

20 March 2020

Training & Development Update

CECA Member Briefing:

Training & Development - Coronavirus

This Update aims to provide all the latest information provided by CITB, Industry Stakeholders, Training Providers and Card Schemes in relation to the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak and the potential impact on Training and Development activity across the Construction Industry.

If you require any further information or have any queries, please contact Jemma Carmody (jemma@ceca-yorks.co.uk) or Briony Wickenden (brionywickenden@cecasouth.co.uk).

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CSCS Update

The growing concerns surrounding Coronavirus (COVID-19) are likely to impact CSCS's ability to issue cards to some first-time applicants or those wishing to renew their card prior to expiry.

A key requirement for all applications (new or renewal) is proof that the applicant has passed the relevant CITB Health, safety and environment (HS&E) test within the last 2 years.

Current position

CITB have confirmed that Pearson Vue HS&E test centres across the UK will temporarily close starting Friday 20 March 2020 until further notice. The situation will be monitored on a weekly basis.

At present CITB are not closing the Independent Test Centre (ITC) network and they will continue to work with these centres to ensure adequate precautionary measures are put in place to protect staff and candidates.

Please visit the CITB website regarding the actions they are taking around the availability of the HS&E test and other industry training.

CSCS and the wider industry should therefore consider the impact Coronavirus will have on the industry's ability to deliver the test and the subsequent impact this will have on CSCS card applications.

What does this mean for CSCS?

The full impact of COVID-19 on CSCS card applications is yet unknown. However, we should prepare for the fact that construction workers will struggle to find availability to sit the test and the likelihood that the remaining test centres will also close until the spread of the virus is under control.

Those new to the industry may be unable to apply for cards as they cannot sit the test or undertake training/qualifications relevant for the card they require. Also the number of expired cards circulating in the industry will increase as existing card holders cannot renew their cards without resitting the test.

This could lead to genuine construction workers being turned away from site as they do not hold a CSCS card or their existing card has expired.

What steps are CSCS taking?

1. In recognition that COVID-19 will prevent some construction workers from meeting CSCS's card application requirements, we are asking the industry to support the following temporary measures:

Requesting employers and those responsible for site access and card checking procedures to use their discretion towards workers whose cards have expired since mid-March onward and who can provide evidence that they have been unable to sit their test or undertake the required training as a result of the closure of Test/Training centres.

This is at the employer's discretion until the situation has stabilised.

2. CSCS has extended the grace period for card renewals from 6 months after the card expires to 12 months. This means that the card can be renewed, once the CITB H,S&E test has been passed, up to one year from the card's expiry date.

This will assist those applicants struggling to find availability to sit the test and renew their card.

We are in unprecedented times. Employers should expect their workers to hold a valid CSCS card as proof of their training and qualifications. However, until COVID-19 is brought under control we are asking the industry to support these temporary measures.

Keep informed

CSCS will continue to monitor the situation and where necessary introduce further proactive measures to limit the impact on CSCS applicants and the wider industry.

We appreciate your support during this time and ask you to visit www.cscs.co.uk/covid19 regularly for updates from CSCS.

Any enquiries related to this matter should be emailed to communications@cscs.co.uk. Click [here](#) for more information.

CPCS / NOCN Update

NOCN Job Cards is aware that there may be some difficulty renewing or updating CPCS cards due to issues caused by COVID19. This may take the form of not being able to make HSE tests, attend CPCS Practical assessments or CPCS renewal tests.

CPCS is now producing 90% of new card applications within 20 days and will soon be under 15 days. With our contingency planning, we aim to retain this level of service, however, we understand that Operators may have difficulty gaining the requirements for Cards in the future.

As such CPCS would suggest to Employers that their sites could be more lenient on accepting cards that have expired from mid-March onwards until the Covid-19 situation has been brought more under control. This is of course the Employers' choice and decision.

For further information about CPCS please contact NOCN's CPCS team on 0300 999 1177 (Option 2), or email: enquiries@jobcards.org. For the latest bulletins click [here](#).

NPORS Update

At NPORS we will endeavour to minimise the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on our support for training providers, training centres and learners, whilst following Government advice. We are taking the required action, monitoring and following government guidelines daily. An appropriate risk assessment for our employees has taken place and as a result all unnecessary travel and face-to-face business meetings etc., are being postponed.

We will remain open for business as we have a robust contingency plan in place to minimise the disruption to our service. Our teams can work remotely and will communicate with training providers via e mail and over the telephone regarding accreditation audits. If you have any concerns or would like to discuss the impact on your centre or learners please contact us on info@npors.com or 01606 351240.

