



Wednesday February 8, 2012

Assessors won't compromise safety

Department of Transport assessors are being bullied into giving licences to incompetent and dangerous drivers to meet unworkable and unsafe demands.

The Department is pushing for more applicants to be passed and for more assessments to be done each day.

Some assessors have been in managerial firing line for not passing enough applicants and being below a particular centre's average pass rate, which the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association said was a blatant push to put business and statistics ahead of road safety.

Union Branch Secretary Toni Walkington said the unrealistic demands by management were all about putting more people out onto the road before they should be which compromised ongoing road safety campaigns.

She said the assessors should never be expected work to a pass rate instead of a standard.

"Some of these drivers and families might be complaining when they don't get their licences straight away, but let me tell you that is nothing compared to the pain and grief experienced by victims of road trauma," Ms Walkington said.

She said the community expected the assessors to mark to a standard which was clearly spelt out on the assessment form, giving them clear guidance on whether or not a driver should be passed.

To be licenced candidates need to reach a minimum score and pass at least four of the five sections.

Assessors believe the roads would become more dangerous if they were forced to diminish driving standards and questioned the scrutiny on pass rates.

Ms Walkington said some assessors at one northern river centre had been heavily scrutinised for their low pass rates (29.66% until September).

She said it didn't take into consideration the poor driving standards of many of the applicants, many who were from overseas.

Some of assessors were also asked to relocate to other centres that had better pass rates.

Assessors have said any claim they took delight in failing clients was insulting.

They said they assessed to a standard and refused to hand out licences to clients who were incompetent or dangerous.

A branch manager sent out a letter to assessors in November telling them they were expected to work towards achieving and maintaining a pass rate between 45-55% for six months “which is considered a suitable period of time to demonstrate a consistent improvement”.

BREAK OUT BOX

Candidate fails when...

- * Assessor intervenes to avoid a potentially dangerous situation.
- * They speed, disobey regulatory signs or markings that could threaten safety
- * They don't wear a seatbelt.
- * They fail to respond to a crisis or potential crisis.
- * They fail to follow reasonable direction.
- * They refuse or are unable to perform any part of the exercise.
- * Cause a crisis or potential crisis.

Note: Tests are discontinued when assessor believes the candidate is not capable of taking the test, the vehicle is not roadworthy, vehicle breaks down, a bribe or inducement is offered.

FOR COMMENT:

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