

CPC Level 3 Unit 4 - 05608

March 2011

The work of many candidates exhibited the usual difficulties arising when Level 1 or 2 candidates attempt to sit a Level 3 examination. Until such time that there are pre-conditions placed on entry to the CPC examinations, this will undoubtedly continue.

General failings again include the inability of candidates to express their answers in complete sentences. It is unrealistic to expect to acquire a Level 3 qualification by the submission of a series of lists containing one- or two-word answers. The inability of candidates to cope with basic mathematical calculations is another recurring theme.

Question 1:

This question required candidates to outline the steps which would have to be taken in applying for a new standard international 'O' licence in the West Midlands Traffic Area. The question was straightforward and the majority of candidates scored reasonably well, identifying the correct application document (GV79), the timescales and the documents to be submitted with the application.

Commonly occurring errors causing candidates to lose marks included applying for a national licence, applying for a major change and confusion between fitness and good repute.

Question 2:

This question required candidates to create a driver's schedule for a two day round trip from Hull to Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Carlisle and Manchester. Most candidates were able to score well and create legal schedules.

Other candidates failed to score high marks. The principal reasons for this included opting to unload at Glasgow after completing 4½ hours of driving rather than taking a break first, and a number of candidates completely failed to follow the instruction in the question to finish at the earliest possible time by opting to construct a three day schedule. This particular error was particularly noticeable as it manifested itself consistently in certain centres, suggesting that the instructors there had incorrectly briefed their candidates.

Candidates were allowed full marks on Day Two whether they opted to start work at 05.45 or 06.00.

Question 3:

This was a relatively straightforward costing question for the Route 2 journey on which Question 2 was based. Even though candidates were provided with labelled summary boxes in the answer booklet, this question was generally not well answered.

The standing cost of the vehicle should have been calculated at £268.60 per day and the running cost at a total of £307.56 for the round trip. One night's subsistence and the 7.5% profit mark up needed to be added to score maximum marks (the mark scheme allowed alternative answers which added the profit mark up either before or after the inclusion of the night's subsistence).

Candidates found a wide range of ways in which to lose marks. The underlying reasons for failure were undoubtedly poor mathematical skills and an insufficient understanding of how to put together a costing calculation.

Question 4:

This question was in two parts. In part (a), candidates were asked to suggest potential advantages for the company in opting to contract out its maintenance at the new West Midlands site. Obvious answers included the fact that there was no need to allocate space or capital for a facility on the site and also that, as a fixed price contract had been agreed with the maintenance supplier, budgeting would be simple. Most candidates managed to correctly identify a reasonable number of advantages.

In part (b), candidates were asked to describe a Nil Defect reporting system and to suggest advantages of it. Correct answers regarding the advantages included the fact that an auditable document is produced each time a check is completed and that it could assist to show that a check had been carried out if stopped subsequently in a VOSA check. This line of questioning represented a change from the more usual maintenance question areas and was not generally well answered by candidates.

Question 5:

Question 5 required candidates to select the most appropriate vehicle to carry a 17 metre long, 3.25 metre wide steel structure and to then identify the steps needed to be taken to move the structure legally. The correct vehicle to be used was the 44 tonne GVW tractor unit with the 13.6 metres flatbed trailer. A disturbing number of candidates opted for the 18 tonne rigid vehicle, obviously motivated by the low weight of the consignment and the mistaken belief that such a vehicle had 12 metres of load space available!

As the structure exceeded the normal width and length of the semi-trailer, appropriate red and white markings needed to be specified as well as the provision of an attendant and two clear days' notice to the police. As the load itself had a height of 3.75 metres then a height indicator had to be fitted in the vehicle cab.

A commonly occurring failing was to make no attempt to link the answer to the information in the scenario and question. A number of candidates opted to simply list the various actions to be taken when projections exceeded certain limits e.g. – "rear projection over 1 metre – clearly mark". As the actual projection to the rear of the semi-trailer was 3.4 metres, such an answer was irrelevant and attracted no marks.

Whilst a number of candidates were able to score well on this question, generally it was not well answered.

Question 6:

Question 6 simply wanted candidates to identify the various stages of testing required to take a driver with a provisional Category B entitlement to a full C+E. There were a large number of correct answers available to candidates on this question, with mentions of the appropriate theory tests, hazard perception tests, CPC case studies, licence acquisition practical tests and CPC practical tests all scoring marks.

Many candidates lost marks by failing to identify the individual components of the testing regime – answers such as “Pass C, go for C+E” lacked any precision and failed to gain marks. A significant number of candidates also lost marks by ignoring the Category B testing and not beginning their answer until preparation for Category C. A disappointing number of candidates also demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the differing vehicles which might be driven by Category C and C1 holders.

Question 7:

This was a simple organisation chart for the Parkin company, including both the Hull and new West Midlands operations. Although no marks were withheld for the practice on this occasion, candidates should be discouraged from using only initials on the charts to indicate job titles. This is a lazy approach and gives rise to the possibility of misinterpretation.

Common failings on this question included the absence of the newly-appointed General Manager, an absence of any link between the Managing Director and the Finance Director, having the General Manager at the same level as the Finance Director and having the West Midlands clerical staff reporting to the Finance Director in Hull.

Despite these shortcomings, the majority of candidates scored quite well on this question.

Question 8:

This question required candidates to calculate both the annual tyre and fuel budgets for the company. This required separate calculations for the tractor units and semi-trailers and the rigid vehicles. The correct tyre budget for the company should have been calculated at £148,500 and the fuel budget at £1,210,000. The inability of candidates to use a calculator, allied to the previously mentioned general mathematical weaknesses, lead to a variety of spectacularly incorrect answers. The candidate who calculated the fuel budget at £96 million deserves a special mention!

Pass rate: 51%