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New construction industry safety body imminent

Operate Safe is set to combine its resources with other industry H&S schemes in a move that will remove duplication of different qualification-related cards and systems.

Discussions have been going on for over a year between Roothing New Zealand and the Master Builders Federation, Site Safe New Zealand, Certified Builders Association and NZ Contractors Federation to establish a new body whose members will work together to rationalise H&S qualifications.

At this stage there is agreement amongst representatives of these groups that the new body could be like a Construction Industry Health & Safety Council (CIHSC) and a strategic plan is currently being drawn up. It was agreed at a meeting in September that any new regime must be industry driven and that industry should act to achieve improvements in H&S outcomes before Government acts to force new regulations.

The new body, when launched, will set industry-wide standards that provide a degree of flexibility on how to achieve minimum health and safety standards in each specific industry sector.

It was noted that there is currently a gap between health and safety legislation, regulations and policies and those in industry who just want to know what they should do to be safe. The CIHSC should aim to fill that gap.

In order to remain free from the uncertainties of political change, industry should ideally fund the body and not rely on Government funding.

The aim of the new independent body would be to facilitate an improved H&S culture in the broad construction sector. It would determine appropriate H&S standards across the sector; assess products and services for accreditation in meeting those standards; measure the H&S performance of the construction sector; and advocate for H&S issues on behalf of the construction industry.

The new body would set standards but would not be a training provider.

Next steps will be for each of the organisations listed above to agree on the vision, structure, goals and governance tasks of the new body. It is hoped that agreement could be achieved by April 2010.

Operate Safe membership — use it or lose it



Mike Cosman

The importance of selecting safe and competent contractors to undertake roading work has never been higher with the Department of Labour paying increased attention to the roles of principals and contractors and with higher penalties being awarded when things go wrong.

Operate Safe, the roading industry's safety accreditation scheme, has been in existence since

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Operate Safe membership

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2004 but is now really showing its true value, thanks to the efforts of many contractors and the increased scrutiny being applied by the scheme's Accreditation Board.

The Board comprises representatives from local government and the Industry Training Organisation (InfraTrain) plus an independent health and safety expert (currently me). The Board meets four times a year to consider the evidence provided by contractors that they are not only meeting the scheme requirements, but moving forward through the different stages of Operate Safe to full accreditation.

Over the last six months a number of contractors have had their Operate Safe membership revoked as they were only paying lip service to the requirements. A further round of "please explain" letters has recently been sent out to those who seem to be making inadequate progress. They will be given an opportunity to submit an action plan, indicating how and when they expect to achieve the

next level of accreditation, and will be held accountable for achieving this — or face the consequences.

The New Zealand Transport Authority and a number of local authorities now require Operate Safe accreditation (or equivalent) from their main contractors, so maintaining accreditation is important to be able to tender for work.

International evidence clearly demonstrates that the most important decision a client can make to ensure a safe project is to select contractors who can objectively demonstrate their commitment and ability to work safely. At a time of rising ACC claims and levy costs the roading industry can proudly point to the efforts it is making to improve its safety performance and to the value of a self-governance approach — from the industry, for the industry.

Mike Cosman

Chair, Operate Safe Accreditation Board

Mike Cosman is Managing Director of Impac Solutions and Impac Services, leading providers of risk and safety management solutions.

Going for Gold



With more site managers and supervisors attaining Operate Safe's Silver Card level, Roothing New Zealand is now actively working on setting qualifications and training requirements for the Gold Card.

The Gold Card is for managers and will be structured to ensure that key Health & Safety management skills are obtained both through training and then through a period of demonstration of those skills on the job. As with Operate Safe's Bronze and Silver cards it will be a full NZQA

qualification, not a two day course.

