



Guidance Note: CSCS Cards

Most major contractors and homebuilders require their workforce to hold a valid CSCS card as a demonstration of their commitment to safe and efficient working.

To attain a CSCS card, operatives must achieve a nationally recognised qualification (such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)) which provides contractors with the assurance that the holder has the skills, knowledge, training, and experience to carry out the task(s) for which they are appointed.

CSCS cards (or equivalents) alone may not provide sufficient evidence that a worker has the right skills, knowledge, training, and experience to undertake their role. Operatives may be asked to provide additional evidence of skills, knowledge, training, and experience.

There are many types of CSCS card depending on the card holder's occupation or job role. ATLAS and SLPTG have developed a **Guide to CSCS cards for the Lightning Protection and Steeplejack Industry** to help identify what card to use.

Contents

Card Types for the Lightning Protection and Steeplejack Sectors	Page 2
Renewing an LCE or SJ Skilled Worker Card	Page 3
ATLAS Endorsed Course Providers	Page 5
Frequently asked Questions	Page 5
Contact CSCS	Page 8
A Guide to CSCS cards for the Lightning Protection and Steeplejack Industries	Page 11

Card Types for the Lightning Protection and Steeplejack Sectors

1. Red PROVISIONAL card

The red PROVISIONAL card is available for workers on probation, a work experience programme or pre-apprenticeship programme.

All applicants must have passed the relevant Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test within the last two years.

Cards are valid for six months and are non-renewable. Applicants must register for, or achieve an industry recognised qualification prior to their card expiring.

2. Red APPRENTICE card

The red APPRENTICE card is available if the applicant is registered on an industry recognised apprenticeship scheme and has passed the relevant Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test within the last two years. The apprentice will also need to supply CSCS with an email from the National Construction College (NCC) – East Apprenticeship Officer confirming that they are registered for the next apprenticeship intake. Apprentices who do not apply for a card before they begin the apprenticeship, will be taken through the process during their college induction.

Cards are valid for four years and six months and are non-renewable. Applicants must complete their Apprenticeship prior to their card expiring.

3. Red TRAINEE Card

A red TRAINEE (Craft and Operative) card is available for trainees who are registered for an S/NVQ but have not yet achieved the qualification.

All applicants must have passed the relevant Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test within the last two years.

Cards are valid for a maximum of five years and are non-renewable. Applicants will need to have achieved a relevant S/NVQ, prior to their card expiring.

4. Red EXPERIENCED WORKER card

A red EXPERIENCED WORKER card is available to applicants with on-the-job experience.

The card is issued on a temporary basis while an S/NVQ is being achieved. It is expected to be replaced by a blue SKILLED WORKER card on achievement of an S/NVQ.

All applicants must have passed the relevant Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test within the last two years.

Cards are valid for a maximum of one year and are non-renewable. Applicants will need to have achieved a relevant S/NVQ, prior to their card expiring.

5. Blue SKILLED WORKER card

The blue SKILLED WORKER card is available if the applicant has achieved an S/NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) – Lightning Conductor Engineer or Steeplejacking and has passed the Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test within the last two years.

Cards are valid for five years and are renewable.

6. Gold ADVANCED CRAFT / SUPERVISORY card

The gold ADVANCED CRAFT / SUPERVISORY card is available if the applicant has achieved an S/NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) - Lightning Conductor Engineer; Lightning Protective Systems Inspecting and Testing or Steeplejacking and has passed the Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test (advanced craft) or Supervisors Test (supervisors' card) within the last two years.

Cards are valid for five years and are renewable.

7. Black MANAGER card

The black MANAGER card is available if the applicant has achieved an S/NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) – Lightning Conductor Engineer; Lightning Protective Systems Inspecting and Testing or Steeplejacking and/or a relevant S/NVQ Level 4/5 Management qualification and has passed the Health, Safety and Environment and Supervisors Test within the last two years.

Cards are valid for five years and are renewable.

Renewing an LCE or SJ Skilled Worker Card

Operatives renewing a **Lightning Conductor Engineer** or **Steeplejack blue or gold Skilled Worker card** are required to attend an ATLAS endorsed course. These one-day courses are:

- **Steeplejacks – Anchors for Steeplejacks**
- **Lightning Conductor Engineers – Working at Height for Lightning Conductor Engineers.**

These changes apply to **all** skilled operatives, whether they achieved their card by S/NVQ qualification or Industry Accreditation.

Those applying for a blue or gold Skilled Worker card for the first time will not be required to attend an endorsed course; they will only require the relevant S/NVQ.

What do I need to do to renew my card?

Anyone renewing their card will be required to provide:

- a certificate for the relevant ATLAS endorsed course which has been completed in the past two years
- their renewal application form

- confirmation that they have passed the Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test**
- the CSCS card renewal fee.

