



Scotguide provides training, as shown here, for Scotland's tour operators and tour guides.

Drivers who go on CPC training courses won't be taught stuff they don't need.

"Remember that as well as funding the training you are losing a driver's productive time for a day," he points out. Those lost hours will have to be covered by somebody else, either through the recruitment of extra manpower or paying another employee overtime if drivers cannot be re-rostered to cover their colleague's absence at the standard hourly rate.

There is of course the risk that older drivers nervous of a return to the classroom after 40 or more years will be reluctant to participate in CPC training and will be lost to the industry after September 2013.

"That's a big challenge for the industry," agrees GoSkills PCV driver training adviser, John Smith. "What I'm hoping is that having seen their colleagues attend courses, older employees will come to realise that training can be both enjoyable and interesting, that it's not unpleasant, and that it will add to their knowledge and confidence.

"Just because you have to do it doesn't mean to say that it has to hurt."

"The courses are not designed to be onerous or boring, so drivers who go on them should not have too much of a problem and they won't be taught stuff they don't need," says a spokesman for the Driving Standards Agency. "There might be the odd one who drops out of the industry, but we don't believe it will be a major problem.

"Remember that continuous professional development, which is what we are talking about, is found in all industries these days."

Nottingham City Transport is running an in-house CPC training scheme and will be putting all its drivers through its own 35-hour programme between now and autumn 2013, even for those drivers who have recently joined the fleet and have undergone, say,

seven hours CPC training with a previous employer. It takes the view that this is the best way of ensuring that everybody is trained to the same standard and in the same manner, and is attuned to the operation's culture.

One coach company that has been quick off the mark so far as CPC training is concerned is Bibby's of Ingleton near Carnforth in Lancashire. On the first day the requirement for periodic training came into force, its drivers attended a foundation course run by Minimise Your Risk covering various aspects of a driver's role and responsibilities.

Topics dealt with included health and safety and risk assessment. The programme also covered manual handling, but in a practical way, involving suitcases and a coach.

"The seven hour course ended with a session that dealt with drug and alcohol awareness which included a practical demonstration with a breathalyser and a double whiskey," says Minimise managing director, Alec Horner.

The firm has also recently provided Bibby's with a road risk safety management programme along with a suite of risk assessments for the workshops, offices and on-road activities.

"I was very pleased with how the CPC training day went," says Peter Bibby. "Everyone found it interesting, informative and fun and I will be asking Alec back to carry out the rest of the periodic training we will require over the next five years."

If you are outsourcing your training to a third party and are willing to agree to it handling all your CPC needs over the five years, then you should be able to negotiate a healthy discount on its standard charges.

The introduction of the driver's CPC also includes the launch of a new initial qualification for novice bus and coach drivers which they must complete to obtain a licence, as well as passing a practical driving test. It includes a longer theory test with 100 multiple-choice questions.

Studying for this qualification can be undertaken in a variety of ways, and one option is to do it online, says Graham Lock of Advance Training Solutions.

Advance Training Solutions has come up with a programme to aid

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Creative Management Development
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Driving Standards Agency
0300 200 1122
www.transportoffice.gov.uk/cpc

Gap Training
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GoSkills
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Minimise Your Risk
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TSO
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Wright Training Services
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both trainers and trainees – go to www.drivingtheory4all.com – that can cost as little as £7.00 for full access for 90 days.

"That's a more than reasonable amount of time for people to learn their theory, but if a trainee can prove to us that they used our service, took their theory test, and failed, we'll keep their account open until they pass," says Lock.

Features include The Theory Wizard, which identifies areas where your knowledge is weak and offers assistance.

The big advantage of this approach is its flexibility and the fact that the site can be accessed round-the-clock seven days a week; ideal if you happen to be on shift work, and a lot better than wasting your time playing computer games. ▀