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New crane users guidance for UK Air Navigation Order

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has announced a revision to its publication CAP 1096 - Guidance to Crane Operators on Aviation Lighting and Notification - which provides a summary of existing regulation, duty of care expectations and recommended best practice.

CAP 1096 currently requires crane users to notify local aerodrome operators if the height of any crane exceeds 10 metres and is within six kilometres of an aerodrome and to notify the CAA if the height exceeds 91.4 metres (300 feet) irrespective of location.

The revision, which is due to take effect on 1st October, includes significant changes to the previous version including a requirement to notify the CAA in advance of a planned lifting operation - via a dedicated email address - if the highest part of a crane will exceed 10 metres above ground level OR of the surrounding structures or trees, irrespective of the location in the UK, replacing the need to notify a local aerodrome.

Once notified the CAA will contact the relevant aerodrome operators and other interested parties. The revised CAP 1096 also includes amended recommendations for lighting and marking of cranes to 'aid conspicuousness'.

CPA technical consultant, Ian Simpson has prepared a draft Technical Information Note (TIN 039D) to help crane users comply with the revised CAP 1096. Simpson along with ALLMI technical manager Keith Silvester continue to discuss the intended revisions with the CAA highlighting its impact on the sector. The CPA has also written to the CAA and the Department for Transport voicing concerns over the potential difficulties that the new guidance will bring for crane owners and operators, and the absence of evidence justifying its requirement.

The draft TIN can be downloaded free of charge from www.cpa.uk.net/tower-crane-interest-group-publications

Construction Equipment Maintenance Mechanic Trailblazer Apprenticeship

An employer development group was formed by CPA in late 2016 to develop a new trailblazer apprenticeship for those that maintain and service equipment, as a replacement for the existing framework apprenticeship.

The group proposed two standards - a Mechanic role at Level 2 and Technician role at Level 3 - and made numerous submissions to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

The group's initial work focussed on developing the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) for the mechanic occupation, which were set at a Level 2 with learning over a 24 month period. The proposed standard received approval from the IfATE in July 2019 from which the group worked on the assessment plan, along with determining the costs of training for funding purposes.

The assessment plan was submitted in February and has received full approval from the IfATE. However the allocated funding band - the maximum amount the employer can claim on the apprenticeship - is considerably less than the training quotes provided. The joint chairmen appealed the decision and sought an increase to make the apprenticeship viable for delivery. The appeal has now been rejected meanwhile options to replace the current Level 3 framework apprenticeship are being worked on.

Ed Hudson, joint chairman of the working group said: "My co-chairman and I are delighted to have gained final approval by the Institute after many years of hard work, during which we suffered continual disappointments and knock backs. This is tempered however by the low funding band allocated to this apprenticeship. We would however like to thank the working group for their support and patience and look forward to employers taking up this important apprenticeship once the funding band issue is resolved. Our focus will now be on seeking a Level 3 replacement." www.cpa.uk.net/trailblazerceme for more information.

Red diesel lobbying

The CPA and other industry trade bodies have written to chancellor Rishi Sunak highlighting continued concerns with the Treasury's policy to cut the rebate on red diesel for construction equipment. In the March budget, the chancellor confirmed plans to abolish the tax relief on red diesel in two years' time.

The associations are calling for a review of the impact of the move on the fragile finances of many contractors, requesting further consultation and an extension of at least a year to the deadline to allow for a sustained economic recovery to take hold.

Industry analysts estimate that scrapping the rebate will cost the industry up to £490 million. Concerns have also been raised about the wider effects such as limiting investment in greener technology, stifling innovation and the implications of passing increasing costs on to clients.

It goes on to say that the construction sector has no choice but to use diesel powered equipment, as electric machines above certain weights are currently not a realistic option.

