

OPERATOR COMPETENCE SCHEME MILESTONE

Two employees from the Norfolk County Council (NCC) waste operations team have become the first in the UK to be awarded VRQ certificates in Waste and Resource Management under the newly approved WAMITAB/CIWM scheme to deliver and recognise technical competence among operators in England and Wales. The recipients of the new award are Norfolk County Council's Mark Allen, Waste Resources Manager (Operations) and his colleague, Dan Jacobs, Technician (Household Waste).



Picture shows (left to right) Lawrence Strong, Director General of WAMITAB, award winners – Dan Jacobs and Mark Allen of Norfolk County Council and Don Glaister, Managing Director of SERAC.

Speaking about the qualification, the pair said, “The VRQ is a much more accessible way of learning. It means newcomers to the industry now have a choice in how they achieve the legally required competence for low and medium risk activities. Based on our experience, the VRQ is an essential tool to help Local Authorities and Private Contractors’ staff to become competent in waste, environment and health and safety law as it affects our operations.”

Dr Lawrence Strong, Director General of WAMITAB, personally attended the first-ever VRQ award hand-over, at NCC County Hall in Norwich on 23 December 2008 and said, "I congratulate NCC and SERAC on these achievements; WAMITAB has played a key role in this industry since 1989 to improve technical competence through the CoTC scheme. The changes to operator competence arising from the Permitting Review build on what has already been achieved and offer a new 'risk-based' system, with learning choices for low and medium risk activities and evidence that waste managers are keeping up to date in a fast moving industry. "

The four day course was run by SERAC, one of WAMITAB's Approved Assessment Centres. Its Managing Director, Don Glaister, said, "We are delighted to have delivered the first VRQs for the new scheme – it's an award which is all about delivering relevant learning, with speed, efficiency and cost-effectiveness for operators in the waste sector, without lowering standards. It's also a quick and important first step for employees, getting them into the business and productive in the minimum sensible time. It offers an initial high level of very important and valuable competence, setting a firm basis for later learning or NVQ's as employees develop their career. It is exciting that there is now a choice of routes for employees to gain the statutory competence required in the waste management sector under the new Environmental Permitting Regulations.

The new Operator Competence scheme, developed jointly by the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) and the Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board (WAMITAB), is designed to provide a simple and flexible competence framework that meets the needs of an increasingly complex industry – approved by Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government on 22 December 2008.

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