual handling, slinger, crane awareness, fire prevention, street works, first aid, fire extinguishers, defensive driving, this is not an exhaustive list.

Associations or training forums

Hire Association Europe (HAE)

Contractors Plant Hire Association (CPA)

Contractors Mechanical Plant Engineers (CMPE)

Does a registration card exist for this occupation

Yes, Red for a trained operator and Blue for an operator holding an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent competence qualification, other card specific assessments may be required before a card is issued.

The Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) and Construction Skills Register (CSR) would appear to be the most widely held cards however other schemes are available and it will in most cases be the client, main contractor or sub-contractor that determines if a card is required and what the preference is.

What does CITB NI do for this sector

CITB provide an on-line training directory in our courses section of the web site at www.citbni.org.uk courses are available for a range of different topics.

CITB provide grant assistance for employers that send employees on training courses please see our grant section at the above website

A Health & Safety advice booklet for plant operators has been developed and is available to view within the publications section of our website.

A Health & Safety Training Blueprint has been developed and is also available to view within the publications section of our website.

The QEW (Qualifying the Existing Workforce) is a fully funded programme that has been running for the last three years. Over 400 plant operators have now benefited from this programme and have gained a regulated NVQ Level 2 qualification for the first time.

Other specifically funded programmes are also available as required and CITB NI has or will be funding programmes for Demolition, Piling, Core Diamond Drilling, Asbestos Awareness, Insulation Installer and Horizontal Directional Drilling.



For further advice please view the Health & Safety advice booklet for Plant Operator that have been developed and is available to view within the publications section of our website www.citbni.org.uk



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