



# Contract Flooring Association

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### The chief executive of ficer: Richard Catt

STANDING out from the crowd is important in a competitive market and CFA membership gives flooring companies a head start. In addition you need to be able to demonstrate a professional approach.

CSCS cards help to differentiate your workforce as do NVQ qualifications. Both of which the CFA supports and encourages.

There is now an even stronger link between CSCS cards and the NVQ qualification. The support and pressure for a fully qualified and safe workforce via CSCS cards is growing.

Currently, 14 major contractors (the MCG or major contractors group) are working to enforce new guidelines introduced last month (January 2007) that require anyone working on their sites to have a CSCS card.

It has also been made a condition that any operatives renewing their CSCS cards need an NVQ in order for the card to be renewed.

Operatives without an NVQ can apply for a temporary card which is valid for 12 months, allowing them access to site for this period. When this card expires the operative must have an NVQ for the card to be renewed.

ConstructionSkills is working to further increase support, relying on the MCG group to enforce it. But who can argue with the principles described above? I know who I would want to employ if faced with a choice.

The really good news is that there is a great deal of very accessible FREE support to gain this competitive advantage and the CFA and FITA can help.

The Experienced Worker Practical Assessment (EWPA) route to an NVQ qualification and therefore the correct CSCS card

# Are you a Pa (or even a Ma)? It's never too late for an NVQ with **EWPA**\*

\* Experienced Worker Practical Assessment

*'It simply isn't good enough to have a general CSCS card any more; the major contractors are demanding a job specific card'*

- Paul Crowdy,  
trainee at FITA



for an installer is now being offered by FITA.

So what does EWPA achieve? Well, essentially it enables a fitter with sufficient experience to gain an NVQ qualification in a relatively short period of time.

Although this route is rigorous, it helps to achieve pre-qualification via a skills scan. The practical element of the assessment can be completed in only eight and a half hours. After this a professional discussion completes the process for successful candidates.

How free is free? Well in terms of the cost of the assessment it is absolutely free as 100% funding is currently available, providing you meet some funding criteria. Simply contact the FITA offices and with our partners in this project, we do the rest. T: 0115 950 6836

As a final but significant bonus through NSCC, when CFA members register for a CSCS card they can obtain £100 for each person. No strings attached!

I recently spent some time with a group of installers completing EWPA with FITA. All were from a particular CFA member.

I spoke to the guys and asked them why they had decided to obtain their NVQ level 2 in impervious floorlaying via the EWPA route?

One of the group, Paul Crowdy, explained his experience of major contractors:

'It simply isn't good enough to have a general CSCS card anymore; the major contractors are demanding a job specific card.'

I also asked Paul if the assessment was what he had expected. He replied that 'it wasn't easy, but as long as you know your stuff it is fine'.

The message to me is clear. This is the way that our industry is moving, towards a skilled, trained and safe workforce. So, don't get lost in the crowd, take the EWPA route to an NVQ and, at the moment, enjoy it for free.

FITA currently offers the EWPA route for NVQ level 2 for impervious flooring.

**For further details contact the FITA office. T: 0115 950 6836**

A recent training session at one of the Fita centres



CFA comment



**The president: Terry Wolfe**

# Giving vent to solving moisture problems

A WELL KNOWN wood flooring distributor told me once that they advise the moisture content of a solid subfloor should not exceed 40% RH, if solid hardwood boards are to be adhered to it. Other wise a sur face DPM should be introduced.

I said: 'I have never seen a screed with a moisture content as low as 40%.' They replied: 'Precisely.'

'What does 'Precisely' mean?' I asked. 'It means that every screed should have a DPM!' was the reply.

I think that is very good advice. True, in most cases of failure that I meet, nobody tested the screed anyway! But in some instances, the flooring contractor went by the book and even carried out a

hygrometer test, yet still he had problems.

Certain other writers in **CFJ** have said that the British Standards must not be interpreted too precisely. When it comes to boards fixed to concrete, remember, this is a comparatively recent development, certainly since the 1987 BS8201 was written, and 75% RH is just not dry enough. 40% is, of course, a bit extreme, but a DPM on every subfloor is not a bad idea.

However, remember that this does not mean you do not have to test at all: Different products have different requirements.

One of the problems I meet nowadays is the use of single coat DPM's where a moisture

test would have dictated two coats. Don't save a pound to subsequently lose £50!

You may assume that if you are secret nailing your boards to floorboards, you do not need to worry about moisture? Wrong!

Moist air circulating under the floorboards, which was fine before because it escaped via gaps in the boards, now becomes trapped and starts to cause problems with the new, kiln-dried hardwood flooring.

The introduction here of Sicalcraft building paper, with a bitumen core, will help to avoid this problem. Even with Sicalcraft there can still be problems if the subfloor moisture is at a particularly high level.

