

Drive to Learn

After the implementation of Driver CPC legislation, there is still confusion about the rules surrounding when and how training should be taken – as well as what should be included. John Fife brings clarification



Although there is a bewildering number of trainers and training courses, the government has provided help. Under the guidance of The Driving Standards Agency (DSA), a body has been established to approve all training courses.

Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT) is based in Milton Keynes and deals with training providers or operators who wish to become approved to deliver CPC periodic training.

This also includes operators who only wish to deliver periodic training to their own employees.

All applications for centre and course approvals must be submitted to JAUPT to gain approval.

Every course and centre will be assessed according to set criteria before approval or re-approval, and JAUPT also ensures that audits are conducted to maintain and to quality-assure the standards.

When Driver CPC legislation took effect in September 2009, there was plenty of expectation in the transport industry. Months later and several issues remain.

There are still no hard and fast rules stipulating the format of the training or a fixed list of what each training programme must include.

If the idea was to ensure flexibility and make allowances for different industry sectors, then that has been achieved, but it has also allowed confusion to reign among large and small fleet operators alike. Look up the European Directive of the Driver's Certificate of Professional Competence legislation (www.dvtani.gov.uk/uploads/legislation/TextoftheDirective.pdf), and you will see why many are left scratching their heads.

Having digested the above document, and gained some insight into what is required, the next task is to find a training provider who has done the same homework and then devised a suitable set of training programmes based on what he/she has gleaned. The vast majority of them have done a good job, yet there is a huge diversity of what is on offer and how it will be delivered. The words 'frying pan' and 'fire' spring to mind.

JAUPT (Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training – see panel, left) is the body authorised to deliver the approved levels of training, and it does provide some help. However, comparing programme details remains well nigh impossible. Every training provider seems to have its own idea on what is compulsory and or advisory, and what should or should not be included. Even under such simple headings as 'fuel efficient driving' and 'legal requirements', for example, there is a bewildering array of sub headings and detail.

For instance, health and safety requirements take on a whole new meaning if you run a fleet of tankers carrying hazardous goods, compared to a wholesale curry house carrying foodstuffs. Tanker drivers have to follow instructions depending on what they are carrying, be it liquid fuel or solid chemicals, whereas in the food trade, the load is not

usually classed as dangerous.

And yet, in both cases, cleanliness is essential and specific load temperatures will have to be maintained during transit – to ensure, in the one case, lack of volatility, and in the other, that frozen fish fingers don't thaw out. Clearly, there are similarities in certain operations, but the devil is in the detail. So, although all transport managers will have a good idea of what training their drivers are likely to need, finding the most suitable training providers could be a time-consuming exercise.

To simplify the task, best advice is to list the vehicles that your fleet comprises and the typical loads you transport and then contact a number of local training providers to see what they can offer. These companies do the legwork, you get an appropriate list of programmes and then you just have to select the most suitable organisation.

For larger companies that prefer to keep their training in-house, however, the issue is going to be one of training the trainer. This is a longer term option, but again, the trainer would need first to be approved by JAUPT.

Targeted approach

But there is another alternative. Most manufacturers have their own driver training service and they see Driver CPC as just an extension of their business. Using one of their courses makes a lot of sense, as the guy selling you the truck knows exactly what it is being used for, so is able to target the training.

As for qualifications, at the moment there are no exams for drivers taking CPC. At the end of the 35 hours of periodic training, they will be issued with a Driver Qualification Card. There is no need to apply for one just now, as the existing photocard Driving Licence will suffice until such time as the training has been undertaken and the first DQC issued.

Note that since there is no end of course exam, there are also no passes or fails. Depending on your point of view, that can either be a good thing or a bad thing. There is no incentive to learn, but neither is there a risk to driving licence and livelihood.

Moving on to cost, that has to be borne by the

Profi Training



The training syllabus

operator – government thinks up the legislation and the schemes and we have to pay for them. For that reason, when contacting local or national training providers, remember to ask what each training module will cost. On top of that there will be expenses to pay for each driver attending such courses and a day's lost wages to be accounted for.

In the end, the idea of Driver CPC is to make roads safer and to improve the overall standards of professional driving. It's a laudable aim, but the only qualification is attendance, and while that may appeal to some drivers, it may well not be enough for operators looking for bottom line improvements.

If a driver is on a training course paid for by his/her employer, the employer has every right to expect that some useful knowledge is being imparted and retained. It is therefore reasonable to expect that a driver will return to work able to put new found skills into operation that will result in a better and more fuel efficient driving style.

Some may argue that it is just a matter of time before the government introduces a testing element to these courses, whereby those who fail may find their driving licence at risk. On that basis, it would be wise to select a training provider now and work with them for the longer-term benefit of both the drivers and the whole operation. **TE**

Given the complex nature of the transport industry in the UK, from parcel delivery companies to STGO (special types general order) operators, carrying so-called abnormal loads, training courses must differ, depending on need.

However, there are three basic areas of operation that must be addressed during the 35-hour programme.

Safe and fuel-efficient driving is an obvious one. This will encompass theory and practical sessions, teaching drivers how to get the best out of their machines. This is an ideal topic for the manufacturers to cover: they should know their own trucks.

Similarly, the 'safe' part of the driving training will provide a timely reminder to even the oldest hacks amongst the nation's drivers to concentrate and not take the daily grind for granted.

Meanwhile, under the heading 'legal requirements', drivers and operators must be aware of the law and any changes to it. As we all know, ignorance of the law is no defence in a court.

The final part of this 'informal syllabus' concerns health and safety, service and logistics – and these can cover any number of subjects. Under this heading will be issues such as first aid and accident prevention, plus drivers' hours and tachographs.

Again, best advice is to look at your operation, consult with the training provider and then come up with relevant courses.



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