



Guidance for Scheme and Training Providers on Criteria for Approval of an Exemption from the ECS Health and Safety Assessment

All exemptions from the ECS Health & Safety Assessment are granted at the discretion of the JIB and the SJIB, operating through the ECS Steering Committee.

This document answers some questions and provides guidelines and mechanisms regarding exemptions as follows:

- 1) The essential aim of the ECS Health and Safety Assessment.
- 2) What does this mean for an individual wishing to obtain an ECS/Grade Card?
- 3) What is meant by an exemption?
- 4) Why do exemptions each have a validity period?
- 5) Why are some exemptions valid for a longer period than others?
- 6) Where can a current list of approved exemptions be found?
- 7) What does a Training Provider have to do to apply for an exemption?
- 8) The Exemption Process.

1) The essential aim of the ECS Health and Safety Assessment

The ECS Health and Safety Assessment was introduced as the method of assessing the **current** knowledge of individuals working in the electrotechnical industry across a wide range of relevant health and safety topics. Such knowledge and awareness will help ensure their health and safety, and that of others who work with or near them, on site.

2) What does this mean for an individual wishing to obtain an ECS/Grade Card?

Since 1 February 2003, in order to demonstrate a satisfactory level of current health and safety knowledge, all applicants for new or renewed ECS/Grade Cards are required to have either:

- a) successfully completed the ECS Health and Safety Assessment; or
- b) provided suitable evidence (e.g. a copy of a certificate) of holding an exemption (within the validity period) which is recognised by the JIB and the SJIB as fulfilling the essential aim of the ECS Health and Safety Assessment above, and the requirements shown in 7 below.

3) What is meant by an exemption?

The JIB and the SJIB recognise that the achievement of some alternative means of assessing an individual's health and safety knowledge which demonstrates an equivalent or greater knowledge and awareness as is required by the ECS Health and Safety Assessment. An exemption will therefore save the individual and/or their employer time and expense whilst maintaining or exceeding the required minimum standard.

To be eligible for an exemption, any such alternative assessment must have been approved by the JIB and the SJIB as fulfilling, as a minimum, the essential aim of the ECS Health and Safety Assessment, and the requirements shown in 7 below.

4) Why do exemptions each have a validity period?

Health and safety legislation and accompanying guidance change through time, for example due to changes in technology and improvements in health and safety practices. In addition, an individual's knowledge may fade unless refresher training is undertaken from time to time.

As is emphasised in the essential aim, the ECS Health and Safety Assessment seeks to test **current** health and safety knowledge, therefore awareness needs to be assessed periodically.

It is for these same reasons that exemptions are also assigned a validity period.

5) Why are some exemptions valid for a longer period than others?

Certain health and safety qualifications may demonstrate that an individual has a level of relevant health and safety knowledge in excess of that required to successfully complete the ECS Health and Safety Assessment. Some will require much more extensive study and the sitting of written examinations rather than multiple-choice assessments and therefore require a much more in-depth level of knowledge. For these reasons the validity period varies, depending upon the level of the qualification.

6) Where can a current list of approved exemptions be found?

The JIB and the SJIB maintain a list of recognised exemptions which is reviewed annually by the ECS Steering Committee and can be viewed at www.ecscard.org.uk and www.sjib.org.uk

7) What does a Training Provider have to do to apply for an exemption?

To obtain an exemption, a scheme or training provider is required to provide the JIB and the SJIB with a compelling case that a scheme, assessment or qualification merits an exemption.

The case for exemption should, as a minimum, include:

- The duration of the course (hours); and
- Provision of the course syllabus or other training provision, showing clearly that all ten topics (see below) included within the ECS Health and Safety Assessment are covered to a satisfactory level; and
- The form and duration of the assessment/test/examination(s) individuals are required to undertake, and the required pass mark.

It is essential that the individual benefiting from the exemption has demonstrated, **by passing a suitable test or examination**, knowledge and awareness of **construction** health and safety issues covering, as a minimum, **all ten topics** included within the ECS Health and Safety Assessment, i.e.:

- General health and safety at work
- Manual handling operations
- Reporting accidents
- Personal protective equipment at work
- Health and hygiene

- Fire and emergency
- Work at height
- Work equipment
- Site specific hazards, and
- Electrotechnical.

8) The Exemption Process

Applications for an exemption will be considered carefully by the JIB and the SJIB, in line with the criteria above. An exemption is granted at the discretion of the JIB and the SJIB, and neither body will enter into further correspondence regarding the decision.

A first-time application for an exemption will be considered free of charge. Subsequent re-applications (for the same, or similar, schemes or courses) will require a non-refundable administration fee of £500.

Applications should be submitted in writing to:

The Secretary to the ECS Steering Committee
The Joint Industry Board
PO Box 127
Swanley
Kent
BR8 9BH

Please Note: An individual cannot obtain an exemption for a non-exempted scheme or training course. They should contact their scheme or training course provider, who may then seek an exemption for the scheme or course as above.

An example of a 'scheme' might be a 'safety passport' or other system that recognises an individual's health and safety knowledge.