Anyone renewing their card after **30 June 2024** will be asked to demonstrate that they hold the relevant S/NVQ for their occupation. This includes operatives who achieved their card via Industry Accreditation. All Industry Accreditation cards will cease to be valid after 31 December 2024 at the latest.

To renew a card, operatives should contact the CSCS Contact Centre. Operatives should make sure they have their certificate, employer's details and a valid debit or credit card to hand before calling to renew their card.

Employers applying for cards on behalf of their employees should also contact the CSCS Contact Centre, but the employee should also be present to give their consent.

****Important:** It is best practice, when renewing a CSCS card over the telephone, to ensure that an electronic copy (.pdf) of the relevant certification held by the applicant is shared with CITB. This will reduce the risks of any delays in the card being renewed while certification is checked.

How do I find a course?

A full list of endorsed course providers is available on the [ATLAS website](#).

Operatives and their employers should contact the Training Provider directly to arrange attendance at the relevant endorsed course.

Only certificates from endorsed course providers on this list will be accepted by CSCS.

Operatives should attend the course in the two years before renewing their card.

I can't attend the course before my renewal date

Operatives will be required to attend the relevant endorsed course before their renewal will be processed.

To avoid any gap in their card, operatives are advised to attend the relevant endorsed course as soon as they are able to and up to two years prior to their renewal.

I have changed occupation

If you have changed occupation or have moved to a management card, the changes will not apply to you. You will need to notify CSCS of the change to your occupation and apply for the relevant card.

ATLAS Endorsed Course Providers

Training Providers who would like to apply for Endorsed Course status should review the Information for Course Providers document* and return the completed application form and accompanying documentation to [Tamsin Parkes](#).

*This document is currently under review. Please contact [Tamsin Parkes](#) for further information.

Frequently Asked Questions

What qualifications are relevant to the Lightning Protection and Steeplejack industries?

Operatives qualified in the Lightning Protection or Steeplejack sectors should hold the S/NVQ Level 2 in Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) Lightning Conductor Engineer or Steeplejacking and obtain the blue CSCS Skilled Worker card in the relevant occupation.

There are three additional qualifications available within the sector, which qualify operatives for the gold CSCS Skilled Worker card.

- S/NVQ Level 3 Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) Lightning Conductor Engineer
- S/NVQ Level 3 Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) Lightning Protective Systems Inspecting and Testing
- S/NVQ Level 3 Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) Steeplejacking.

How do I achieve an S/NVQ?

Depending on the level of experience and competence of the operative, there are a number of training routes available to obtain an S/NVQ:

- **A new entrant with no previous experience in construction**
Two apprenticeship programmes for Lightning Conductor Engineers and Steeplejacks are available at NCC - East at the Bircham Newton residential campus.
- **Experienced steeplejack and lightning protection operatives**
Experienced operatives can register to receive training and/or assessment via and Experienced Worker Practical Assessment (EWPA) or through On Site Assessment and Training (OSAT). When registering an experienced operative for an S/NVQ, a training provider will carry out a pre-course interview to assess and profile the operative's existing skills and assign them to the appropriate training route.
- **Operatives with experience in lightning protection, but limited knowledge of inspecting and testing**
Specialist Upskilling Programmes (SUPs) for the S/NVQ Level 3 Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) Lightning Protective Systems Inspecting and Testing and for the S/NVQ Level 3 Accessing Operations and Rigging (Construction) Lightning Conductor Engineer, are also available.

For further details of the training available visit the [SLPTG Website](#) or call 0844 249 0023.

What if I don't have an S/NVQ qualification?

Industry Accreditation **has closed for new entrants** to the lightning protection and steeplejack sector.

There are a number of existing card holders who have not achieved an S/NVQ but who achieved Industry Accreditation. The **Blue SKILLED WORKER card** referred to as Industry Accreditation Grade A and the **Gold ADVANCED CRAFT/SUPERVISORY card** is referred to as Industry Accreditation Grade B.

Anyone renewing their card after **30 June 2024** will be asked to demonstrate that they hold the relevant S/NVQ for their occupation. This includes operatives who achieved their card via Industry Accreditation. All Industry Accreditation cards will cease to be valid after **31 December 2024** at the latest.

CSCS has confirmed that operatives with an indentured apprenticeship (those whose cards state Assessed Route A or B on the back) will not need to achieve an S/NVQ.

The renewal of existing cards achieved via Industry Accreditation is subject to successfully completing the Health, Safety, and Environment and Working at Height Test, as well as Anchors for Steeplejacks and/or Working at Height for Lightning Conductor Engineers.

How do I apply for my first CSCS card?

To apply for a first CSCS card operatives will need to:

- demonstrate that they have achieved the recognised qualifications required
- pass the relevant Health, Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test
- submit a signed application form
- pay the relevant fee.