Where, due to travel restrictions or company internal policies card holders are unable to renew their registrations due to no re-testing being available, they or their employer should contact NPORS for guidance.

CCNSG Update

Due to a number of CCNSG courses being cancelled at short notice the ECITB recognise that some delegates, when able to re-attend a course, will have a card that has exceeded the 3 month expiry grace period for renewal. In the majority of cases this will be at no fault of the delegate and as such the ECITB will be extending the grace period for renewal to 6 months from anyone attending a course after Monday 16 March 2020. This extension will be reviewed regularly over the coming months and updates communicated accordingly.

EUSR Update

A valid EUSR National Water Hygiene registration is mandated by all water companies across Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England in cooperation with the UK drinking water regulators, and is a core requirement of the Principles of Water Supply Hygiene and Water UK Technical Guidance in order to protect public health. It remains a mandatory requirement for all individuals working on the public water supply within Restricted Operations.

As part of their contingency planning for the COVID-19 event, water companies will be required to have a more flexible direct and indirectly employed workforce working across their water assets. It is therefore more important than ever that anyone working within Restricted Operations is properly trained and assessed in how to observe best practice on site and maintain the high standards expected by every company and the UK's drinking water quality regulators.

"Hygiene at the moment is the highest priority for the health of individuals and the public and this does not reduce during this time but arguably becomes more important." - Marcus Rink, Chief Inspector, Drinking Water Inspectorate.

Through discussion with the chairs of the Water UK Strategic Drinking Water Quality Network and National Water Hygiene Group we can confirm that throughout the COVID-19 event, the National Water Hygiene Scheme continues to apply as a mandated requirement and a valid registration must be maintained. It is vital that every person on site maintains the highest possible standards of hygiene, and no reduction in competence or compliance occurs.

Energy & Utility Skills are therefore working to help all organisations, where the current situation and restrictions could make it difficult for individuals to complete their renewal training and assessment before their expiry date or gain access to an Approved Trainer. For a limited period, we are offering a Computer Based Learning (CBL) route for renewals of EUSR National Water Hygiene registrations. For further information click [here](#).

Should you have any questions, please contact the EUSR Support, Monday – Friday, 8.00am – 5.00pm, via e-mail to quality@euskills.co.uk, or call us on 0121 745 1310 (option 1)

Sentinel / Track Safety Cards

As part of our response to the Covid 19 situation, we are considering a number of measures to maintain the competence and medical status of our workforce. This may include extensions where appropriate. We are working through the detail and will distribute communications when confirmed. In the meantime, please bear with us and rest assured that appropriate measures to deal with these risks are being worked on. Please continue to report any issues to the 24/7 Helpdesk Tel 0330 7262 222 or e-mail: Sentinel@mitie.com. For more information click [here](#).

First Aid – extension up to 3 months

The First Aid Quality Partnership through consultation with the Health and Safety Executive and Department of Education have secured a very sensible extension arrangement for courses and certification in these difficult times.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is aware that people holding Offshore Medic (OM), Offshore First Aid (OFA), First Aid at Work (FAW) or Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) certificates nearing expiry date, might experience disruption to access to requalification training as a result of events or circumstances generated by the coronavirus pandemic.

If requalification training is prevented for reasons associated directly with coronavirus or by complying with related government advice, it is reasonable and practical to extend the validity of current certificates by up to 3 months. Anyone taking advantage of this extension should be able to describe clearly their reasons for delaying requalification training, and demonstrate steps they have taken to undertake the training, if required.

This guidance comes into effect for certificates expiring on or after 16 March 2020. HSE will review this matter over the coming months and will issue further statements as necessary.

If your certificate expiry date is imminent it will be valid for a further 3 months. If you are midway through a modular 10 week or 6 week course there will be an acceptable 3 months extension. Requalification courses will be open to anyone who has been previously qualified, even if their certificate is beyond the 30 day after expiry. Candidates will be eligible to attend the two day programmes but they must demonstrate competence in all aspects to be certified. This modification to our standards and procedures will endure after special measures are rescinded.

For more information, click [here](#).

[CITB Update](#)

Grants

We understand that cash flow is an immediate issue for employers, with this in mind, we have prioritised the processing of grant claims in order to pay grants as early as possible. In consideration of the current circumstances we are freezing the 20 week processing rule, this will allow employers to claim grants later as a result of the disruption caused by this pandemic.

We urge employers to check their Grant Online accounts for claims which need authorising, and to sign and return any paper Grant Claim forms we have issued as quickly as possible.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and update employers accordingly.

Funding

The Skills and Training Funds for both Small and Micro and Medium-sized businesses will still be launched on 1 April and assessed at the end of April. Support to develop applications will be available from the CITB Partnerships Team over the phone or skype in addition to written guidance available on the web site.

