



H-004 **CONSTRUCTION SITE CARD SCHEMES** **TARGET AUDIENCE & OBJECTIVES:**  
This paper sets out the SCC's understanding of the current position regarding construction site ID cards in the Scottish construction industry, and identifies the issues that have arisen.

**INTRODUCTION**

Concern has been expressed by a number of construction organisations about the lack of understanding of the various construction site ID card schemes that are currently in operation.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the issues, and to collate existing information so that all members of the construction supply chain, including clients, may be better informed. It should be noted that the majority of the information pertaining to the CSCS scheme is available on the Construction Skills Certification Scheme website [www.cscs.uk.com](http://www.cscs.uk.com), and has been collated here into one document for ease of use.

**THE ISSUES**

- Some organisations feel that the purpose of the cards is unclear and needs to be clarified
- Various card schemes are available and the position of each needs to be clarified
- Several types of cards exist within each scheme and there appears to be a lack of understanding regarding the qualifications required for each
- There is uncertainty amongst many people within the industry whether the card schemes are compulsory/statutory

**CURRENT POSITION**

**The purpose of the cards.**

The purpose of the cards is to help the construction industry to improve quality and reduce accidents. The cards act as proof of occupational competence by contractors, public and private clients. Carrying the right card helps prove you have the skills and health and safety awareness to get on site.

**The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS).**

The CSCS card scheme is the industry's largest scheme and is fast becoming the industry standard. At present it covers 220 occupations including trades, technical, supervisory and management. CSCS cards list the holder's qualifications and are valid for either three or five years.



It also certifies that cardholders have the required level of health and safety awareness as they have to pass the appropriate CITB - ConstructionSkills Health and Safety Test to obtain the card.

CSCS cards are supported by organisations such as the Major Contractors Group (MCG), National Contractors Federation (NCF), Major Home Builders Group (MHBG) and Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) all of whom are committed to a fully qualified workforce by the end of 2010.

Most contractors and clients now demand proof of competence before allowing workers on to their sites. This is provided by a CSCS card. Not having a CSCS card may affect your ability to work on certain sites. The CSCS card shows that the holder is considered to be competent at his or her job, lists any relevant certificates/qualifications and also shows that the holder has passed a health & safety test.

There are eleven types (or levels) of CSCS skills cards ranging from trainee to senior manager. The 11 card types can be seen at <http://www.cscs.uk.com/types-of-cards>

CSCS also has a number of affiliated and amalgamated schemes which are based on the same standard as CSCS requiring the holder to gain an N/SVQ in the appropriate field and pass the Health and Safety Test. These schemes can be found at <http://www.cscs.uk.com/affiliated-schemes>.

## Non CSCS affiliated schemes.

Different schemes exist in different professions but all card schemes have similar requirements, such as a NVQ or SVQ and a Health and Safety Test. Perhaps the most prevalent of these in Scotland is the card scheme operated by the Scottish Construction Registration Executive (SCRE) called the SCORE card. SCORE has over 8000 active members with a further 1000 (approx) trained in 2009. The SCORE scheme is for those who have trade lines as proof of their apprenticeship or have worked in the industry for 10 years and have the necessary health and safety training. There are 4 cards available, white for general building operatives, gold for craft operatives, platinum for management/ or supervisor & red for trainee.

The SCORE board now comprises the Scottish Decorators Federation, the Union of Construction Allied Trades & Technicians, the Transport & General Workers Union and the General Municipal & Boilermakers Union. A SCORE representative stated that they would be happy for SCORE to be re-affiliated with CSCS and would also support card schemes in general becoming statutory, of which CSCS & SCORE are equally recognised. **The Signposting page details other non CSCS affiliated schemes** and cards accepted by Major Contractors Group (MCG) sites for each of the occupations.



## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

At present the Scottish government is committed to raising standards of both workmanship and health and safety. Many influential bodies are working towards a policy of a fully qualified workforce by 2010 when it will be compulsory to prove workers' skills and qualifications before they can work on site.

At present there is no legally imposed government requirement for possession of CSCS, SCORE or other cards, but on many sites the client imposes the requirement on the contractors or on large sites the requirement forms part of the agreements with the unions. Many contractors are already asking for all workers on their site to hold a CSCS card to prove their competence in their stated occupation and that they have health and safety awareness. Some clients are also specifying that contracts will only be awarded to contractors and sub-contractors with carded workforces.

## **COSTS & LENGTH OF VALIDITY**

The cost of the various schemes can vary and it has been suggested that card schemes are not being taken up by small/medium sized contractors due to the cost involved, however larger firms are making it compulsory.

