

OPERATOR CPC - THE NEW ORDER

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, Operator CPC, the qualification required by managers for a company's Operator Licence, has undergone some fairly radical changes. The old system, consisting of a separate set of exams for National Operations and one for International Operations, has gone the way of the dodo. Under the new system, one examination combines them both. Details have now been released of how the format of the new exam will look.

The Operator CPC changes have come about because of the requirements of the EC Regulation on "Access to the Occupation of Road Transport Operator." As well as laying down well documented rules on the need for all transport managers to be qualified, it also laid down the syllabus for the training for CPC and stipulated minimum requirements for the examinations. Although the right to deliver CPC examinations is no longer the monopoly of the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (OCR) awarding body, it is still the primary body involved with Operator CPC. Specialist, and most other national training providers, are continuing to use the OCR exams for the foreseeable future. The examination format that OCR has announced is a simple one, but hopefully will be more effective than the previous systems.

There are now two exams for the Passenger CPC and two exams for the Freight CPC. The first examination is two hours long and consists of multiple choice questions which can be taken from almost any area of the syllabus. The second examination is also two hours long and is a case study based exam and will address the major themes of transport management covered in the syllabus. Unlike the previous case study based exams, this time the narrative will not be released prior to the examination. It will be issued with the exam paper itself and candidates will have to read and interpret it in the exam room. Arguably the biggest change to the format however will be the "open book" aspect of the case study exam (the multiple choice exam is "closed book"). Candidates are allowed to take whatever study material they like into the exam to help them. On the face of it this seems that it may make it easier for candidates, however OCR stress that in the new examinations, marks will be being awarded for the interpretation and application of knowledge rather than any simple regurgitation of facts and figures.

The first exam doesn't take place until March, so it is impossible to evaluate this new approach just yet. The format of the exam and the intent of the examiners so far is encouraging however, and we can only hope it is a successful move in re-establishing CPC as a credible qualification for transport managers. Specialist's course format has adapted to the new syllabus. It is barely changed in length from the previous course although

there have been alterations to objectives and delivery methods to incorporate the examination and syllabus changes. The course is nine days long, followed by the examination day. The exams will continue to be held four times a year (March, June, September and December) and Specialist's courses will continue to run in the weeks immediately before the exams.

The new regime is going to be interesting and hopefully will result in a positive growth for the reputation and usefulness of CPC. So, if you have a need for Operator CPC training and examination, you know who to call!