



Department
for Transport

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Street Works Qualifications in England

*Guidance for operatives and
supervisors*

January 2017

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1. Key points

- On 6 April 2017, new regulations came into force in England, *The Street Works (Qualifications of Operatives and Supervisors) (England) Regulations 2016*.
- You do not have to do anything to move to the system that these regulations introduced.
- The changes do not affect your existing certificates or street works cards - they will remain valid until they expire.
- There is no requirement to hold any particular combination of (non-key) certificates - you can tailor these certificates to the work you actually do.
- If you renew your old style certificates on a like-for-like basis, you will be reassessed in the same subjects as before.
- On renewal, your old style certificates will automatically be converted to their new equivalents.
- Each certificate now has its own expiry date - there is no longer a card expiry date.

2. Introduction

- 2.1** The *New Roads and Street Works Act 1991* (NRSWA) requires that there is a qualified operative on site at all times while street works are in progress. The qualifications held must be appropriate for the work being carried out. The Act does not require all the relevant qualifications to be held by a single operative - the main requirement is that there is always at least one operative on site whose qualifications match the activities being undertaken.
- 2.2** The Act also requires that the site is supervised by a person having a prescribed qualification as a supervisor. The supervisor is not required to be on site at all times. A qualified supervisor might therefore supervise a number of street works sites.
- 2.3** There are four tiers to the training and accreditation regime.
- The **registration body** maintains the street works qualifications register and issues street works cards.
 - **Awarding organisations** approve assessment centres, issue certificates and notify the registration body. Awarding organisations eligible to award street works qualifications are listed on the registration body's web site at <http://www.swqr.org.uk/SWQR/Home>
 - Approved **assessment centres** assess candidates, inform the relevant awarding organisation and apply to the registration body for certificates to be registered. They can also provide training.
 - **Candidates** - You can be qualified as an operative, a supervisor, or both. A supervisor qualification does not mean you are qualified to work as an operative. However, if you hold operative and supervisor qualifications, you will be qualified to work as either, or both.

3. Getting qualified

- 3.1** If you are new to street works you first need to attend an approved assessment centre. The centre will assess you in theoretical knowledge and practical skills in your chosen subjects. You can ask for training before assessment if you want but training is not compulsory.
- 3.2** If you pass the assessment, the centre will notify its awarding organisation and the registration body. The awarding organisation will also contact the registration body and confirm that they have awarded you a certificate and the date they issued it. The registration body will then record the certificate on the street works register and issue you with a street works card. Each certificate on the card will last for 5 years from the certification date, i.e. the date the awarding organisation issued the certificate.

4. Certificates

- 4.1 There were 16 units before - now there are 16 certificates, namely LA, O1 to O8, and S1 to S7 (the units have become individual certificates). There are three key certificates and the new certificate structure is as follows:

Common to operatives and supervisors:

LA - Location & avoidance of underground apparatus KEY CERTIFICATE

O-series certificates, for operatives only:

O1 - Signing, lighting and guarding KEY CERTIFICATE

O2 - *Excavation in the highway*

O3 - *Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials*

O4 - *Reinstatement of sub-base and base in non-bituminous materials*

O5 - *Reinstatement in cold lay bituminous materials*

O6 - *Reinstatement in hot-lay bituminous materials*

O7 - *Reinstatement of concrete slabs*

O8 - *Reinstatement of modular surfaces, concrete footways*

S-series certificates, for supervisors only:

S1 - Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding KEY CERTIFICATE

S2 - *Monitoring excavation in the highway*

S3 - *Monitoring reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials*

S4 - *Monitoring reinstatement of sub-base and base in non-bituminous materials*

S5 - *Monitoring reinstatement in bituminous materials*

S6 - *Monitoring reinstatement of concrete slabs*

S7 - *Monitoring reinstatement of modular surfaces, concrete footways*

- 4.2 LA and O1 are the only two key certificates for operatives. If you are an operative, you therefore need the following to be qualified to excavate or reinstate:

- LA - *Location & avoidance of underground apparatus*;
- O1 - *Signing, lighting and guarding*; and
- The relevant O-certificate(s), from O2 to O8.

