

This newsletter is aimed at all personnel registered on the MCERTS Personnel Competency scheme. It is intended to keep you up-to-date with scheme developments, summarise exam results, provide guidance on some technical aspects and help with future examinations. If you have any comments, suggestions or topics you would like to see included in future editions, please let us know. Send your comments to mcerts@sira.co.uk

Suspension of UKAS accredited laboratory

Following the recent suspension of a UKAS accredited laboratory, Sira reminds all personnel that improper conduct, if proven, can result in their exclusion from the MCERTS Personnel Competency scheme.

Supervision of trainees and Level 1 personnel

Trainees and Level 1 personnel are required to provide evidence that they are working under the direct supervision of a Level 2 person. Candidates will be required to identify the Level 2 person within their organisation who is providing supervision. If there is no level 2 person within the organisation, personnel can attend an approved training course. See Section 2.4.7 of the MCERTS Personnel Competency Standard.

Exam board meetings

Exam board meetings are scheduled for 9 March and 21 June 2006.

Contact details

Sira maintains a list of personnel registered on the scheme. As competency certification is awarded to the individual, not to their employer it is the individual's responsibility to inform Sira of changes in contact details. If changes occur please update Sira by telephoning Debbie Collins on 0208 468 1842 or send an email to debbie.collins@sira.co.uk

Health & Safety reminder

The Environment Agency has received reports recently of instances where the Health and Safety requirements for working platforms, as stipulated by the MCERTS scheme, are being ignored.

Environment Agency Technical Guidance Note M1 sets out the requirements for provision of safe working platforms and states that "sampling from mobile access platforms, 'cherry-pickers' or ladders is unacceptable" (Section 4.1.1). The same preclusion is also contained within Section 4.1 of the STA Risk Assessment Guide.

Adhering to the guidance contained within these two documents is a mandatory requirement of the MCERTS scheme – refer to Annex B of the MCERTS Performance Standard for Organisations. A commitment to comply with the relevant provisions of the MCERTS for manual stack-emission monitoring scheme is also contained within the MCERTS Code of Conduct signed by all MCERTS-certified personnel.

Accordingly, all MCERTS-certified personnel are reminded of their obligations with regard to working platforms.

Level 2 – failure rate

Results of recent Level 2 interviews indicate an unusually high failure rate. Personnel are reminded that the requirement for 12 months experience is a "minimum" requirement. Some recent applicants do not appear to have sufficient experience to convince the examiners of their suitability as Level 2 team leaders.