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A warm welcome to the following NEW MEMBERS

Corporate

- 524 - Advantex Network Solutions Ltd
- 523 - Synstar Networking
- 521 - Fibrecom Data Networks Ltd
- 520 - Fibre Optic Communications (FOC) Ltd
- 519 - Regal Communications Ltd
- 518 - Tech Multi Services Ltd
- 517 - Radius Data Solutions
- 516 3 Peaks Ltd
- 514 - Lythgoes Ltd

Associate

- 515 - Morgan Stanley

Personal

- 522 - John Tibbs

**FIA membership
reaches an all-time
high of 218**

FIA Product Sponsorship Scheme!!!

Over the last three years, the activity levels of the FIA and its various directorates have reached an all time high, as has the number of members. Many of the activities have been initiated by conversations within and around FIA Council meetings. At the AGM, it was announced that the Council intends to provide additional tangible benefits to members, by delivering new, innovative and potentially revolutionary products and services in a unique way.

As a result the FIA has agreed to sponsor one or more FIA members to undertake projects that lead to the production of innovative new products and/or services, provided these add benefit for the membership as a whole. In return for sponsorship, the FIA requires that the resultant products or services be offered to the FIA membership at prices discounted from those charged to non-members. As a result, the concept forms a "virtual circle" - the FIA funds a development, from monies provided by its membership, of a product /service that is then made available to its members at an advantageous rate. There is no restriction to the type of product or service to be supported under the program - it could be hardware such as a tool, a piece of software, a combination of the two etc. The only proviso was that it must be clearly and demonstrably of use to FIA members.

The initial level of sponsorship will be around £5000 but will not be restricted to this figure if the ideas are good enough. The sponsorship deal is not restricted to pure financial assistance. The Technical and Commercial Directorates of the FIA will provide assistance, free-at-the-point of delivery, to the successful applicants. Applicants can be assured of full confidentiality of the project development by the measures that have been implemented.

We already have a number of applicants but to maximise the opportunity the **deadline for applications has been extended until 17th April 2003**. To apply please contact the Secretariat at the contact points shown on this page.

FIBREOPTIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

The FIA is a Company Limited by Guarantee

Management Council

- Mike Phillips - Chairman
(Fibre Optic Solutions)
- Peter Thompsett - Vice Chairman
(Ensign Communications)
- Mike Gilmore - Technical Director and Treasurer
(The Cabling Partnership)
- Steve Strange - Commercial
(Anixter International)

Industry Sector Directors

- Adrian Buckingham (IBS Limited)
- Dave Carswell (Black Box Network (NW))
- Paul Bateson - Test & Measurement
(Optical Test and Calibration)
- John Colton - Training and Qualifications
(Lucid Optical Services Ltd.)
Installation
- John Cupitt - (Dwellight)
- Peter Thompsett - (Ensign Communications)

Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)

- and how it is impacting our industry

By Stuart Smith, FIA Training Director 2001/2002

Can't sort the facts from the rumours?

Does it apply to me?
Who do I contact?
What does it cost?
Is it Mandatory?
What do I get out of it?

When does it apply?

Confused? - join the club!, If you are not then you are either blissfully unaware of the potential impact or have spent a substantial amount of time trying to answer the questions on the left.

The following is a summary of the scheme, where it is now, where it is going and its likely impact to members working in our industry.

CSCS is firmly linked to the government's initiative to move towards a fully qualified workforce within the construction industry, the CSCS card scheme identifies the trained and qualified members of that workforce.

So who is CSCS?

CSCS is a private Ltd. Company owned and controlled by a management board whose members range from Unions such as the GMB and T&GW, employers organisations such as NSCC (National Specialist Contractors Council) and clients including CCC (Confederation of Construction Clients). The management board has appointed CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) to administer the scheme on their behalf.

Why establish CSCS?

Prior to 1995 the construction industry was dealing with some 28 card schemes and administration bodies. The scheme has incorporated most of these to a single administered scheme now covering over 150 occupations and with 250,000 'cardholders' making it more attractive for the construction industry to 'adopt' the scheme.

Who will enforce it and when?

The Construction Industry in the form of the MCG (Main Contractors Group), over 19 of the major contractors such as Costain, Amec, Taylor Woodrow etc.

The MCG has a target that over 80% of workers on their sites from 31.12.02 and 100% of workers from 31.12.03 must hold CSCS cards or affiliated/approved cards. Some construction sites may enforce the system sooner. Failure to have a card will simply mean no access to site or, at best, delays in access.

How does it work?

The first stage is for CSCS to recognise an occupation and 'open a card'. CSCS now has over 138 occupations and is busy resolving the periphery occupations such as 'Structured Cabling Installer' etc.