- 4.3 LA and S1 are the only two key certificates for supervisors. If you are a supervisor, you therefore need the following to be qualified to monitor excavation or reinstatement:

- LA - *Location & avoidance of underground apparatus*;
- S1 - *Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding*; and
- The relevant S-certificate(s), from S2 to S7.

- 4.4 There is no requirement to hold any particular combination of non-key certificates. As long as you hold the key certificates, you can choose to hold as

many or as few of the others as you like to suit the work that you do. For example, if you only wanted to be qualified to carry out reinstatement in hot-lay bituminous materials, you would need the two key operative certificates plus certificate O6. This principle applies similarly to supervisors.

- 4.5** Key certificates will appear on the front of the card, others will appear on the back. Key certificates must be valid for the others to be valid. In summary:
- If O1 expires, all O-certificates on the back of the card become invalid;
 - If S1 expires, all S-certificates on the back of the card become invalid;
 - If LA expires, every certificate on the back of the card becomes invalid.
- 4.6** If a key certificate expires, you won't lose the other certificates altogether - they will become valid again once the expired key certificate is renewed.
- 4.7** Although O1 is a key certificate, signing, lighting and guarding is not itself a street works activity as defined in NRSWA (i.e. it is not *breaking up or opening the street, or any sewer, drain or tunnel under it, or tunnelling or boring under the street*). Because of this, you don't need a street works card to simply set up signing, lighting and guarding for a street works site.
- 4.8** You must, however, be "appropriately trained" to comply with the *Safety at Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice* - see last paragraph on page 9 of the Code - and holding a street works card with certificate O1 on it is one way of demonstrating that you have been appropriately trained for setting out signing, lighting and guarding.
- 4.9** Location and avoidance is another activity that does not come under the definition of street works. You therefore don't need to hold an LA certificate to simply carry out location and avoidance of underground apparatus. (However, if you still want a card showing LA on its own, that is possible with the new style card.)

5. Renewing certificates

- 5.1** You can renew your certificates by undergoing **reassessment** but you can choose to do so by undergoing **assessment** if you want. The difference is as follows. Assessment is what takes place when you first obtain a certificate, and it involves a practical and theoretical assessment of your skills. Reassessment, which is intentionally less burdensome for certificate renewal purposes, involves only a theoretical assessment. However, the regulations allow you to renew a certificate by undergoing the original assessment if you choose to.
- 5.2** If you are an existing card-holder and you decide to renew your certificates on a like-for-like basis, you will be reassessed (or assessed if you like) in exactly the same subjects as before. For example, if you are renewing an old style operative certificate in *Reinstatement of construction layers in hot-lay and cold lay bituminous materials*, you would be reassessed in LA, O1, O5 and O6 (i.e. units 1, 2, 6 and 7 under the old system). The main difference will be the way the certificates appear on your new card.
- 5.3** You won't need to be reassessed in the key certificates more than once every five years. As long as they are current, you can add as many other certificates as you like, and when you like.
- 5.4** You can keep using your old style card until it expires. However, if you add a new certificate before the card expires, a new style card will be issued to you showing the new certificate together with any unexpired certificates from your previous card. The unexpired certificates will be converted to their new equivalents while retaining their original expiry dates. Your new style street works card will no longer have an expiry date. Every new certificate will last for 5 years so each one will have its own expiry date.
- 5.5** You will be able to renew any certificate at any point in its lifetime. Training is not compulsory when renewing but assessment centres can provide it if you want it.
- 5.6** When a certificate approaches expiry you will be able to renew it at any time in its last year without losing the unexpired portion. For example, if you renew a certificate with 10 months life left in it, the renewed certificate will last for 5 years and 10 months from the date of renewal.
- 5.7** You can also renew a certificate when it has more than a year left to go. In this case the renewed certificate will last for a fixed 6 years from the date of renewal (5 years if, for some reason, a certificate is renewed in its first year). You might want to do this if you have certificates expiring at different dates and you want to renew them all at the same time.
- 5.8** A certificate is not valid once it has expired but it can be renewed any time up to 5 years after this date. This may be useful if you stop doing street works for a while then decide to return to the industry later.

