

CAREERS INFORMATION PACK

For Caravan Service Engineers



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Skills Active

Caravan Industry Training

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JOINING THE INDUSTRY

as a caravan service engineer



There are no recognised training schemes or taught courses available as such for instruction in caravan service and repair. The majority of engineers are trained by their employers within the individual caravan dealerships. However CITO are able to provide and recommend the following:

City & Guilds Caravan Service Engineer Exam

Accredited by City & Guilds, the exam in Caravan Service Engineering, which is now becoming a mandatory requirement for workshops belonging to the Approved Workshop Scheme, is the only qualification available to assess and recognise the competence and ability of those working on a caravan or motorhome.

To gain the qualification, the engineer must successfully pass a practical and short written exam. The exam consists of an observed service carried out in a caravan workshop, and a multiple choice exam to make sure that candidates understand some of the theory behind European standards, gas, ventilation, health & safety and other issues. There is no formal training course for the engineer to attend as the practical service they will have learnt in their own workshop, however to aid the engineer in the written element, they will be provided with the CITO Engineers Handbook which contains all the relevant information they will need. There is also a recommended one day Pre-Exam Seminar day available.

CITO rely upon the goodwill of dealers and workshops in allowing us to use their facilities as an exam centre. Exam centres will be chosen in the early autumn in response to the locations of engineers who have registered to take the exam.

We welcome all engineers, whether you are currently working as a caravan service engineer or are looking to join the industry. However, as there is no formal training available for the service and repair of caravans, we do recommend that you study the exam syllabus to ensure you are able to confidently carry out the practical work required to pass the exam. If you are joining the industry with no previous experience, we also suggest that you attend a Gas Competence course to help you through the aspects of gas work in the practical exam.

Gas Competence Training

If you will only be working on tourers and motorhomes, and they are not hired out in the course of business, then the work is outside the scope of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations and you do not need to be Gas Safe Registered. However, you should be able to prove that you are competent, and this requires external assessment. If you cannot prove that you are competent to carry out gas work, you are very exposed should any related problem occur on caravans you have worked with.

Our 'gas competence' courses are run in caravan workshops or at a Gas Training Centre in Birmingham or Somerset, and last five working days. They are based on the Approved Codes of Practice.

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Gas Training to Gas Safe Registration standard

If you intend to do any gas work on caravan holiday-homes or park homes, then you will need to be Gas Safe Registered. To do such work without being previously registered with Gas Safe will make you liable to prosecution and should not be contemplated.

Gas Safe Registration requires assessment under the ACS scheme. Courses for ACS training and assessment usually last two weeks, but they do require prior gas experience and qualification, otherwise additional training will be required in advance of ACS. The Competence course below can provide you with the necessary entry qualification.

Electrician Training

Under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, all employers have a duty to ensure that employees are competent to carry out any electrical duties expected of them. The National Caravan Council has defined the competencies necessary for electrical inspection and test of touring caravans and motorhomes as part of a standard service.

These CITO electrical courses are designed to develop and test the competence of touring caravan and motorhome service engineers. Training ensures that they are safe when carrying out their day to day duties, that all legal requirements are met, and that they can sign off a range of specified electrical work including Periodic Inspection Reports, as required within their usual duties. These assessed and certificated training courses provide the necessary proof of the competence of workshop engineering staff.

Gaining Experience

At the moment the only way for new engineers to actually gain specific experience in serving a caravan is within an established workshop. Some Workshops have shown an interest in expanding their existing business with the use of contracted mobile service engineers in return for training to their standards. It may be worth considering contacting a local dealer principle and exploring the possibilities with them. Suppliers of appliances such as fridges, ovens, toilets etc. also provide specific training of their own products and should be contacted directly for further information.

CAREERS ADVICE

Your CV and Interview



Changing jobs is a large step for any individual, and in this competitive job seekers market, it is essential job candidates promote themselves to the best of their advantage. Employers are looking to take on the right person for their business. Different employers will have different objectives, criteria and preference for the type of candidate they will chose to see, however there are key industry qualifications and experience they will all be looking for and it is important to make sure they see it in you.

Curriculum Vitae - Preparation and Presentation

Your CV is a vital tool when seeking employment and you should take time preparing it. Think about how you want to present yourself and make sure that key skills, qualifications and experience are `relevant` and given. Ask people to read your CV prior to sending it to a prospective employer. Make sure there are no spelling mistakes or errors in dates etc.

