

## **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways pushes ahead with its skilling programme: proposals received from nine states for training of drivers: concessionaires being roped in for training of highways construction workers**

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways is steadily pushing ahead with its programme for training and skill upgradation of drivers and highway construction workers. Several circulars have been issued over the last three months, outlining the guidelines of the scheme and issuing directions to the concerned authorities and agencies in the centre and all states.

In case of drivers, the skill training / skill upgradation will be provided at the existing driver training centres run by the State Road Transport Corporations (SRTCs). In addition to this, private promoters are also being invited to set up training facilities. The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways will give a grant of Rs 1 crore to each SRTC for augmenting its training infrastructure. Similarly, the Ministry will also give a grant of Rs 1 crore to each private promoter for setting up training centres, after their project report is duly appraised and sanctioned by NSDC or a recognized financial institution.

The Ministry will also provide a stipend to each trainee, both at the government and privately run training centres, based on the daily minimum wage, to compensate for loss of income during the training period. This amount will be borne out of the Road Safety Funds of the Ministry. The cost of training will be met out of Prime Minister Kaushal Vikas Yojana of the Ministry of Skill Development both at the government and privately run training centres.

The State Road Transport Corporations have been asked to open their training centres to the general public. At present, only drivers employed by the SRTC were being trained at these centres. The Automotive Skill Development Council (ASDC) of the Ministry of Skill Development has drawn up a curricular for the training of drivers under its National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). All training centres will have to conform to NSQF guidelines. The Ministry had issued directions in this regard to Transport Commissioners / Secretaries of all states and UTs and Managing Directors of all SRTCs in August. So far, 55 proposals have already been received from nine SRTCs for implementing the scheme.

For skill development of workmen in the highways construction sector the Ministry has resorted to convergence of resources. This training is proposed to be done by concessionaires / contractors at project sites, ITIs and Indian Academy of Highways Engineers. In addition to this, according to a circular issued this week, for projects with civil works of Rs 100 crore or more, the training will be taken up by the Project Head looking after the concerned project through the authorised training centres of Directorate General of Training. Preference is to be given to the institutes located near the project site. The Project Head/Executive Engineer will have to ensure that the training of workmen is as per the NSQF.

The training cost will be met from the provision of the contingency fund at a rate of 0.05% of the total estimated cost of civil work. For example, if the total civil construction cost is Rs 100 Crore, Contingencies @ 2.8% would be Rs 2.8 crore. Provision for skill development as proposed @ 0.05 % would then be Rs 0.05 Crore and the contingencies available for the main work would be Rs 2.75 crore. For this training also the Ministry will pay the trainees a stipend based on minimum wages to compensate for the loss of income during the training period. This expenditure will be met from the CRF allocation.

This week's circular also aims to rope in private contractors/ concessionaires into the training scheme by directing that the Contract Documents/ Agreement should be amended to include the provision that the Contractor/Concessionaire will try to hire at least 10% trained workmen as per NSQF. If necessary, the requisite workmen may be got trained through recognised institutes; and also that the Contractor/Concessionaire will organize training at project site/sites for the trainees as and when required as per the training schedule finalised in consultation with the training institutes, and the Project Director/Executive Engineer. The Ministry has directed that the above provisions should be incorporated in the tender documents immediately and be made applicable to all projects with civil works of Rs. 100 Crores and above which are at tender stage or yet to be awarded. For ongoing projects, the same is to be incorporated by signing the Supplementary Agreement to the main Contract Agreement

The scheme for training and skill upgradation of drivers and highways construction workers is a major initiative of the Ministry that aims at bridging the gap between the demand for skilled persons in the transport sector and the huge shortfall in the availability of the same. Training and skill upgradation will not only provide employment to a large number of people, but also make Indian roads safer for driving by inculcating the desired sense of responsible driving among the trained drivers.

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