

# CPCS RED CARD TO BLUE CARD GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING NVQs, WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT AND THE ROUTE TO CPCS COMPETENCE

Transforming workplace experience into nationally recognised competence.



## WHAT IS A CPCS BLUE CARD?

The CPCS Blue Competent Operator Card is the industry standard card that demonstrates you are competent to carry out your job safely and effectively in the workplace.

It is achieved by completing the relevant NVQ and meeting all CPCS requirements, including a valid CITB HS&E Test.



## WHY DO I NEED AN NVQ?

- A CPCS Red Card shows you are trained, not yet competent.
- An NVQ proves you can carry out the role to the required standard in the workplace.
- Blue Cards are nationally recognised and highly valued by employers.
- It opens doors to more responsibility and better career opportunities.

## THE CPCS PROGRESSION PATHWAY



## HOW DOES THE NVQ ASSESSMENT WORK?

- INITIAL ASSESSMENT & REGISTRATION**  
We discuss your current role, experience and goals. The correct NVQ qualification is selected and an assessment plan is agreed.
- WORKPLACE SITE VISIT**  
Your assessor visits your workplace. There is no need to attend a training centre – assessment takes place in your normal working environment.
- DIRECT OBSERVATION**  
The assessor observes you carrying out your normal duties to confirm your skills, safe working practices and competence.
- JOB KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS**  
A professional discussion to assess your knowledge of procedures, legislation, responsibilities, equipment and decision-making.
- EVIDENCE GATHERING**  
Your assessor gathers a range of evidence that demonstrates your competence in the workplace (see examples opposite).
- PORTFOLIO COMPLETION**  
All evidence is reviewed. Once all criteria are met, your NVQ is completed and you can apply for your CPCS Blue Card.

## EVIDENCE GATHERING EXAMPLES

- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Lift plans
- ✓ Inspection records
- ✓ Risk assessments
- ✓ Method statements
- ✓ Training records
- ✓ Maintenance records
- ✓ Toolbox talks
- ✓ Site documentation
- ✓ Company procedures
- ✓ Worksheets and reports



Evidence comes from your everyday work activities. You don't need to do anything extra – just continue to work safely and competently.

## NVQs AVAILABLE THROUGH RELO TRAINING



### PLANT OPERATIONS LEVEL 2 NVQs

- Suitable for:
- A40 Slinger/Signaller
  - A60 Mobile Crane
  - A64 Overhead Travelling Crane
  - A66 Compact Crane



### LIFTING OPERATIONS – CRANE SUPERVISOR LEVEL 4 NVQ

- Suitable for:
- A62 Crane / Lifting Operations Supervisor



### LIFTING OPERATIONS – APPOINTED PERSON LEVEL 5 NVQ

- Suitable for:
- A61 Appointed Person (Lift Planner)

## COMMON MYTHS ABOUT NVQs

- ✗ "I have to go back to college." No. NVQs are assessed in your workplace.
- ✗ "I need to sit exams." No. NVQs are assessment-based, not exams.
- ✗ "I need to stop working." No. You continue working as normal.
- ✗ "The assessor does the work for me." No. You must demonstrate your own competence.
- ✗ "I can complete it without evidence." No. Evidence is essential to prove competence.

## BENEFITS OF COMPLETING AN NVQ

- ✓ Upgrade from Red to Blue CPCS Card
- ✓ Nationally recognised qualification
- ✓ Demonstrates workplace competence
- ✓ Improves career prospects and earning potential
- ✓ Increases employer confidence
- ✓ Supports professional development
- ✓ Opens doors to more senior roles

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ? How long does an NVQ take? Timescales vary. Most candidates complete within 3–6 months.
- ? How many site visits are required? Usually 1–3 visits depending on the NVQ and evidence available.
- ? Do I need to attend a training centre? No. All assessment is completed in your workplace.
- ? Can experienced workers complete an NVQ? Yes. NVQs are ideal for experienced operators and supervisors.
- ? What evidence can I use? Evidence comes from your normal work activities and documents.



## CONCLUSION

An NVQ is not about learning a new job – it is about demonstrating the skills, knowledge and experience you already use every day in the workplace. Completing the correct NVQ is the recognised route to upgrading from a CPCS Red Card to a CPCS Blue Competent Operator Card.