6. Converting to the new style street works card

- 6.1** This will happen automatically when your old style card expires - there is no need for you to convert to the new style by a certain date. However, if you add a new certificate to your old style card, the replacement card will be to the new style.
- 6.2** New style cards will be as shown in Figure 1 (although in practice, there may be some minor differences). The examples shown are for someone who holds all the possible operative and/or supervisor qualifications, as appropriate.
- 6.3** The main points to note are that:
- there is no card expiry date;
 - each certificate has its own expiry date;
 - key certificates are listed on the front of the card;
 - other certificates are listed on the rear;
 - security features have been added; and
 - a QR code (Quick Response code - it looks like a small crossword puzzle) has been added. It contains the main data on the card.

7. Working across UK borders

- 7.1** Street works certificates continue to be technically equivalent throughout the UK. The only condition is that any non-English certificate over 5 years old has to have been renewed by reassessment (or assessment). If, after 6 April 2017, you have certificate that was renewed by simply re-registering it, it will not be valid in England. However, if you renew re-registered certificates by undergoing assessment, you will be qualified to work in England.
- 7.2** For example, a certificate in *Excavation in the highway* in Wales/Northern Ireland (or *Excavation in the road* in Scotland) will be equivalent in England to:
- LA *Location and avoidance of underground apparatus*;
 - O1 *Signing, lighting and guarding*; and
 - O2 *Excavation in the highway*.
- 7.3** It follows that an English operative will need to hold LA, O1 and O2 to be technically equivalent to holding *Excavation in the highway* in Wales/Northern Ireland or *Excavation in the road* in Scotland.
- 7.4** Tables 1 and 2 cover all the new English certificates and their equivalents in the UK. These two Tables of Equivalence will also appear on the web site of SQA, the UK registration body for street works.
- 7.5** The Scottish Government is in the process of introducing similar changes to *The Road Works (Qualifications of Supervisors and Operatives) (Scotland) Regulations 1992*. When these come into force on 4 September 2017, there will be a direct correlation between Scottish and English certificates.

Figure 1: The new street works cards


SWQR No 1234123412

 Keep this card with you at all times while on site.
 

GARY STREETER
 Date of Birth 12/04/1964

Key Certificates:

LA Location & avoidance of underground apparatus	22/07/2018
O1 Signing, Lighting and Guarding	22/07/2018

If found please return to SWQR, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW, G2 8DQ. 0345 270 2720.

If LA and O1 current, qualified in:

O2 Excavation in the road/highway	22/07/2018
O3 Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials	22/07/2018
O4 Reinstatement sub-base and base in non-bituminous	22/07/2018
O5 Reinstatement in cold-lay bituminous materials	22/07/2018
O6 Reinstatement in hot-lay bituminous materials	16/03/2020
O7 Reinstatement of concrete slabs	16/03/2020
O8 Reinstatement of modular surfaces, concrete footways	16/03/2020

Expiring:

Operative card


SWQR No 1234123412

 Keep this card with you at all times while on site.
 

GARY STREETER
 Date of Birth 12/04/1964

Key Certificates:

LA Location & avoidance of underground apparatus	22/07/2018
S1 Monitoring Signing, Lighting and Guarding	08/05/2022

If found please return to SWQR, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW, G2 8DQ. 0345 270 2720.

If LA and S1 current, qualified to monitor:

S2 Excavation in the road/highway	08/05/2022
S3 Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials	08/05/2022
S4 Reinstatement sub-base and base in non-bituminous	08/05/2022
S5 Reinstatement in bituminous materials	08/05/2022
S6 Reinstatement of concrete slabs	08/05/2022
S7 Reinstatement of modular surfaces, concrete footways	08/05/2022

Expiring:

SWQR No 1234123412

Supervisor card


SWQR No 1234123412

 Keep this card with you at all times while on site.
 