If you can check it somehow, it

is well worth while. In any event, as I have said previously, do walk round the building and check the ventilation to the subfloor void. I saw a house recently which had one small vent to the rear, and none at all to the front!

Moisture continues to be the single commonest cause of failure in flooring installations. In today's world, with wonderful equipment and excellent products on hand to protect against dampness, there is no longer a reason for the competent contractor to be caught out.

**Contact Terry Wolfe on**

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## Flooring industry Training Association

### TEXTILE

**Basic carpet fitting:** Mar 3-7 (L); Apr 7-11 (L); May 12-16 (N); Jun 16-20 (L); Jul 14-18 (N).

**Intermediate carpet fitting:** Feb 11-15 (L); Mar 31-Apr 4 (N); May 19-23 (L); Jul 7-11 (L).

**Advanced carpet fitting:** Apr 14-17 (L); Jun 23-26 (L).

**Carpet tile fitting:** Feb 4-5 (N).

### VINYL FLOORING

**Domestic vinyl fitting:** Mar 6-7 (L); Apr 10-11 (L); May 15-16 (N); Jun 19-20 (L); Jul 17-18 (N).

**Safety & solid vinyl fitting (commercial)** Feb 18-21 (N); Mar 31-Apr 3 (L); May 12-15 (L); Jun 16-19 (N).

**Design vinyl tile fitting:** Feb 25-28; May 5-8; Jun 30-Jul 3 (L)

### WOOD & LAMINATE

**Laminate/Floating wood fitting** Mar 13-14 (L); Apr 24-25 (N); Jun 5-6 (L); Jul 10-11 (N).

**Basic wood fitting:** Mar 10-12 (L); Apr 21-23 (N); Jun 2-4 (L); Jul 7-9 (N)

**Intermediate wood fitting:** Feb 4-6; Mar 17-19, 28-30; Jun 9-11; Jul 21-23 (L).

**Sanding & sealing:** Feb 7-8; Mar 27-28; May 1-2; Jun 12-13; Jul 24-25 (L).

**Estimating & Planning:** Feb 26-27; May 8-9; Jul 1-2 (L).

**Understanding moisture:** Mar 5 (N); Mar 20 (L); May 28 (L); Jul 28 (L).

### Subfloor preparation:

Mar 25-26; May 26-27 (L).

### UP-SKILLING COURSES

Stairs, subfloor preparation, joins, dual stick, stretching: On request.

### Ardex presentation days

Feb 27 (N); Mar 19 (N). (Contact Ardex direct on: 01440 714939)

### Parador presentation days

(TBA Contact Gordon Collier of Parador on: 07917 543259)

### (N) Nelson (L) Loughborough

**Early booking for FITA courses is advised to ensure you have a place.**

■ T: 0115 950 6836

■ [www.fita.co.uk](http://www.fita.co.uk)

### Other courses

#### HCTS MERSEY ACADEMY

The HCTS floor covering academy offers free apprentice training for NVQ for local CITB and a few non-CITB employers, plus day release courses for local flooring firms. Shirley Ashcroft

■ T: 0151 289 9090

#### NVQ TRAINING

FITA offers NVQ training through EWPA. Contact FITA for details.

■ T: 0115 950 6836

NVQ Floorcoverings (Levels 1, 2, and 3) offered at Thomsit Centres, & OSAT for experienced workers.

**Northumberland:** Richard Hogg

■ T: 01670 841252

**Leicester:** Martin Coles

■ T: 07836 622811

**Accrington & Rossendale:** Kevin McLean

■ T: 07980 891318

**Yale, Wrexham:** Irene Dobson

■ T: 01978 361440

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A recent training course of the NCCA

## Cleaners focus on training

THE National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA) is the only independent UK trade body solely dedicated to the craft of carpet, upholstery, curtain and other soft furnishing cleaning. Established in 1968 it is now widely recognised by government, the media, industry and commerce as the authoritative source of information and advice on all aspects of the industry.

The NCCA aims to develop the required skills, knowledge and understanding of its members, so that they come equipped not just with a comprehensive and up to date knowledge of all types of cleaning equipment and chemicals available, and the various cleaning techniques they can be used with, but also with an awareness of both carpet and upholstery construction and the fibres used in their manufacture.

All applicants for NCCA membership are required to undertake at least the basic NCCA training in carpet and upholstery cleaning, or equivalent, and reach the prescribed NCCA standard in written test papers.

The course provides impartial training on the complete spectrum of cleaning techniques and equipment currently available. It is aimed at both newcomers to the business as well as more experienced professionals wanting to extend or update their technical skills and knowledge or perhaps complement the training courses provided by equipment manufacturers. The training is led by two NCCA directors, who are practicing carpet cleaners in daily touch with customers and their problems.

**NCCA courses are listed on page 20** ■ T: 0116 271 9550