Helpful Hints

Employers will have many CVs to read, so they do not want to have to hunt out the relevant information from your CV as to why you would be suitable for the job. To short list applicants for interviews, employers can be much harder reviewing a CV than on a candidate in person, therefore it is essential not to give the reader any reason to dismiss your CV. Your CV is no different to a soap powder commercial. You expect to hear what the product can do within 30 seconds and are likely to loose attention on anything longer - your CV is the same for the reader. They want to see quickly why they should finish reading your CV and at the end of it understand why you should be short listed for an interview - they will ask you to explain relevant points in detail then.

- ▶ Eliminate unnecessary detail and `waffle`. Include enough information to stimulate an interest but not too much so that you `bore` the reader. Keep the detail for the interview.
- ▶ Use good quality white paper and try to avoid photocopying. Do not be tempted to use fancy layouts and fonts or coloured paper. It may make the CV stand out but it will detract from the information presented and rarely makes a good impression.
- ▶ Be clear and concise. Keep the number of pages to a minimum - 2 pages is ideal but 3 is fine depending upon your experience.
- ▶ Visit recruitment agencies websites and read the job descriptions, even for unrelated work. Notice the 'to the point' style and experience and qualifications requested. This is how the employer is thinking and therefore gives an idea to what they expect to see. When you apply for a position your CV needs to answer the requirements of the advert. Does yours?
- ▶ Page 1 should detail your name and contact details (address, telephone number, email), any qualifications and courses attended, a brief personality profile/career summary.
- ▶ Pages 2 and 3 should detail your employment history (with your most recent role first) - job title, company name, dates of employment and key areas of responsibility. It is also advisable to include `achievements`, not just tasks. You can also include information such as hobbies/interests should it support your application - remember the job requirements.
- ▶ References, either say 'References available upon request' or detail the Referee`s name, position, company address and telephone number.



Covering Letter

Some companies will ask you to write a covering letter, however even if one is not specifically requested, it is always worth returning. A covering letter will introduce you as a person and it is here you have a short opportunity to bring relevant aspects of your CV to the attention of the reader.

- ▶ The covering letter should be short and concise, just a few paragraphs - do not write more than 1 page.
- ▶ This is your opportunity to bring to the readers attention that you have read their job advert and have done some background reading into their organisation - and that if they care to look at your CV they will find you have relevant skills, experience or qualifications as specified or which you feel would be of interest to them.
- ▶ Similar to a contents page, you are highlighting to the reader what they will find of interest in your CV - do not repeat details that will then be read later in the CV - the reader does not need to read it twice.

Interview - Advice and Techniques

Preparation

Prior to attending an interview you should be clear on what is written on your CV (be prepared to provide evidence to back up your statements), know why you are interested in the role and why the company should be interested in you! Other areas for consideration are:

- ▶ Find out Company details via the website. If you cannot find any literature, telephone the Company and ask for information to be sent to you (if applying for work on a holiday park, request a brochure)
- ▶ Prepare questions to ask (see below)
- ▶ Plan your journey – you do not want to be late or rushed to arrive
- ▶ Decide what to wear – this should be appropriate to the position

Questions

- ▶ Prepare at least 5-6 questions to ask relating to the job. The areas to probe are career prospects, training, daily duties, what the team is like you'd be working with, and maybe social aspects
- ▶ Avoid 'yes' or 'no' answers, always expand on the information and 'sell' yourself
- ▶ Do not ask about salary as your first question
- ▶ Do not be afraid to take a list of questions – this demonstrates preparation
- ▶ Be prepared to tell the interviewer your strengths and weaknesses

Questions you may be asked

- ▶ What do you know about our Company?
- ▶ What do you know about the role?
- ▶ What does your current job involve?
- ▶ Are there certain aspects you really enjoy or dislike and why?
- ▶ What can you bring to the role?

CAREERS ADVICE

Your CV and Interview



- ▶ Demonstrate how you...
- ▶ Give an example of...
- ▶ What would you do if...

Body Language

- ▶ Remember the interview starts in the Reception area, so be polite to the Receptionist and sit confidently and patiently
- ▶ Give a firm, warm handshake
- ▶ Keep a warm and attentive attitude - no slouching or gazing out the window - maintain eye contact with the interviewer and look interested
- ▶ Turn your mobile off
- ▶ Try to avoid smoking before the interview
- ▶ Do not be negative about other employers or colleagues, regardless of why you are leaving/have left. It is important to be honest, and you should not lie, but you should not degrade or be rude about them.