GARY STREETER
 Date of Birth 12/04/1964

Key Certificates:

LA Location & avoidance of underground apparatus	22/07/2018
O1 Signing, Lighting and Guarding	22/07/2018
S1 Monitoring Signing, Lighting and Guarding	08/05/2022

If found please return to SWQR, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW, G2 8DQ. 0345 270 2720.

If LA and O1 current, qualified in:

O2 Excavation in the road/highway	22/07/2018
O3 Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials	22/07/2018
O4 Reinstatement sub-base and base in non-bituminous	22/07/2018
O5 Reinstatement in cold-lay bituminous materials	22/07/2018
O6 Reinstatement in hot-lay bituminous materials	16/03/2020
O7 Reinstatement of concrete slabs	16/03/2020
O8 Reinstatement of modular surfaces, concrete footways	16/03/2020

If LA and S1 current, qualified to monitor:

S2 Excavation in the road/highway	08/05/2022
S3 Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials	08/05/2022
S4 Reinstatement sub-base and base in non-bituminous	08/05/2022
S5 Reinstatement in bituminous materials	08/05/2022
S6 Reinstatement of concrete slabs	08/05/2022
S7 Reinstatement of modular surfaces, concrete footways	08/05/2022

Expiring:

SWQR No 1234123412

Combined operative and supervisor card

Table 1 - Operative certificate equivalents for England

<p>Certificates below* issued in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wales • Northern Ireland • Scotland before 4/9/17** • England before 6/4/17 <p>* Only applies to certificates that have been obtained or renewed by undertaking assessment or reassessment.</p> <p>** Certificates issued in Scotland after 4/9/17 will directly correlate with those issued in England. For example, certificate O2 in Scotland will be equivalent to certificate O2 in England.</p>	<p>... are equivalent to the following certificates in England from 6 April 2017.</p>
<p>Excavation in the highway/road.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. O1 Signing, lighting and guarding. O2 Excavation in the highway.</p>
<p>Excavation, backfilling and reinstatement of construction layers with a cold lay bituminous surface.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. O1 Signing, lighting and guarding. O2 Excavation in the highway. O3 Reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials. O4 Reinstatement of sub-base and base in non-bituminous materials. O5 Reinstatement in cold lay bituminous materials.</p>
<p>Reinstatement of construction layers in hot-lay and cold lay bituminous materials.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. O1 Signing, lighting and guarding. O5 Reinstatement in cold lay bituminous materials. O6 Reinstatement in hot-lay bituminous materials.</p>
<p>Reinstatement of concrete slabs.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. O1 Signing, lighting and guarding. O7 Reinstatement of concrete slabs.</p>
<p>Reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. O1 Signing, lighting and guarding. O8 Reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways.</p>

Table 2 - Supervisor certificate equivalents for England

<p>Certificates below* issued in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wales • Northern Ireland • Scotland before 4/9/17** • England before 6/4/17 <p>* Only applies to certificates that have been obtained or renewed by undertaking assessment or reassessment.</p> <p>** Certificates issued in Scotland after 4/9/17 will directly correlate with those issued in England. For example, certificate S2 in Scotland will be equivalent to certificate S2 in England.</p>	<p>... are equivalent to the following certificates in England from 6 April 2017.</p>
<p>Monitoring excavation in the highway/road.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. S1 Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding. S2 Monitoring excavation in the highway.</p>
<p>Monitoring excavation, backfilling and reinstatement of construction layers with bituminous materials.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. S1 Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding. S2 Monitoring excavation in the highway. S3 Monitoring reinstatement and compaction of backfill materials. S4 Monitoring reinstatement of sub-base and base in non-bituminous materials. S5 Monitoring reinstatement in bituminous materials.</p>
<p>Monitoring reinstatement of construction layers in bituminous materials.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. S1 Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding. S5 Monitoring reinstatement in bituminous materials.</p>
<p>Monitoring reinstatement of concrete slabs.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. S1 Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding. S6 Monitoring reinstatement of concrete slabs.</p>
<p>Monitoring reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways.</p>	<p>LA Location and avoidance of underground apparatus. S1 Monitoring signing, lighting and guarding. S7 Monitoring reinstatement of modular surfaces and concrete footways.</p>

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