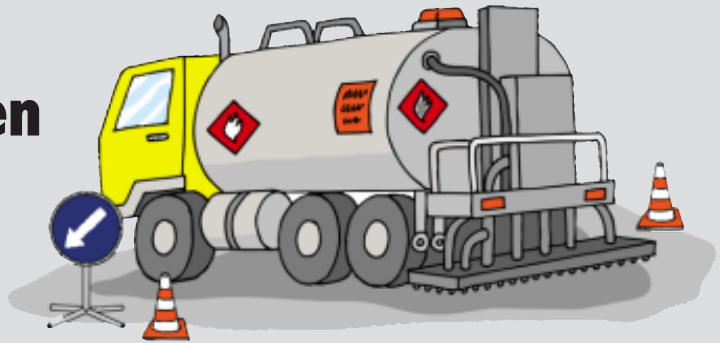
Present work is focussing on identifying those H&S management skills that are considered the essentials of our industry. The current proposal—still subject to wider discussion—is that an Operate Safe Gold Card NZQA qualification would include the following basic modules:

- Undertake formal OH&S review of tenders
- Develop project safety management plans
- Carry out workplace and task hazard identification, risk assessments and controls.
- Facilitate group/work team OH&S discussions and meetings

- Plan and deliver toolbox talks
- Identify/challenge unsafe behaviour/attitude at any level when encountered
- Make site visits where a site worker is spoken to directly about OH&S in the workplace
- Carry out formal incident investigations
- Carry out basic project OH&S system element audits
- Monitor sub-contractor activities
- Identify and include suitable OH&S requirements into sub-contractor packages
- Evaluate OH&S performance of subcontractors
- Understand and apply general injury management, rehabilitation & compensation requirements
- Work with staff to solve safety problems
- Recruit and select new staff

It is proposed that the modules are delivered by training providers and that there is an evidential module assessment criterion in each element. Once the above requirements have been agreed and developed an approach can be made to central government for registering these qualifications with NZQA. If you have any thoughts on the suggested criteria please contact info@operatesafe.org.nz

Know your bitumen safety resources



A recent incident in the South Island has once again focussed attention on the need to be fully aware of the dangers inherent in working with bitumen. We think a reminder of the various resources available to industry workers is timely.

First and foremost, most contractors should have a copy of the Code of Practice RNZ 9904, *The Safe Handling of Bituminous Materials Used in Roading*. This is the definitive guide to safety procedures required when working with bitumen and reflects the current knowledge of those hazards risks and controls associated with handling bitumen products, including those products mixed with other materials. It is intended primarily for supervisors and senior management.



As the Code (sometimes referred to as the manual) is a fairly bulky ring binder, a handbook - *The Bitumen Safety Book* - should be carried on the job. The handbook distils the essential elements of the Code and includes valuable facts about bitumen as well as sections for transport and sprayer operators, asphalt paver operators, safety during maintenance work on tanks and pipework, fire fighting and first aid. It is intended primarily for those who work operationally with bitumen - tanker drivers, operators, surfacing teams and other production staff



The handbook also includes a number of cartoons about the risks of working with bitumen to help get the safety messages across.



An essential item for the cabs of all bitumen-related vehicles is the Burns Card, which gives clear and illustrated instructions on immediate first aid measures for dealing with anyone who has received a burn injury from bitumen.

The reverse side of the card provides medical information on bitumen burns for use by doctors and nursing staff at hospitals where there is no burns unit.

While safety courses in handling bitumen have been running very successfully for some years, a new one-day course, *Managing Bitumen Risk*, is being presented for the NZIHT by Barry Gundersen.

This is an essential awareness course targeted at senior managers, engineers and supervisors. Particular emphasis will be placed on understanding legislative requirements related to meeting health and safety compliance measures in respect of storage and handling of bituminous materials in all areas of operation.

Topics include knowledge of the Code of Practice, the HSE Act, coverage of various hazards, management responsibilities, managing fire risk and much more. Courses are currently scheduled for:

Auckland	12 March
Hamilton	16 March
Palmerston North	19 March
Christchurch	23 March
Dunedin	26 March

For more details on these courses visit www.nziht.co.nz or to book [click here](#) . . .



Reversing guidelines - you should know them backwards

Nearly a quarter of all deaths involving heavy and specialist off-road vehicles used for work operations in the roading construction industry occur while the vehicle is reversing. The types of vehicles used include heavy trucks, light trucks, dump trucks, milling machines, bobcats, rollers, etc.

Research conducted in the road construction industry has shown that, in terms of the injuries and the frequency of accidents, rollers were involved in the most serious accidents, closely followed by milling machines, bobcats, then heavy trucks.

