



Construction Site Health & Safety Cards

Advice for Members

July 2026

Purpose

This note summarises the main construction site 'card' routes that may be encountered by CIEEM members working as ecologists or environmental managers on UK construction sites, and the typical requirements for each. Site requirements vary, so you should always confirm what is needed with the client, principal contractor, or site management team before attending site.

Construction sites can be hazardous environments. Depending on the activities you undertake, you may be treated by the site as a visitor or as a contractor. If you are working as a contractor, your work will be covered by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. In all cases, you should expect to complete the site's induction process and comply with site rules (including personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements), and you may be required to be supervised by site staff.

Quick guide

- First: ask the project/site team whether a card is required, and which scheme they will accept.
- If you are visiting housebuilding sites (non-construction role): the Home Builders Visitors Card may be acceptable.
- If you are working on major infrastructure schemes where a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) -style card is required for ecological roles: you may need a British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI)/Land-based Industry Skills Scheme (LISS) CSCS card.
- Expect to need a relevant Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Health, Safety and Environment test and, for the BALI/LISS route, Register of Land-based Operators (ROLO) training (see below). On some utilities or rail projects, different competence schemes may be required (e.g., Basic Electricity Safety Course (BESC) or Personal Track Safety (PTS)).



CSCS cards

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) provides an assurance that people on construction sites have the appropriate health and safety training and knowledge for their site role. A CSCS card is not a legal requirement, but many contractors require it (or an equivalent) as a condition of site access.

Cards (often issued digitally) allow those working on a construction site to demonstrate that they have met the required health and safety standard. Ecologists and environmental managers working on some major infrastructure schemes may be required to hold a card issued through the Landscape Industry Skills Scheme (LISS) and CSCS route, commonly referred to as the BALI/LISS CSCS card.

The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) is licensed by CSCS to provide BALI/LISS CSCS cards. Cards are usually valid for five years (except trainee cards). Ecologists and environmental managers do not typically have a direct route to a CSCS-only card.

Further details of the BALI/LISS CSCS card scheme and how to apply are available at www.bali.org.uk/lisscscs. Not all CSCS and BALI/LISS card types are available to ecologists and environmental managers.

To apply for a BALI/LISS CSCS card, ecologists and environmental managers will need to complete the relevant ROLO training course and pass an appropriate CITB Health, Safety and Environment test. The separate ROLO health and safety test is not required for this route. The table below summarises the CSCS card options available via the BALI/LISS scheme and the minimum training and test requirements at the time of publication (July 2026).

Members are advised to first check with the project or site team whether a CSCS card is required and, if so, which card type is acceptable. If you are eligible for a Professionally Qualified Person card, you may still find that a Skilled Worker card meets the site's requirements. Alternatively, the Academically Qualified card may be suitable. The Skilled Worker and Academically Qualified cards require a one-day ROLO Operatives course, rather than the three-day ROLO Manager course.

If you are also a member of another professional body, it may be worth checking whether that body offers an alternative route to a card that your site will accept. In some cases, this may provide different training requirements or application routes.

CSCS Card	Card Colour	CITB Test Required	Minimum ROLO Training Required
Trainee	Red	Yes	1 day ROLO Operatives course
Skilled Worker (Any member with protected species licence(s) or other relevant licences)	Blue	Yes	1 day ROLO Operatives course
Professionally Qualified Person (Full member or Fellow)	White/ Yellow	Yes	3 day Manager course (2 day refresher)
Academically Qualified member (relevant degree or equivalent qualification)	White/ Yellow	Yes	1 day ROLO Operatives course

Home Builders Visitors Card

The Home Builders Visitors Card is a scheme established by the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and the Home Building Skills Partnership (HBSP) as an industry-specific replacement for the former CSCS Visitors card (which is no longer available). It provides assurance that anyone visiting a housebuilding construction site has basic, up-to-date health and safety awareness appropriate for that environment.

The scheme is used by many housebuilders and associated companies, and in most instances ecologists and environmental managers visiting housebuilding sites will be covered. Applicants must provide evidence that they have passed the CITB Health, Safety and Environment test.

Employers can make bulk applications.

For many CIEEM members visiting housebuilding sites in a non-construction role, this card may be appropriate because it demonstrates a basic level of health and safety awareness. It is not intended for people undertaking construction activities or higher-risk, intrusive works; if your role involves such activities, confirm the required competence and card route with the site team.

Further information and details of how to apply are available [here](#).

Other competence schemes you may encounter (utilities and rail)

Basic Electrical Safety Competence (BESC: Access, Movement and Egress):

On some electricity transmission/distribution projects (for example, when surveys require access to substations or other operational electrical environments), you may be asked to evidence BESC:AME. This is an Energy & Utility Skills Register (EUSR) scheme focused on safely entering, moving around and exiting defined electrical work areas (it is not authorisation to carry out electrical work). Registration is typically for three years and may be specific to the work area (e.g., substations, overhead lines, underground cables). Requirements and acceptance vary by asset owner and project, so confirm what is needed with the client/site team in advance.

Rail: Personal Track Safety (PTS):

Where ecological work requires access 'on or near the line' on the operational railway, a Personal Track Safety (PTS) competence may be required. PTS is typically managed via Network Rail's Sentinel system and usually involves (as a minimum) sponsorship, rail medical fitness checks, and drugs and alcohol screening, alongside training and assessment. You cannot normally obtain PTS independently without a sponsor (often your employer/contracting organisation). Rail projects may also require additional rail modules depending on location and task (for example, electrification-related competence). Always confirm rail access and competence requirements with the rail client/principal contractor well in advance.



CIEEM position

CIEEM recognises that the process for obtaining construction site cards can be complex and time-consuming.

The Institute is working with relevant industry bodies to improve accessibility and to ensure that routes are proportionate to ecological roles, while maintaining high safety standards.

Keeping this information current:

This information was correct at the time of publication (July 2026). Members are advised to check the relevant scheme websites for the most up-to-date information, as requirements can change. CIEEM accepts no responsibility for members acting on incorrect or out-of-date information.



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