### CSCS

- All CSCS cards cost £24.47 (inclusive of VAT at 15%)
- The Construction Skills Health and Safety test costs £17.50 (The Test is VAT exempt because it is a training/ educational test and rights are held by Thomson Prometric).
- SkillsDirect offer the H&S Test and card application for £41.97 (inc VAT). SkillsDirect is a quick and easy way to get qualified and get a card which pulls together everything you need to qualify into a simple three-step process (see <http://www.cskills.org/workinconst/cardschemes/skillsdirect/index.aspx>)

Also available are CSCS Certificates of Commitment which are awarded to companies that have shown a level of commitment to CSCS and/or its affiliated schemes. This commitment is determined by the proportion of the company's onsite workers who hold full CSCS or affiliated cards that are valid and current. There are two\* types of certificate, which reflect the level of commitment:

- Gold: 75 – 89% of onsite workers carded
- Platinum: 90%+ of onsite workers carded

\*The CSCS Scheme Booklet 2007 shows out of date information i.e. that 4 types of certificate are available and requires updating.

The certificates cost £48.93 each and are valid for three years, renewable upon re-audit.

Depending on the card type the CSCS card is valid for either 3 or 5 years. When your card is due to expire you will need to take another CSCS Test.

### Non CSCS

Costs for non CSCS affiliated and also some affiliated schemes can vary.

- The SCORE Card costs £20 (inc VAT) with an additional £35 (+VAT) for the health & safety course. (It should also be noted that there are differences in Health & Safety test between the schemes. CSCS has a basic touch screen health & safety test (multiple choice) and SCORE has a full day of health & safety competence training).
- SCORE cards are valid for 5 years

## TRAINING AND FUNDING

If you do not have an N/SVQ qualification you may be able to get a CSCS card through on-site assessment and training (OSAT). Another option is Experienced Worker Practical Assessment (EWPA). There are grants available although grant aid for the Health and Safety Test was withdrawn from the 2009/2010 Grant Scheme and "in-scope" registered companies can no longer apply for grant from 1st August 2009. The Experienced Worker card has a life span of one year and within that year the candidate will have to achieve an N/SVQ to apply for their actual "trade/profession" card.

Similarly for SCORE the experienced worked route is available and also Accreditation of Prior Learning. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or, as it is commonly known "Grandfather rights", is available to operatives wishing to be registered and who can demonstrate they have worked in the industry for the last 10 years. The information provided must be by current or previous employer(s) and is verifiable.

## SMART CARDS

CSCS is introducing a SmartCard to replace the plain printed cards currently used. It is planned to start rolling this out to the Construction Industry in late 2009. The new cards are proposed to bring many advantages and a technology sufficiently flexible to link to any data that is required to support contractors' and construction clients' business requirements.



Information can be stored electronically in the card chip meaning that the CSCS SmartCard will have the potential to be used for a host of new applications. Things like tracking site (specific) inductions; recording continuing professional development; controlling access to building sites through turnstiles; monitoring time and attendance; ticketing for public transport; enabling chip and pin payments and verifying occupational health restrictions.

## TESTING

Periodic independent testing is currently not part of the CSCS or SCORE schemes and it has been suggested that unless it formally forms part of the schemes testing will never happen due to the fear (and implications) of failure. The most likely to fail are those who have never been trained or those whose work keeps them out of touch with actual practice. That would include a large number of administrators, i.e. partners and directors.

Since the construction industry is wide-ranging in scope either the testing would have to be job specific or it would be necessary to have a basic test with many optional speciality tests, bringing with it further complications.

Other factors to consider are:

- Who would pay for the testing & time off work?
- What happens if you fail, is your card taken away?
- Would there be free re-testing?
- Whose responsibility is keeping up-to-date, employers or employees?

## SUMMARY

Card schemes are an example of good practice for training and professional development and are a sensible requirement for employers to demand, as in general they currently test essential site safety and good practice. It has been suggested that cards have had a positive effect on workforce self esteem, as well as general skill and productivity levels. The less well trained and low skilled high risk employees are seen to benefit most, resulting in a much reduced health & safety risk to everyone else.