Many more accidents do not result in injury to workers but cause costly damage to vehicles, equipment and premises. Industry research has shown that heavy trucks and light vehicles are involved in most of these type of incidents, followed by rollers, milling machines and loaders.

The Guideline for Controlling Reversing Vehicles has been developed by Roothing New Zealand and is now available on its website. This is a new and important document.

The Guideline highlights the dangers caused by reversing vehicles used in the roading construction industry, in order to protect the health and safety of employees and others.

By critically looking at how people can be put at risk and considering how reversing can be done safely, both employers and employees can then take reasonable



practicable measures to reduce the risk of injury or damage.

The Guideline provides practical advice on general safety precautions for using road vehicles and specialist off-road vehicles. The advice can be applied to any vehicle that may have to reverse in roading operations.

It is, therefore, a best practice document for the roading and civil construction industry to reduce the occurrence of reversing accidents. It will help in meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment (HSE) Act 1992, Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act 2002 and the Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995.

To download a copy of the Guideline, [click here](#) . . .



On-site specific Health and Safety Audits

Back in 2003 it was agreed that on-site specific audits would be part of the Operate Safe regime. Various clients were approached but none appeared interested at the time.

Over the past year or so Auckland City Council has been working with Site Safe to audit contractors on-site health and safety performance. This on-site audit tool was developed for the building industry and initially did not align with Operate Safe. Over the past year many changes have been made to it and it is now better aligned. These are still a few issues being worked through but we're hopeful that these can be resolved in the next few months.

Determining ACC levies

Roading NZ Chair, Cos Bruyn, and Chief Executive Chris Olsen recently met with the Minister for ACC, Hon Nick Smith, to discuss the issue of ACC levies following the Government announcement of likely changes to accident compensation in the future.

One of the issues raised by the Minister was the difficulty of deriving statistically sound experience ratings, for small to medium enterprises (SMEs). The problem is that the employee numbers of individual SMEs are too small to be able to calculate sound experience ratings. Experience ratings use the performance of the company to set its ACC levies.

Following these discussions Roding New Zealand has suggested to the Minister that flexibility should be provided in the legislation to enable SMEs to cluster with larger employers by industry group, thereby enabling a sound experience rating to be calculated for the group and applied to each member. This approach could:

- overcome the problems of determining an experience rating for non statistically significant SMEs
- enable SMEs to associate with other best practice employers
- facilitate best practice transfer from leading employers to others
- incentivise employers to take responsibility for health & safety and injury prevention.
- assist SMEs into a learning environment of health & safety best practice. An analysis in 2002 of those contractors in the roading sector who had OSH prosecutions and unsatisfactory injury prevention records showed that 95% of them did not belong to an industry association such as NZ Contractors' Federation or Roding New Zealand. We believe that industry associations provide a critical service to SMEs in that they interpret and translate permissive legislation into what SMEs have to do on the ground.
- provide peer pressure within the industry group to motivate poor performers to improve because their performance will impact on the ACC levy of everyone in the group.

Roding New Zealand is now discussing this suggestion with other industry associations.

NZIHT Courses

The NZIHT has announced its 2010 course dates for the Health & Safety, Part A (Bronze Card) and Part B courses. The Bronze Card approved course covers all compulsory plus selected elective unit standard requirements. Successful course completions show that a company is committed to training staff to meet industry expected "good practice" in health, safety and environmental awareness.

Date and locations for Part A courses are as follows:

Wellington	12 February
Christchurch	22 February
Hamilton	8 March
Palmerston North	11 March
Blenheim	7 April
Dunedin	8 April
New Plymouth	12 April
Auckland	15 April
Gisborne	20 April
Wellington	22 April
Tauranga	28 April
Napier	12 May

The H&S Part B Course (working towards the Silver Card) is for supervisors working in the Civil Infrastructure industries who have the responsibility for protecting health, safety and the environment.

This course, together with the Part A course will give participants additional unit standards towards the National Certificate in Civil Infrastructure Health, Safety and Environment (Operation) (Level 3).

Dates and locations for Part B courses are:

Hamilton	9 February
Palmerston North	26 February
Dunedin	9 April
New Plymouth	14 April
Napier	30 April
Christchurch	5 May
Auckland	20 May
Wellington	11 June

For registration forms [click here](#).

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