

## **DRIVER CPC - FINALLY THE PENNY DROPS!**

Although there has been a steady uptake of Driver CPC training in the Transport Industry over the past few years, it has not been universal. Now it seems companies are beginning to take notice. This may have something to do with the large number of industry luminaries, politicians and Traffic Commissioners making it very clear that there will be no extensions, no special treatments and no allowances for those that aren't qualified by the appropriate time. The penny has finally dropped it seems.

It is worth reminding ourselves of the timescales. 35 hours (five days) of approved training has to be carried out over 60 months. For bus and coach drivers their 60 months started in September 2008, for goods vehicle drivers it started twelve months later. Thus, as at December 2011, the bus and coach drivers have 21 months left and the goods vehicle drivers have 33 months left. If they have not completed their training by the 9th September 2013 and 2014 respectively, and possess their Driver Qualification Card (DQC), they cannot drive professionally. This sounds like there is a long time left, but as the average bus and coach driver has barely completed 21 hours of training and the average goods vehicle driver has completed less than 14, there is still a degree of lag behind where they should be.

Both the Government and DSA were expecting some sort of drag factor in the early years. After all this is the biggest single training project ever to be undertaken by the Industry and things take time to get going. What is probably heartening for the authorities is the fact that the take up of training has now quickened noticeably. Uptake is still below what is required to make sure everyone is trained by the deadline days, but if the uptake continues to increase at the current rate, the nightmare scenario envisioned by some pundits starts to recede.

Those organisations that have "come late to the party" are finding they have to do two or three sessions in their "first year" in order to reach where they should have been. Once on par though, they can carry out the 'one day a year' approach going forward. It is arguable that 2012 may be the last year that this can be done in a controlled manner. Bus and coach drivers are now in their penultimate year and the "bow wave" of late starters in that industry will start to develop now and grow through to 2013. Unfortunately for the goods vehicle drivers 2013 is *their* penultimate year. So if they haven't already got most of their hours under their belt, it could be a mad rush in 2014!

Specialist's advice is to talk to us early. Even if a company is behind where it needs to be we can work out a programme that ensures there is no issue come the deadline date. Leave it too late and that luxury may be difficult to provide!