

TOPICAL | NOW

Do I get credits for off-road courses I've completed? Yes. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) recognises prior learning.

How long will the DCC be valid for? It is envisaged that, as with the firearms competency certificate, the certificate will be valid for five years, but it will not require full retesting or retraining.

How much will a DCC cost? Once driver trainers have been registered, and once the curriculum has been finalised, one will have a better idea of the cost. The final cost, which will be determined by the service provider, may also vary from region to region. The cost may also depend on the ancillary benefits offered in terms of the quality of facilities, catering and course material.

Who's training the trainers? Training of drivers and off-road tourist guides will be registered

with the SAQA. Training can only be offered by training providers that have been accredited by the appropriate sector education and training authority (SETA).

What about tour guides? Off-road tour guides will also be required to complete training programmes, but certain credits could be carried forward.

Will I need a new licence? A new driver's licence will not be required.

Will my off-road vehicle also have to pass a competency test? No.

Will I need a DCC to drive on a gravel road, farm road or trail? NOW proposes that the DCC only be required to enter an eco-sensitive area. The DEAT may however decide to make it compulsory to go off-road on a defined, registered trail. If you don't have a DCC, you will possibly be required to

Who is NOW?

The following seven organisations and associations represent the off-road industry on NOW:

- Association of All Wheel Drive Clubs of Southern Africa
- Association of Motorcycle Importers and Distributors
- National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa
- South African National Off-Road Trainers Association
- South Africa Route Owners and Operators Association
- SA Vehicle Renting and Leasing Association
- Four Wheel Drive Guide Association

Led astray. This type of environmental damage gets the environment minister hot under the collar and has led to the self-regulation strategy.

travel with a competent, registered guide.

Does only the driver need a DCC to visit a sensitive area, or the passengers as well? Only the driver would need a DCC to visit an eco-sensitive area. The DCC does not affect the vehicle or the passengers.

The following criteria that would allow access to eco-sensitive areas are being proposed: A DCC by the driver; the accompaniment of a registered off-road guide; A DCC-holder who takes responsibility for his fellow drivers, if there's more than one vehicle.

Will trail owners be forced to have an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) done? No. A complete EIA will only be required for trails in eco-sensitive areas. But, as in the past, trails will have to comply with existing environmental regulations. As before, trails will have to have a management plan. Without a management plan, trails will not be accredited with the regulatory body.

Will trails have to be registered with the DEAT? Yes. This is not new. NOW will try making the registration process easier and simpler.

Will trails be audited? It is proposed that audits be conducted every two years, when a trail will be evaluated in terms of its management plan. This will be done with a range of auditing tools, such as self-auditing, compliance auditing by an accredited agency, or officially appointed inspectors.

Will trail owners have the right to fine transgressing drivers? Trail owners won't have much teeth, but they can report an incident or driver to the regulatory body, who will then take further steps.