## GENERAL

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	LINKS
CSCS - Construction Skills Certification Scheme	CSCS was set up to help the construction industry to improve quality and reduce accidents. CSCS cards are increasingly demanded as proof of occupational competence by contractors, public and private clients and others. They cover hundreds of occupations so whatever you do in construction there will be a card that is suitable for you.	<a href="http://www.cscs.uk.com">http://www.cscs.uk.com</a>
CSCS Card Types	The various types of CSCS cards	<a href="http://www.cscs.uk.com/types-of-cards">http://www.cscs.uk.com/types-of-cards</a>
CSCS Affiliated Schemes	Affiliated and amalgamated schemes are based on the same standard as CSCS requiring the holder to gain an N/SVQ and pass the Health and Safety Test.	<a href="http://www.cscs.uk.com/affiliated-schemes">http://www.cscs.uk.com/affiliated-schemes</a>
Scottish Decorators Federation	The Scottish Decorators' Federation is the national trade association for all types of firms involved in the decorating industry in Scotland.	<a href="http://www.scottishdecorators.co.uk/">http://www.scottishdecorators.co.uk/</a>
SCORE	SCOTTISH CONSTRUCTION REGISTRATION EXECUTIVE (SCORE)	<a href="http://www.cskills.org/supportbusiness/cardschemes/availablecardschemes/score.aspx">http://www.cskills.org/supportbusiness/cardschemes/availablecardschemes/score.aspx</a>  01324 555 550
Construction Skills health & Safety Test	Prometric's site dedicated to providing the official preparation material for the ConstructionSkills Health & Safety Tests. Prometric is the contracted partner for delivery of the ConstructionSkills Health and Safety Test offering direct access to the complete range of official preparation materials. Products include CDs and books covering all 14 tests.	<a href="http://www.healthandsafetytest.co.uk/">http://www.healthandsafetytest.co.uk/</a>

## NON CSCS Affiliated Schemes

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	LINKS
Asbestos Control Abatement Division (ACAD)	ACAD is a trade association representing anyone in the Asbestos & Asbestos Removal Industry.	<a href="http://www.tica-acad.co.uk/">http://www.tica-acad.co.uk/</a>
Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA)	The Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) has been in operation for over 20 years providing asbestos training and representing the interests of asbestos removal contractors and associated asbestos businesses throughout the UK.	<a href="http://www.arca.org.uk">www.arca.org.uk</a>
Association of Industrial Truck Trainers (AITT)	The Association of Industrial Truck Trainers (AITT) is a non-profit body that covers all sectors of industry which use industrial trucks. AITT is an accredited body approved and listed by the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) in the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) for Fork Truck Operator Training.	<a href="http://www.aitt.co.uk">http://www.aitt.co.uk</a>
BT/IOSH	The BT group of companies operate a Health, Safety and Environment Passport scheme in conjunction with the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).	For further information regarding the BT/IOSH Passport scheme call 0800 780783
Building Engineering Services (BES)	Building Engineering Services (BES) is the division of ConstructionSkills that provides training, assessment and certification for people who work with Electricity, Gas, Oil, Water, Steam & Refrigerants.	
Gas Safe Register	Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI (Council of Registered Gas Installers) gas registration in Great Britain on 1 April 2009.	<a href="http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk">www.gassaferegister.co.uk</a> or 0800 408 5577
Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA)	Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA).	Call 020 7222 0464 or <a href="http://www.semta.org.uk/">http://www.semta.org.uk/</a>
Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training (FASET)	Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training (FASET) is required from all operatives who are involved in erecting safety nets on site.	<a href="http://www.faset.org.uk/">http://www.faset.org.uk/</a>
Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA)	The Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA) provides training and certification of all operatives involved in industrial rope access.	<a href="http://www.irata.org">www.irata.org</a>
International Powered Access Federation (IPAF)	The International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) is an operative record scheme, representing the whole of the industry, from manufacturing, distribution and rental trades to associate businesses and users of all forms of powered access equipment.	<a href="http://www.ipaf.org">http://www.ipaf.org</a>
Network Rail Sentinel Track Safety Card	The Sentinel card is a Network Rail Scheme for making sure that the people who within the Network Rail infrastructure are competent and medically fit	<a href="http://www.ncca-sentinel.co.uk">http://www.ncca-sentinel.co.uk</a>
New Roads and Streetworks Act (NRSA)	The New Roads and Streetworks Act (NRSA) is for both supervisors and operatives working in a gang.	0141 242 2239.
Road Transport Industry Training Board (RTITB)	The Road Transport Industry Training Board (RTITB) is an independent and impartial training accreditation body, working extensively in the road haulage and distribution industry.	<a href="http://www.rtitb.co.uk">www.rtitb.co.uk</a> .
Safety Passport CCNSG/ECITB	The scheme is designed to ensure all personnel seeking employment on-site has a basic knowledge of Health & Safety and therefore, after appropriate site induction, be able to work on-site with greater safety and with lower risk to themselves and others.	
SCORE	DETAILS ABOVE	DETAILS ABOVE