When a 'card is opened' it may be coloured differently dependent upon the skill levels and this may range from Green (site operative) to Black (senior manager), there is even a Yellow visitors card. The card allocated depends upon skill, experience & qualification or a combination together with relevant up-to-date Health and Safety awareness and these are detailed within the schemes booklet.

Is there a card open for our Industry – Structured Cabling or Fibre Installation?

The answer is no - not yet, it covers such operatives as 'Dry Liner' to 'Road Building Traffic Management Op' and you just thought they guessed at the timing on those temporary traffic lights! The nearest to our occupation and may impact a few members is 'Public Utilities Telecoms cable layer' for which there is a RED (trainee) and Blue (Skilled) card available.

When will a card be opened for us?

At this point in time CSCS are consulting with various parts of our industry including the FIA to establish the best way forward in terms of opening a card.

As there is no card what do I do if a main contractor requires one – Now?

Yes you may be required to have a card now as the MCG players move from 80% to 100% card requirement on site. CSCS operate an exemption scheme for occupations where they have not yet opened a card. You need to apply to CSCS (see details at the end) for an exemption letter. To save time, the FIA have requested a blanket exemption letter in .pdf format which, once received will be located at www.fibreoptic.org.uk/pdf/cscs.pdf.

Once a card is opened what experience/skills will I need to qualify?

First of all its important to understand that not all levels (Colours) of card are available in all industries. For our occupation this will depend on what levels of NVQ are available in our industry for eg. It could be argued that someone pulling cables only needs a 'Green' site operative level. Someone terminating will need a 'blue' skilled operative card etc.

CSCS card rules essentially define *Operative* cards and *Supervisor/Manager* cards.

To qualify for an *Operative* card you would need one of four routes:

- **Industry Accreditation (IA)** based upon experience and verified by employer, essentially getting the scheme going and accepts that experienced staff do not need retraining. (CSCS limit this to usually the 1st or 2nd year only of the card programme);
- **Apprenticeships** N/A in our industry;
- **NVQ/SVQ** at appropriate level for card (colour);
- **Experienced worker** for someone who missed 'IA' (e.g. returned into the industry).

The first 3 are renewable upon application every 5 years but the experienced worker is only valid for 3 years by which point an appropriate NVQ should have been attained.

To qualify for a *Supervisor/Manager* card you would need one of two routes:

- **Industry Accreditation** as above but open for 3 years from start of the programme;
- **NVQ/SVQ**.

So there are routes in for existing experienced staff and for new entrants in the future via the NVQ/SVQ path.

Which NVQ/SVQ's are recognised and what about C&G?

The only qualification recognised by the scheme is the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) or SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) - no other qualifications are currently accepted by CSCS.

CSCS has not at this point decided on the levels required for our industry. Arguably someone only requiring to "pull cables" could enter at the NVQ Level 1 as a 'green' card. The problem is that our industry focus has been on the more widely accepted City and Guilds 3466 series of courses. In addition the NVQ focus has been on levels 2 and 3 leaving gaps below and above. It can also be argued that the NVQ offerings are at best varied, in various stages of development and because the nature of our industry much more expensive than C&G as it may take many assessor visits to see all disciplines.

But this is a topic for, and the subject of, a separate article by John Colton (the FIA Industry Director of the responsible for training). Suffice to say the FIA will be providing input to CSCS on this topic on behalf of members.

Is Health and Safety linked to CSCS?

Yes - for those occupations already up and running in the scheme the required Health & Safety training may be included inside one of the available NVQ's. This may also be the case in some of the NVQ's being developed by the various bodies for our sector. However, you can also gain the required level of Health & Safety training to fulfil the Contractors requirement by taking an appropriate CSCS H&S test directly. See details below for the test.

The test involves 35 multiple choice questions within 40 minutes for the *Operative* level - the passmark being 29 correct answers. For the *Supervisor/Manager* levels there are different tests of 40 questions and 45 minutes - the passmark being 34. Note: ensure it's a CSCS test that is applied for as there are 9 H&S tests offered this way by the testing companies and not all relate to CSCS. Preparation for the test is done via the revision manual sent after booking the test. Alternatively various companies offer the CITB H&S awareness training (typically lasting one day).

So what should I be doing now & how much does it cost?

If your company is involved on construction sites decide the appropriate level of staff who may be challenged for Cards - remember it may not only be MCG members who apply the scheme.

Step 1 - Apply to CITB for each staff member to be allocated a CITB registration number.

Telephone no. 01485 578777 (Help line for CITB CSCS dept.) or fax them through to 01485 577601 with a return header fax no. You will be asked for: Full name, home address including post code, date of birth, National Insurance number.