We will offer increased flexibility to those businesses with current Skills and Training Fund Projects; recognising that changing business need will result in requests for different training, or a change to delivery time scales.

We are also reviewing how the funds can be used to help businesses retain essential skills and support managers to provide the right leadership through a challenging period.

CITB Apprenticeships

In light of recent Government advice, CITB Apprenticeships has taken the decision to base all staff at home wherever possible. As a result of this decision, apprentice reviews and engagement with your apprentices and colleagues will be carried out via phone or Skype call and we would appreciate your support with this as we work to keep both our staff and yours safe.

Your Apprenticeship Officer will continue to be your point of contact and will provide ongoing support to you and your apprentices.

A letter is being issued to all apprentices, via email today (19 March), advising them that their Apprenticeship Officer will be in touch and in the meantime to follow the NHS and Government guidance.

We will contact you with more information as the situation develops.

CITB Directory & Register

We remain committed to supporting our Approved Training Organisations (ATOs), employers and delegates. We are encouraging ATOs to relax cancellation and refund policies, to assist candidates in rescheduling courses attendance free of charge, should they be unable to attend as a result of COVID-19.

In addition to the support offered we have advised all ATOs to take additional precautionary measures across their centres as we collectively work to combat the spread of COVID-19.

CITB is continually reviewing the situation and will provide further updates as and when we can.

Site Safety Plus

We remain committed to supporting the construction industry with training, whilst putting the health and safety of our Site Safety Plus training providers and delegates first.

We are encouraging all Site Safety Plus centres to relax cancellation and refund policies, to assist candidates in rescheduling courses attendance free of charge, should they be unable to attend as a result of COVID-19.

Additionally, any delegate whose SMSTS/SSSTS achievement has expired since 15 March 2020 and who hasn't been able to renew in time due to COVID-19, will be allowed to take the refresher rather than the full course - this will remain in place whilst the current Coronavirus situation continues and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Centres have been asked to take additional precautionary measures across their centres as we collectively work to combat the spread of COVID-19.

We understand that difficulties accessing SSP courses will have an impact on card applications and renewals, and also on meeting many employers and federations standards for working on site. We have been liaising with card scheme providers to agree how to tackle this challenge and we are supportive of the calls for employers to provide flexibility on recently expired cards. We ask employers to show this same discretion for recently expired SSP courses such as SSSTS and SMSTS. You can find more on card schemes by following the links below

CITB is continually reviewing the situation and will provide further updates as and when we can.

Please visit [the CSCS website](#) regarding the actions they are taking around COVID-19 and card applications.

Health & Safety Test: Temporary Pearson Vue test centres closure

As you are aware, the UK Government and the NHS have been providing the public with regular advice and updates regarding the evolving situation around COVID-19.

We have followed the guidance as strictly as possible in an effort to maintain a smooth operation, whilst putting candidate and staff safety first.

As a result of this, the decision has been taken to temporarily close all Pearson Vue HS&E test centres across the UK starting Friday 20 March 2020 until further notice. The situation will be monitored on a weekly basis.

Impact of renewals

We understand that this decision will have an impact on card applications and renewals, and we have been liaising with card scheme providers to agree how to tackle this challenge. We are supportive of the calls for employers to provide flexibility on recently expired cards. You can find more on this by following the links below:

- [CSCS](#)
- [CPCS](#)

Impact on new entrants

We are working on some alternative ways that employers may be able to deliver HS&E assessments and hope to have some options available very soon. These will be interim solutions to allow informal processes which provide employers a level of local assurance of an employee's suitability to be on site. As soon as we can confirm when these options are available and how this will work will update you.

Independent Test Centres

At present we are not closing the Independent Test Centre (ITC) network and will continue to work with these centres to ensure adequate precautionary measures are put in place to protect staff and candidates.

Candidate support

We are working closely with Pearson Vue to ensure support is in place to reschedule or refund a candidates test. In addition we continue to work alongside Pearson Vue to understand ways of maximising testing capacity for when the test centre network reopens.

We wish to take this opportunity to assure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure that Employers and candidates are supported through this difficult time, and the health and wellbeing of the British Construction Industry is of paramount importance.

If you have any concerns, or queries. Please email: HSEtestdev@citb.co.uk

[Inspiring Change – Postponed until Thursday 10 December 2020](#)

The Awards ceremony and conference for Inspiring Change is postponed until Thursday 10 December. The deadline for award entries is extended to 23 October. For more information click [here](#).

[Linked in Learning on Remote Working](#)

Information on setting yourself and your teams up for successful remote working - click [here](#).