

LEGAL
UPDATE

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Driver CPC under review

REGULATORY

The government has announced it is reviewing Driver CPC training for lorry drivers to see how it can be improved to help ease HGV driver shortages. A review is to be launched to look at ways to improve compulsory ongoing training for existing and returning HGV drivers.

This is the latest of a number of measures being taken to support the road haulage sector and encourage vocational driver recruitment and retention.

Drivers currently need to complete 35 hours of periodic Driver CPC training every five years. Some drivers have to pay for this training themselves, and are not paid while



Image from RTITB, which has new PCV Driver CPC courses: see www.is.gd/esubog

attending training. Industry feedback suggest this deters many drivers who have left the profession from returning, and industry leaders are calling for reform.

The review will look at how Driver CPC can be improved to reduce the burden on drivers – both returning and new – and ensure it doesn't act as a barrier to working in the sector.

The review will explore: whether different training requirements should apply for more seasoned drivers; if the current requirement should be more evenly spread over the five-year period; the durations for each training course (currently seven hours minimum); whether Driver CPC qualifications obtained in the EU should continue to be recognised in the UK for immigrants; and other issues.

REGULATORY

Driving test changes

Changes have been announced to HGV, coach and bus driving tests and driving licences. The changes streamline authorisations for vocational drivers. A new provisional lorry licence will allow learning to drive in an articulated lorry (category CE). Learners can take a category CE test without having to first pass the test for large rigid lorries (category C). Passing a category CE test allows drivers to also operate categories C (large rigid lorry), C1 (medium-sized lorry) and C1E (medium-sized lorry towing a trailer). Similarly, under the new rules, drivers can learn

to drive a medium-sized lorry towing a trailer (category C1E) and take their test in one, without having to pass a test in a medium-sized lorry (category C1) first. And bus and coach drivers can learn to drive in a bus or coach towing a trailer (category DE) on a new provisional licence, without having to take the bus or coach (Category D) test first. The same rules apply to learners operating minibuses towing trailers (category D1E).

REGULATORY

New 'find my nearest'

In November, DVSA launched a new 'find my nearest' service to find a Driver CPC part 3a test provider for the off-road

exercise part of the vocational driving test.

From 29 November, all Driver CPC 3 tests have been split into two parts: part 3a tests (off-road exercises), and part 3b tests (on-road). Drivers must have passed a part 3a test before they can take their 3b test.

The new gov.uk service, available via www.is.gd/eliwap, lists all current approved assessors across Great Britain who can carry out the off-road exercises and have agreed to be on the directory.

The provider can charge up to £40 for this test, but the fee does not include the cost of any training or vehicle hire.

Fact File

DIGITAL CHANGES AT ATFs

Currently, ATF owners do not have live access to data about vehicles and trailers which are tested at their sites. They also cannot view and track their financial transactions online.

However, through a new vehicle testing transformation project, DVSA is going to give ATFs and other testing customers their own digital account, with live access to this information.

In addition, in February 2020, DVSA provided an app for vehicle standards assessors (VSAs) which lets them enter test results in real time and record defects digitally. In November 2021, the system reached a major milestone when the one-millionth test was recorded in the app.

According to Danny Charles, who is in charge of the project, the design features of the app help DVSA to improve the accuracy of test records. This directly benefits test history records and the information which can be viewed online. "Being able to record every annual test digitally means we now have a much richer set of data to use when we develop services [such as 'Check the MOT history of a vehicle', available via www.is.gd/dukomi] in the future," he adds.

Plans are afoot to improve the vehicle testing application process, including for individuals and businesses who need to get vehicle approvals.