Step 2 - Apply for the Health and Safety test via the booking centre at Thompson Prometric in Manchester on Tel No. 0870 600 4020.

You will need: Candidates CITB registration number, Candidates full name and address, Candidates date of birth, Credit or Debit card details or Voucher number for **£35**. They will provide date, time and booking number and location of DVLA centre nearest to you that does the exam. Ensure you select a CSCS test for Operative (for installers). Within 5-6 days they will send a confirmation letter and revision booklet. Bookings may be made by fax or mail. Ring general enquiries on 01485 577641. Note: there are penalties for cancellations and re-appointments.

Step 3 - Apply to CSCS for your site exemption letter (issued until a card for our occupation is opened). As we understand it there is no charge for this currently but once a card is open then a charge of **£20** will be made to applicants. Telephone the CSCS help line 01485 578777.

Other useful contacts for information:
CITB (also for H&E test) <http://www.citb.co.uk>
CSCS <http://www.cscs.uk.com>

New Council Member – David Carswell The second in a series of profiles

David Carswell has been appointed FIA Industry Sector co-Director, Installation

In 1993, after several years gaining experience in fibre optic and copper based communication systems, David became co-founder and Director of Optech Fibres Ltd based in the North West. The company was initially established to service the local industrial sector. However, it soon evolved to be able to become a service provider in design, installation & maintenance for companies across the whole spectrum - one example being, the installation of cabling for EPOS systems in 360 Beefeater Restaurants throughout the U.K.

After a successful eight years, Optech Fibres was acquired by Black Box, which resulted in the name change to Black Box Network Services (North West) Ltd. David remains as Director and General Manager of the North West office, which is one of ten on-site offices through the U.K and Ireland. To be now part of one of the leading technical services company's, and servicing clients of all sizes in 132 countries throughout the world, David can offer expertise in all area's of communications along with his chosen field and now looks forward to the new extension of his role and the challenges to be faced in his role on the FIA Council.

This Newsletter is provided as a means of maintaining communication between and with our Members.

It can, therefore, promote the activities of Members to other Members. Articles, product information, news items etc. are always welcome.

Please send the information via email (jpg illustrations) to Roy Atterbury via roy@attassoc.demon.co.uk

e-Tools: an "Infrastructure Management" revolution

A revolutionary new infrastructure documentation system has been announced by e-Tools, a division of e-Ready Building Limited.

Based upon conventional Office applications such as Excel, Powerpoint and Access, the e-Tools system delivers compliance with the three leading cabling administration infrastructure management standards, ANSI/TIA/EIA-606-A, IS 11801 and BS EN 50174-1.

Browser-based, through hyperlinked schematics and associated test result reader software, the e-Tools package provides every feature that could be desired by an installer to document a fixed infrastructure using either voice grade, data grade copper or optical fibre.

e-Tools software can be purchased to document a single building, a multi-building campus or even a multi-campus infrastructure.

Although the basic software is targeted at installers seeking to document the fixed cabling within and between buildings, those installers wishing to implement sophisticated connectivity management are able to export the .csv files necessary to create the fixed elements of intelligent patching systems.

Little or no specialist software knowledge is necessary to create and deliver documentation using the basic package but, if required, training is available to provide users with the ability to make modifications to the underlying package and to produce more customised layouts and reports.

Further information is available from The Cabling Partnership:
mike.gilmore@btinternet.com

FIA APPROVED INSTALLER SCHEME

'There's something in it for you!'

The few that have it – *renew it every year.* It's an *exclusive club* and a *'badge'* with value. It *costs little*, but we do not just *'give it away'* but the

**FIA Approved Installer Scheme
(the FIA-AIS)
needs more members.**

If you are active in fibre installations - consider the **selling advantage**. The FIA Council works hard to promote fibre optic industry benefits and members' business interests. The **FIA-AIS** is an industry benefit and **you** are a member. Put the two together for a marketing edge - **added value** for your prospective customers.

If you are active in fibre installations with a strong track record and an ISO 9000 QA 'ticket', talk to us now about your Association's *Approved Installer Scheme*.

More *FIA-AIS* members will help us to persuade the specifiers, consultants and end-users on the value in choosing an *FIA Approved Installer* for their next fibre project.

If you would like to receive more information the criteria and application form can be downloaded from the FIA web-site – <http://www.fibreoptic.org.uk/PDF/Ais.pdf>

FIA Members Guide

The publication contains full contact details about every FIA member with Approved organisations being highlighted throughout. In addition, a comprehensive index allows users to look up products and services by company or by the product/service required

Containing 74pp of valuable information about 200 national and international organisations, this is the most comprehensive guide to most of the leading installers and manufacturers in the fibre optics sector.

