

24 February 2005

Health & Safety Test price to halve as CITB-ConstructionSkills introduces new campaign

CITB-ConstructionSkills today announced the launch of its new health and safety campaign. The campaign seeks to improve awareness and knowledge of health and safety in the construction industry, increase competence and ultimately create a permanent change in behaviour on-site. The launch came at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Construction Summit, held in London.

The campaign aims to shift perceptions of employers by demonstrating that it's the small things on-site that have the biggest impact, contributing to the 9,500 injuries on-site every year and the thousands of days' sickness taken due to ill health. The bottom line is, good health and safety practice means good business.

Peter Lobban - CITB-ConstructionSkills Chief Executive - commented:

"CITB-ConstructionSkills has a key role to play in insuring that solid and effective health and safety training and development support is in place. It is at the heart of everything that we do as a Sector Skills Council.

"As a significant step, I'm pleased to announce a reduction in price of the Construction Health and Safety Test. Following a series of negotiations with the test supplier and a review of internal processes, the price will be cut from £35 to £17.50 from 4 April 2005. We believe the revised Test price will realise savings for industry of £4m per year - money that can be spent on delivering and funding further training. This represents a reinvestment of over £20million in the drive to qualify the workforce by 2010.

"We recognise there is still work to be done in changing attitudes and behaviour if we are to achieve our goal of an accident-free industry. It is clear from independent research that those contractors who have had an accident are more aware of the impact that small improvements can make. It is by focussing upon and eliminating these small mistakes that will see a reduction in our industry's accident and ill health figures."

The Construction Health and Safety Test is just one way CITB-ConstructionSkills is already working with the industry to increase awareness and improve standards. Developed five years ago, in consultation with key industry stakeholders, more than 650,000 individuals have passed the Test, demonstrating they meet the minimum standard of health and safety awareness.

As part of the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement, a revised Construction Health and Safety Test will be introduced in April 2005. After close consultation with industry representatives, CITB-ConstructionSkills has further developed and revised the Test to represent recent changes in legislation. Simplified language has been used to ensure that it examines understanding of health and safety issues rather than English language.

The updated Test will be supported by an improved booking service, a wider range of support materials, voiceovers in a range of languages and an updated question bank. There will be a significant increase in the number of mobile test centres so that testing can be taken direct to a contractor's site or training premises.

The reduction in the price of the Test improves accessibility to those groups who wouldn't normally claim CITB Grant - employers out of scope to CITB-ConstructionSkills and individuals not linked to an employer.

ConstructionSkills, including CIC, has developed training throughout the supply chain. By sharing best practice with the HSE and RIBA, ConstructionSkills has developed accredited health and safety training courses for designers and architects, in addition to S/NVQs.

Through the National Construction College, CITB-ConstructionSkills continues to be the largest provider of construction health and safety competence training in the UK having delivered courses to over 70,000 individuals since 2001. People from all industry disciplines can access training for a range of skills - from one-day introductory programmes for craft and operative level workers, to the site management safety training scheme (SMSTS) for supervisors and managers.

For more information on how you can improve your health and safety credentials, contact CITB-ConstructionSkills on 01485 577577 or go to www.citb-constructionskills.co.uk/health_safety