Card applications can be made by telephone on 0344 994 4777 and paid for by credit or debit card. Applications by telephone are processed the next working day.

It is recommended that you include a photocopy of the relevant certification held by the applicant with your application. This will reduce the risks of any delays in the card being renewed while certification is checked

What do I do if I have changed occupation?

Apply for a CSCS card for a new occupation in the same way as your first card (see above), enclosing evidence that you have achieved the recognised qualification(s) required for your new occupation or that you are registered to study the recognised qualification.

All of the candidate's formal qualifications are listed on the back of all operative CSCS cards.

Is a CSCS card all I need to demonstrate my competence?

Sole reliance should not be placed on industry certification cards or similar being presented as evidence that a worker has the right skills, knowledge, training, and experience.

When reviewing a member of the workforce, contractors/employers should make enquiries to ensure the individual has the skills, knowledge, training and experience to carry out the work they will be employed to do in a way that secures health and safety for everyone working on the site.

Please review the [Build UK Training Standard](#) for further information.

What other training can I record on my CSCS card to demonstrate my competence?

A number of endorsements are available on LCE and SJ skilled worker cards, which demonstrate the additional skills which Steeplejacks and Lightning Conductor Engineers often have. The full list of endorsements available and how to apply for these is listed below:

Endorsement	When is the Endorsement Available?	How To Apply
Rope Access (Bosun's Seat)	Application or Renewal	Provide proof that module 2108 K/S (QCF 255) Bosun's Seat has been completed (available through S/NVQ Level 2 Lightning Conductor Engineer or Steeplejacking)

What is a labourer within the lightning protection sector?

LABOURERS assist a skilled Lightning Conductor Engineer in performing their tasks. This should include unskilled work only and all work should be overseen by a skilled operative at all times. Labourers should be trained in basic health and safety skills and due to the nature of the work they are assisting with, they should successfully complete the CITB Health Safety and Environment and Working at Height Test. Clients are also likely to request that the labourer has undertaken industry-recognised training in working at height.

Labourers should not use specialised access equipment such as Bosun's seats or industrial ropes.

All work carried out by a LABOURER **must** be classed as unskilled, and this may include:

- carrying, positioning and dismantling scaffolding and access equipment but not erecting it for use. Erection must only be undertaken by skilled workers and not even supervised working is permitted
- digging trenches for installation of lightning conductor tapes and conductor rods but not the driving of the rods or the laying of the tape. Installation must only be undertaken by skilled workers and not even supervised installation is permitted
- bringing plant and materials to skilled operatives but not to areas where access can only be obtained through the use of specialised access equipment. Specialist access

equipment can only be used by skilled workers and not even supervised use is permitted.

What is a labourer within the steeplejack sector?

Due to the specialist nature of the work undertaken by a steeplejack, there is no recognised labourer's role in this sector.

Are labourers, apprentices, trainees, and provisional workers permitted on a main contractor's site if they are accompanied by a skilled worker with a relevant CSCS card?

Only if they hold the correct CSCS card for their role:

- Labourer – green LABOURER card
- Apprentice – red APPRENTICE card
- Trainee – red TRAINEE (CRAFT/OPERATIVE) card
- Provisional Worker – red PROVISIONAL WORKER card.

As these are unskilled operatives or operatives working towards the achievement of an industry recognised qualification, they should be supervised/accompanied by a Skilled Worker with the correct CSCS card at all times.

Which card does an operative require if he is supervising the work of others or leading a job on site?

Front line/trade supervisors working on site, with direct responsibility for putting people to work, will typically brief their workers on how to carry out their work and ensure they are carrying out their work safely. These operatives must demonstrate they have the necessary knowledge and skills to supervise workers effectively.

The relevant card for this role is a gold ADVANCED CRAFT/SUPERVISORY card which demonstrates the operative has:

- achieved a Construction Related S/NVQ Level 3 or Level 4 with a Craft or Supervisory title, **and**
- passed the CITB Health Safety and Environment and Working at Height (Advanced Craft card) or Supervisors Test (Supervisory card).

I have recently employed an operative with no previous experience within the sector. He had a CSCS red provisional card with his previous employer and is unable to get another one. What is the relevant CSCS card for him?

The employer can register the operative for an S/NVQ in the relevant occupation and the operative would then be eligible for a red TRAINEE (CRAFT AND OPERATIVE), APPRENTICE or EXPERIENCED WORKER card.

If the Employer is unable to register them for an S/NVQ at this stage, they can appeal to CSCS under the following terms:

- If their red PROVISIONAL card relates to the same occupation – employers should appeal to CSCS and ask for an extension due to the operative changing employer

- If their red PROVISIONAL card relates to a different occupation – employers should appeal to CSCS for a second red PROVISIONAL card due to extenuating circumstances

Speak to the CSCS Contact Centre 0344 994 4777 for further advice and guidance.

