

# Verification of Competency Guidelines



**Verification of Competency (VoC) is a quick and simple check of an operator's ability to operate a piece of plant or equipment safely. It's an essential step towards reducing risk arising from unsafe operations, including injuries and breakdowns.**

It's important to verify that all mobile plant operators at every worksite are competent before commencing work. A VoC ensures that operators' stated experience and abilities can be confirmed via a documented skills and knowledge assessment. As a minimum, an operator should have:

- A current licence or relevant unit of competency.
- Logbooks or work diaries, work documents or other evidence of competency and experience.
- Site induction or authorisation.

## Who conducts a VoC?

At most worksites, members of the site supervision team conduct VoCs. There is no single set of requirements for a VoC, but it should include qualifications, experience, risk identification, plant knowledge and practical observation.

Design and apply a formal, documented process for each item of plant. The process doesn't need to be complex. However, it should check the specific knowledge and skills that a team member needs to operate the equipment safely. Pre-requisites for a VoC verifier include:

- Relevant experience for plant item (may work in tandem with Subject Matter Expert [SME] if required).
- Certificate IV in Training or other VoC qualification.
- Site induction and typically a site supervisor, trainer or team leader.

## How long does a VoC last?

Duration is an important consideration when developing the VoC process. It should reflect the nature of your business's operations. A VoC could be valid for a specified period (12 months, for example) or only for a specific site or project.

Similarly, when you alter or change a machine in any way, you should run your operators through the VoC process again. Doing so will ensure they are aware of the change's specifics and how they might impact operations.

Finally, a VoC might be suspended following an incident, or pending an investigation, until the operator is again deemed competent.

## Creating a VoC

When creating a VoC for plant on your worksites, key considerations include:

- **Plant make and model:** Even from the same manufacturer, not every equipment model is the same. There can be differences in control, design, responsiveness and performance characteristics.
- **Attachments:** Some plant has different attachments, such as diggers, augers and sprayers. You must include all that are in use on your site.
- **Modifications:** Businesses often customise and repair their equipment, which can change its visibility, weight, performance characteristics and more.
- **Pre-start inspection:** One of the most critical aspects of operating equipment is understanding the basic components and being able to spot if something is awry. This empowers the operators and creates ownership of the pre-start process.
- **Restrictions:** Include usage time and work location restrictions.
- **Licensing and registration:** If your team works on roads or public access areas, your VoC should account for registration and insurance requirements.
- **Risk categorisation:** Different equipment may have different requirements for training and assessment.

## VoC: why bother?

VoCs do more than keep your operators (and the public) safe. By reducing the risk of accidents and incidents, they can improve plant uptime and productivity. They also make an important statement about your business culture, showing your team members that safe and skilled operations matter.



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