It will be available at all exhibitions, seminars, and conferences where the FIA has a presence.

Copies are available free-of-charge. If you would like further Guides for yourself, a colleague, or another organisation, please contact the Secretariat with your requirements.



OPTO 2003 Exhibition/Conference

Said to show case all optical solutions for Industry, Networks and Telecommunications, the OPTO 2003 Exhibition/Conference will be held from 21st /23rd October 2003 in Hall 7-1 in Paris, at Paris Expo, Porte de Versailles, France.

With around 200 exhibitors, more than 8,000 visitors and 400 conference delegates are expected. Visitors will have the chance to discover new products, services and applications that characterise today's main fields in the optics industry - such as optic networks, optoelectronic technologies and lasers - and the way in which they contribute to the development of pioneering industrial projects primarily in the automotive, optical telecommunications, aeronautics, space, medical/health, and defence sectors.

At the same time, a conference programme featuring experts, events and dedicated areas in the exhibition will specifically highlight the new biotechnology, nanotechnology and broadband optical network (MAN, LAN, etc.) applications and markets.

OPTO 2003 is being organised in partnership with: ANTICIPA-TECHNOPOLE LANNION TREGOR, CLUB CMOI, CLUB NANOTECHNOLOGIE, CLUB OPTIQUE, the FIA, GIFO, OPTICS VALLEY, POP SUD, RHENA PHOTONICS, and SFO

Information/Applications/Early registration: +33 (0)1 49 68 51 53

E-mail: optoexpo@exposium.fr Website: www.optoexpo.com

Online Fibre Optics Newsletter

While there is a massive amount of material on the internet, members might be interested in taking a free subscription to receive the Fibre Optics Online Newsletter by registering at www.fiberopticonline.com. Some useful information is contained in the publication.

Are You a Training Provider Within the FIA?

Please ensure that you update your details on the FIA Web Site as regularly as possible. It is a valuable resource on the site which is accessed many times each day. Both Approved and Non-Approved Training Providers are featured. The original printed guide to FIA Training Providers has been replaced by the web site guide.

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FIA Guide to Waste Disposal

Don't forget that the FIA's Technical Support Document 2000-5-2 covers the procedures to be adopted and the precautions to be taken during the use and subsequent disposal of the potentially hazardous substances commonly used in the fibre optic industry - a very hot subject today. These range from filling compounds used during the manufacture of fibre cable, adhesives, polishing and cleaning compounds used during fibre termination and cleaning and degreasing compounds used during maintenance of the completed cables or patch cords.

Recommendations are made as to the best practices to be adopted, the review and implementation of COSHH programmes and appropriate Occupational Exposure Limits defined by the Health and Safety Executive and the RIDDOR reporting requirements. The guide will save time previously spent in cross-referring to various different Standards.

The document deals specifically with the precautions to be taken to guard against injury from the fibre optic shards necessarily produced during the termination or splicing of fibre optic cables. Being very small and sharp, optical fibre shards can easily penetrate the skin, causing pain, irritation and inflammation; as they are transparent to X-rays they can be very difficult to locate and remove if they do penetrate the skin. The transparent shards can also be unknowingly carried on the skin and subsequently transferred to the eyes or mouth. The guide selects BS EN 50174 as the basis of the further recommendations set out as a Code of Practice to be followed to avoid injury to personnel. The FIA Code of Practice covers the handling precautions, protective equipment and disposal methods to be used when working with fibre optic cables.

The guides can be download from the FIA website, www.fibreoptic.org.uk, or are available on CD or as hard copy. They are free to FIA members; they cost £15 each to non-members who can order online or by contacting the Secretariat.

Guide to Forthcoming Shows and Conferences

OSDA Conference: The LINK Optical Systems for the Digital Age (OSDA) programme is staging a one-day conference in London on Thursday 5 June 2003. This year the conference is being held at the Dali Universe, on the South Bank next to the London Eye, making it both an accessible and impressive location. You may also wish to visit www.OSDA.org.uk to find out more about the programme and its projects. The website is currently being re-designed but will continue to be updated with conference information.

Optical Communications 2003 - a European Conference: Rimini, 21-25 September 2003. See www.ecoc.it for further information.

Broadband Communications Europe (BCE): Maastricht, Netherlands, 14-16 October 2003.
For more information, please visit: www.broadband-convention.com.

Mesurexpo-Exposition de Physique, Opto and Semaine de l'Electronique: Paris, 21-23 October 2003.
Held in conjunction with Automation Europe – Optimisation Europe 2003, 'the exhibition of all automation and optimisation solutions for production'.

Public Wireless LAN London 27-28 November 2003 For details, visit smi-online.co.uk/pwlan.asp.