Contact CSCS

CSCS Helpline: 0344 994 4777 (8:00am to 6:00pm Monday – Friday)

PO Box 114
Bircham Newton
King's Lynn
PE31 6XD

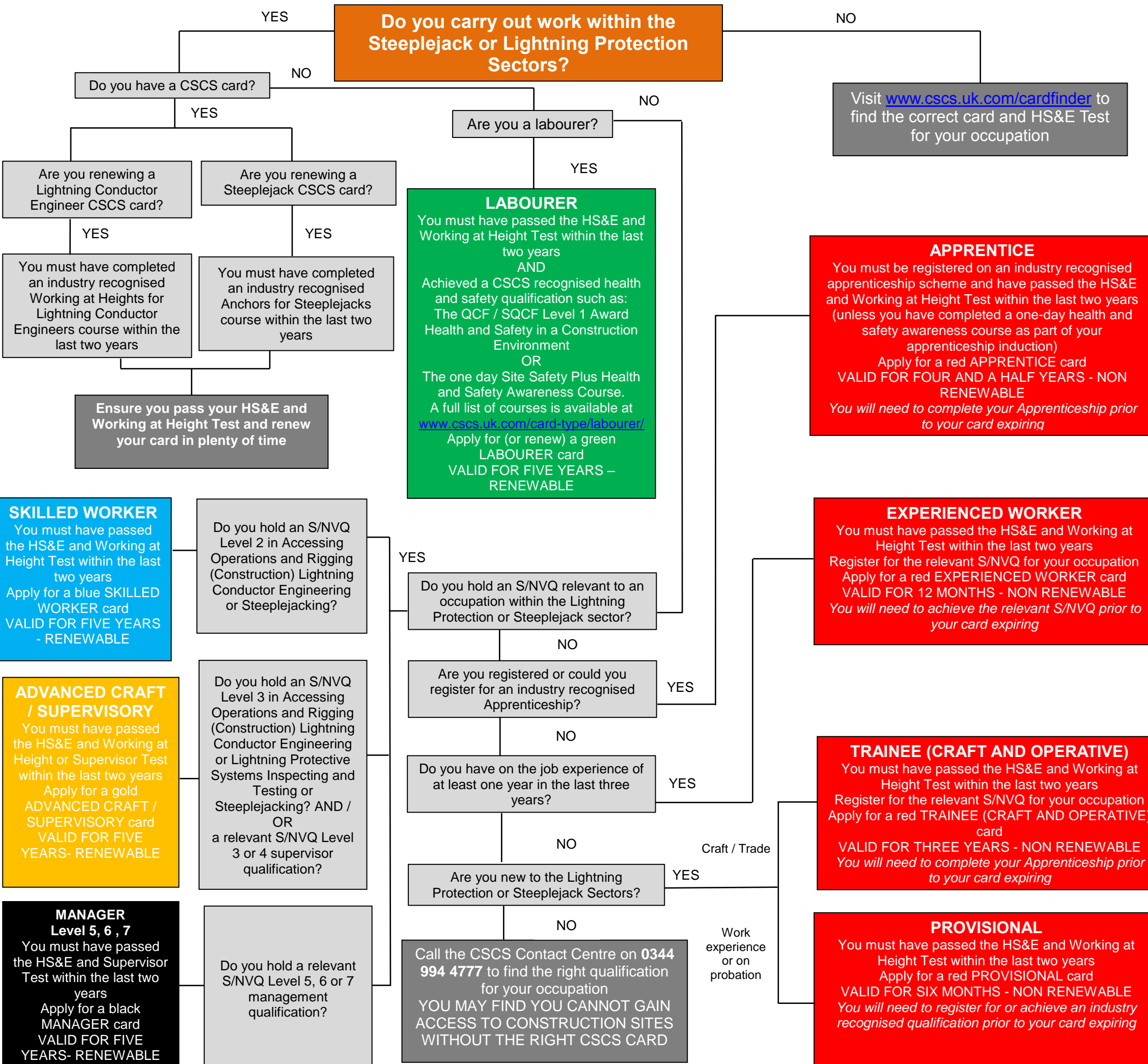
customerservice@cscs.gb.com

www.cscs.uk.com

Guidance updated: **17 June 2019**



A GUIDE TO CSCS CARDS FOR THE LIGHTNING PROTECTION AND STEEPLEJACK INDUSTRIES



- NOTES**
- All HS&E Tests cost £21.00
 - All CSCS cards cost £36.00
 - Card applications can be made by telephone on **0344 994 4777** and paid for by credit card or debit card. Applications by telephone are processed by the next working day
 - Contact CSCS on **0344 994 4777**.