

Best Practice

Power Mobile Equipment Operators' Train-the-Trainer Program

CONTACT

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THE ISSUE

In 2007, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (the ministry) notified all municipalities in Saskatchewan that by October 2008, all operators of Power Mobile Equipment (PME) must be "competent operators" according to *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* (Section 154). While third party certification of operators' competency was not required, operators are required to obtain minimum training (knowledge content and practical skills training) from an operator who is trained and competent as defined in the regulations.

After receiving this notification, the North Central Transportation Planning Committee (NCTPC) realized that the required training was not readily available. They began working to ensure that municipalities within their planning area would meet the requirements by developing and delivering workshops and training content templates. The key element of this work is the training of a series of competent trainers that can then, in turn, train other operators. It is the committee's hope that eventually, by sharing their knowledge and training program, every municipality in Saskatchewan will have its operators deemed competent within the required time period.

THE NEED

The changes to the regulations meant that all municipalities were facing a daunting task within a relatively short timeframe. The NCTPC found that outside training to meet the requirements was not readily available. The committee responded by designing and implementing a train-the-trainer program that could be shared across the province.

CREATING THE PRACTICE

The NCTPC regularly holds workshops for its member municipalities on current issues facing the industry. In January 2008, the committee held workshops in five locations in the North Central Transportation Planning Area to train operators who would then be able to train and declare other operators competent.

Firstly, the NCTPC made a video presentation to be used in the workshops and that meets the prescribed four-hour classroom training time. Ten operators were also sent to heavy duty construction workshops to complete the required training, making these operators competent, and enabling them to become evaluators with the ability to declare other operators competent. The NCTPC intends to send these trainers to pre-arranged, hands-on workshops in municipalities throughout its planning area to assist other operators to not only be declared competent, but to become evaluators themselves. Eventually, every municipality in Saskatchewan could potentially have their own evaluators and meet the regulatory requirements.

The NCTPC also created a training documentation template for the operator and trainer to complete that was accepted by the ministry, and has provided this template to all Area Transportation Planning Committees throughout Saskatchewan. The committee is also developing an operator certification "card" to document an operator's declaration of PME operation competency.

APPROVAL

The NCTPC received notification of this regulatory enforcement and decided to be proactive in dealing with this issue. Throughout the development of the training video, workshops, and templates, they were in contact with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, and the committee's senior planner from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. Ultimately, once the material was deemed acceptable, the NCTPC was able to proceed with the practice.

CONSULTATION

As part of the approval process, the NCTPC had consultations with their executive and senior planner from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, as well as the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

IMPLEMENTATION

NCTPC executive members, as well as the committee secretary, were responsible for organizing and implementing the required work. They scheduled and organized the hands-on training sessions with the help of municipalities. Some municipalities went so far as to donate grader time and fuel for the training sessions.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Budget

Funding for this practice has been on a cost-recovery basis. Attendees to the five initial workshops paid a nominal registration fee. The NCTPC will support the ten trainers to attend the heavy-duty construction workshops. When these trainers go to other municipalities, that municipality will pay a nominal fee to recover the NCTPC's expenses.

The NCTPC already owned the camera and computer equipment required to make the training video.

Staff

The NCTPC executive, senior planner from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and committee secretary will continue to work on scheduling the hands-on sessions, and the further development of the templates.

EVALUATION

All municipalities in Saskatchewan could potentially benefit from this practice. Using the train-the-trainer formula, and providing templates to all Area Transportation Planning Committees, municipalities should be able to meet the requirements and have their operators deemed competent within the specified time period. The NCTPC faced some challenges by having to create their own materials and templates, as well as the challenges of scheduling workshops.

LESSONS LEARNED

Through this process, the NCTPC has reaffirmed their belief that it is best to be proactive rather than reactive, especially when it comes to regulatory changes. They also realized that some municipalities did not believe the regulations were applicable to them because they have only one employee; or that if they ignored the problem it would go away.

The NCTPC hopes that their innovative and proactive approach will assist municipalities to meet these requirements.