

INDEPENDENT PLANT OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

For employers, clients and principal contractors · The legal position, the myths, and our audit trail

The legal position — in one paragraph

There is no statutory universal "plant licence" or "forklift licence" for workplace use in the UK. The legal requirement — Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and PUWER 98 regulation 9 — is that operators receive ADEQUATE TRAINING in the equipment, its risks and its precautions, and that employers authorise trained operators in writing. For lift trucks and telehandlers this is set out in the HSE Approved Code of Practice L117: basic training, specific job training and familiarisation, with records kept. PHW Services delivers and evidences the basic training stage in full, and supplies the record set for the other two stages.

The myths, answered

- MYTH: "You need a plant licence / FLT licence." — There is no government-issued plant or forklift licence for workplace use. The legal test is adequate training and competence for the machine being operated.
- MYTH: "Only CPCS or NPORS makes you legal." — CPCS, NPORS, RTITB, ITSSAR and similar are recognised ways of proving competence, not the only lawful route. The test is whether the operator had adequate information, instruction, training and assessment.
- MYTH: "If the course is unaccredited, it doesn't count." — Independent training is valid when it is delivered by a competent instructor/assessor, machine-specific, formally assessed (theory and practical), and backed by an audit trail. That is exactly how this VQ is built.
- MYTH: "A card is the same as competence." — A card evidences training at a point in time. Compliance depends on operator competence, suitable maintained equipment, controlled tasks and employer authorisation.
- MYTH: "A road driving licence covers plant." — Road entitlement and plant competence are separate. Road travel adds road traffic law on top of plant competence; it never replaces it.

What stands behind every certificate we issue

	Audit trail item
1	Qualification framework and HSE compliance statement (PHW-VQ-00) — legal basis, unit structures, assessment specification
2	Unit-by-unit knowledge & understanding records — questions asked, responses, assessor judgement
3	Technical theory test paper, handwritten by the candidate, marked and signed (80% pass; safety-critical questions must be correct)
4	Practical assessment checklists per exercise, with competent/not-yet-competent decisions — any dangerous act is an automatic refer
5	Machine, attachments and conditions recorded; certificates state the machine scope in words
6	Candidate file retained (certificate life + 3 years) — available for client verification on request
7	Record set for the employer's stages: specific job training, familiarisation, written authorisation to operate, refresher recommendation

Straight answers on site access

Some principal contractors require a scheme card (CPCS/NPORS) as a contractual site rule. Where that applies to your site, that requirement stands — we will tell you so plainly rather than talk around it. For workplaces and sites governed by the legal standard rather than a card scheme, this certification, with your written authorisation, is a complete and auditable competence record.

PHW Services · qualification through competence	Verification of any certificate: contact the assessor named on it
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