

Guidance Note


September 2009



New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

Street Works Qualifications

How to Qualify, Register and Re-register



This leaflet details the qualifications that are required by law to carry out, or supervise, works in the street.

It explains how to gain these qualifications, how they should be registered and re-registered.

What are the legal requirements?

The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) requires undertakers to ensure that work to install, renew, maintain and inspect underground apparatus in the street is controlled by competent people. To meet these requirements, undertakers have to make sure that an operative, with the appropriate qualification(s), is on site when works are in progress. In addition, a suitably qualified supervisor must supervise street works in most cases. The supervisor does not need to be on site at all times, and can supervise more than one set of works. However, a supervisor qualification does not qualify the holder to work as a qualified operative or vice versa.

A person may only act as a trained operative or supervisor for the type of work for which they hold the relevant qualification. Therefore, it may be necessary for a number of people with different qualifications to be involved with the work during its various stages. There is no limit to the number of qualifications held by one person.

What is an undertaker?

An undertaker is an organisation or person carrying out street works under:

- a) a statutory right (e.g. organisations such as gas, water, electricity and communications companies); or
- b) a licence granted by the street authority (e.g. people laying sewers, drains, water supply connections and other apparatus for their own private purposes.) This licence is commonly called a section 50 licence.

Undertakers can arrange for their contractors or agents to provide the qualified operatives and supervisor, but the undertakers are ultimately responsible for making sure that their works comply with NRSWA.

What are prescribed qualifications?

The prescribed qualifications for various types and combinations of work are set out in the Street Works (Qualifications of Supervisors and Operatives) (England) Regulations.

To be qualified a person has to:

- a) have achieved a certificate of competence as issued by an Awarding Body; and
- b) register that certificate with the approved register, the Street Works Qualifications Register (SWQR).

The Regulations outline the qualifications for both supervisors and operatives by referring to the various units of competence in which they will be assessed.

A registered qualification allows a person to only carry out the type of work covered by that qualification. The qualifications for the various types of work are given below and are made up of one or more units of competence

Units of competence for Operatives:

1. Location and avoidance of underground apparatus
2. Signing, lighting and guarding
3. Excavation in the highway

4. Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials
5. Reinstatement of sub base and base in non bituminous materials
6. Reinstatement in cold lay bituminous materials
7. Reinstatement in hot lay bituminous materials
8. Reinstatement of concrete slabs
9. Reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways

Qualifications for Operatives

Currently, there are five separate qualifications that may be registered by trained operatives:

Qualifications (type of work)	Units of competence required
Excavation in the highway	Units 1, 2 and 3
Excavation, backfilling and reinstatement of construction layers with a cold-lay bituminous surface	Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
Reinstatement of construction layers in hot-lay and cold lay bituminous materials	Units 1, 2, 6 and 7
Reinstatement of concrete slabs	Units 1, 2 and 8
Reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways	Units 1, 2 and 9

From April 2011 onwards, a sixth qualification for signing, lighting and guarding must be registered with the SWQR.

Units of competence for Supervisors:

1. Location and avoidance of underground apparatus
10. Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding
11. Monitoring excavation in the highway
12. Monitoring reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials
13. Monitoring reinstatement of sub base and base in non bituminous materials
14. Monitoring reinstatement in bituminous materials
15. Monitoring reinstatement of concrete slabs
16. Monitoring reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways

Qualifications for Supervisors

Currently, there are five separate qualifications that may be registered by supervisors:

Qualifications (type of supervisory work)	Units of competence required
Monitoring excavation in the highway	Units 1, 10 and 11
Monitoring excavation, backfilling and reinstatement of construction layers with bituminous materials	Units 1, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14
Monitoring reinstatement of construction layers in bituminous materials	Units 1, 10 and 14
Monitoring reinstatement of concrete slabs	Units 1, 10 and 15
Monitoring reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways	Units 1, 10 and 16

From April 2011 onwards, a sixth qualification for the monitoring of signing, lighting and guarding must be registered with the SWQR.

Who awards the qualifications?

The Secretary of State has appointed three organisations to be Awarding Bodies for the scheme:

City & Guilds of London Institute, 1 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DD
Tel: 020 7294 2800 Web: www.cityandguilds.com

CABWI Awarding Body, 1 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BT
Tel: 020 7957 4523 Web: www.cabwi.co.uk

SQA. Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ
Tel: 0845 279 1000 Web: www.sqa.org.uk

A detailed list of the national assessment centres that are approved by the Awarding Bodies to assess the various units of competence is available.

After the Awarding Body has issued certificates of competence to an operative or supervisor, the required certificates that make up a qualification will be registered with the SWQR within one month of receipt of such information. This registration is valid for five years only.

Workers from member states of the European Union (and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) with equivalent guarantees of skill and competence will be treated as qualified operatives and supervisors. Before starting work in England they must register with the SWQR.

How is assessment carried out?

Assessment of the units can be done at one of the approved assessment centres nationwide.

The assessment process, as agreed by HAUC(UK), is in the form of a purpose designed practical and knowledge test. The test covers questions relating to the materials, equipment and methods given in the current version of the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways Code of Practice (the SROH or the "Yellow Book") and the traffic management procedures set out in the latest edition

of the Safety at Street Works and Road Works Approved Code of Practice (the “Red Book”).

Further information on the location of assessment centres and procedures for approval can be obtained from the Awarding Bodies.

While training may be carried out with the assistance of an interpreter, assessment must be carried out in English without assistance.

What are the re-registration and reassessment requirements?

From 6th April 2010 an operative or supervisor can re-register for another five years as long as the application to re-register is received by the SWQR within a window of 6 months before and 6 months after expiry of the earlier registration.

From 6th April 2011 onwards, operatives and supervisors will be required to have successfully completed reassessment for the units of competence that they already hold before they can re-register. The reassessment certificate will also be registered. The window for re-registration is 6 months before and 6 months after expiry of the earlier registration.

The reassessment process has been introduced to make sure that operatives and supervisors maintain their level of skill and understanding since they registered or re-registered. This reassessment, as agreed by HAUC(UK), will be in the form of a knowledge based, multiple choice test and will only be used when an operative or supervisor wishes to re-register.

What are the cost implications?

The assessment centres will charge for initial approval of each unit of competence. A fee will also be charged by the Street Works Qualifications Registrar for individual entries in the SWQR.

Assessment centres will establish their own scale of charges for candidates undertaking reassessment.

Details of fees and charges are obtainable, on request, from the relevant organisations.

How are the qualified persons identified?

The Street Works Qualification Register contains details of the qualifications awarded by the Awarding Bodies. Each person on the SWQR is issued with a personal identity card (the SWQR Card) showing the qualification(s) they hold.

After an operative or supervisor gains a qualification, the details of the units of competence that make up that qualification are added to the SWQR. This registration lasts for five years.

If new units of competence are gained after registration or re-registration, details of these units can be added to the SWQR and SWQR Card. As with all other qualifications, it will only be registered for five years, unless it is re-registered.

If a person or organisation wishes to check if someone is a suitably qualified operative or supervisor, they may contact the SWQR:

Street Works Qualifications Register

Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ

Tel: 0845 270 2720 Web: www.swqr.org.uk

The Registrar will respond in writing to telephone or written requests for information about a person's qualification status. There may be a charge for this service.

SWQR card

The SWQR card is shown below. The cards are colour coded; yellow for operatives, blue for supervisors and white for persons holding both qualifications.



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