

THE CERTIFICATION OF ROAD SAFETY AUDITORS IN EUROPE AND UK – A PERSPECTIVE TO BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

This paper shows how the certification of road safety auditors in UK is in progress and the future of this certification in Europe by the new EU Directive 2008/96/EC on Infrastructure Safety Management which provides guidelines for high-risk spot management and road safety audits. This paper has the objective to point out the relevant role that road safety audit and training of road safety auditors in Europe to promote improvements on road safety.

RESUMO

Este trabalho mostra como a certificação dos auditores de segurança viária está em progresso no Reino Unido e o futuro dessa certificação na Europa devido à nova Diretiva Européia 2008/96/EC sobre Gerenciamento da Segurança de Infraestruturas, a qual prove procedimentos para o gerenciamento de locais de alto risco e sobre auditoria de segurança viária. Este trabalho tem como objetivo apontar o relevante papel da auditoria de segurança viária e do treinamento de auditores de segurança viária na Europa para promover a melhoria da segurança viária.

1. INTRODUCTION

A RSA is a formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent audit team. Road Safety Audits (RSAs) can be used in any phase of project development, from planning and preliminary engineering, design and construction. AUSTROADS (1994) define a road safety audit as a formal examination of a future road or traffic project, an existing road or any project which interacts with road users, in which an independent, qualified team reports on the project's accident potential and safety performance. One of the main objectives nowadays in traffic safety is to reduce the number of accidents and the number of casualties. Road Safety Audit is an excellent tool to identify potential safety problems to the road users and to assure that safety measures to eliminate or reduce the problems are fully considered. Thus an adequate training of road safety auditors is necessary to establish a common standard.

2. ROAD SAFETY AUDIT (RSA) IN EUROPE

The European Union Directive 2008/96 on Road Infrastructure Safety Management is the document that makes the road safety audit mandatory to all State Member. This EU directive is a result of The European Commission that had announced it would take an initiative on road infrastructure safety in its 2001 White Paper on European Transport Policy for 2010 and in its Communication on a European Road Safety Action Programme of June 2003. Through the White Paper on Transport (2001), Road Safety Action Programme (2003) and Mid Term Review of Road Safety Action Programme (2006) the EU consider the road safety policy as a shared responsibility, with an integrated approach at the EU level; the global target was reduce over the period 2001-2010 in 50% the road accident victims. Besides action on the driver and the vehicle,

infrastructure plays an important role for any comprehensive road safety programme. Physical features of a road network together with associated traffic volumes are important contributing factors to accidents. This EU directive explicitly limits the requirements to a minimum set of elements necessary to achieve a safety effect and spread procedures that have shown to be effective. This comprehensive system of road infrastructure safety management is centering on the following four procedures: **Road safety impact assessments** will help strategic decision-making about the safety implications of new roads or major changes of operation of existing roads, especially on the adjacent network; **Road safety audits** shall provide for an independent control and recommendations for technical verification of the design of either a new road or a rehabilitation of a road; **Network safety management** is to target remedial measures to parts of the network with high concentrations of accidents (high risk road sections or black spots) and/or a high potential to avoid them in the future; **Safety inspections** as part of regular road maintenance will allow detecting and reducing in a preventive way risks of accidents through cost-efficient measures. These procedures already exist and are applied at varying degrees in some Member States. Aim of this proposal for a directive is therefore to extend these measures to the whole of the EU, without defining technical standards or requirements, but leaving the Member States free to keep already existing procedures or to introduce their own. The application of the comprehensive package of measures will make sure that road safety is included and considered in the whole life of a road of European importance, from planning to operation.

Within the European Union Directive 2008/96 on Road Infrastructure Safety Management there is recognition that road safety has been compromised in the past through a history of restricted budgets; the use of a network mainly constructed before the current design standards and knowledge existed; where designs only comply with standards, despite the knowledge that these are not adequate and where route management has been carried out without reference to road safety engineering experts. The EU objectives are to strengthen safety and make informed decisions on transport; to improve safety through continuous adaption of requirements; to establish a constant exchange of best practice and by the creation of awareness of safety through informed planning and design. Article 5 within this EU Directive states that when high accident concentration sections are evaluated by expert teams by means of site visits, at least one member of the team shall meet the requirements for auditors set out in Article 9. The Article 9 is transcript below:

“Article 9: Appointment and Training of Auditors and Inspectors states (...)

- 1. Member States shall ensure that training curricula for road safety auditors are adopted within 3 years after entry into force of this Directive.*
- 2. Member States shall ensure that where road safety auditors carry out functions under this Directive, they undergo an initial training resulting in the award of a **certification of competence** and follow periodic re-training.*
- 3. Member States shall ensure that road safety auditors hold a certificate of competence. Certificates awarded before the entry into force of this Directive shall be taken into account.*
- 4. Member States shall ensure that auditors are appointed in compliance with the following requirements:*
 - a. They have experience in road design, road safety engineering and accident analysis.*
 - b. Two years after the adoption of the guidelines (...) road safety audits shall only be undertaken by auditors meeting the requirements provided for in paragraphs 2 and 3.”*

3. ROAD SAFETY AUDIT IN UNITED KINGDOM

The principal document about regulation of RSA in the UK is HD 19/03. This document updates the requirements for Road Safety Audits which are mandatory for all trunk road Highway Improvement Schemes including motorways. In the UK HD 19/03 as it applies to trunk roads and motorway networks is viewed as 'best practice' by local highway authorities. Within this Standard are prescribed levels of experience and training for the Road Safety Audit team Leader and Member, as well as Observers (trainee auditor). In this document, on paragraphs 2.55 to 2.59, give guidance on the general levels of training, skills and experience that are expected of road safety auditors. Although it states that they are not absolute requirements but are intended to assist Project Sponsors when considering proposals for Audit Teams and also to assist potential auditors to prepare themselves as candidates for Road Safety Audit Teams. The guidance is intended to be flexible, recognizing that the experienced road safety professionals that are needed to carry out Road Safety Audits may have developed their careers from a range of backgrounds.

These requirements are summarized as follows: Audit Team Leader and Audit Team Member are individuals whose current employment involves Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering on a regular basis. This should ensure that auditors are well versed in the most recent practices and developments in the field. Those candidates who have the recommended experience in Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering but who have not undertaken such work on a regular basis in the previous 2 years are unlikely to be acceptable. Candidates who carry out Road Safety Audits full time to the exclusion of general Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering work are unlikely to be acceptable as they may lack the appropriate and recent Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering experience. The Project Sponsor must be satisfied that the proposed Audit Team Leader, Audit Team Members and Observer have adequate and relevant training, skills and experience. The Audit Team Leader, Audit Team Member and Observer's curriculum vitae submitted to the Project Sponsor should consist of no more than 3 pages of information for each. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) record included on the curriculum vitae should also focus on Road Safety Audit, Accident Investigation and Road Safety Engineering. It should mention any other relevant CPD, covering areas such as highway design, traffic management and highway maintenance.

The following list gives guidelines on acceptable training, skills and experience for Audit Team Members:

- **Audit Team Leader:** A minimum of 4 years Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering experience. Completion of at least 5 Road Safety Audits in the past 12 months as an Audit Team Leader or Member. In order to become an Audit Team Leader the auditor will already have achieved the necessary training to become an Audit Team Member. However, they should also demonstrate a minimum 2 days CPD in the field of Road Safety Audit, Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering in the past 12 months.
- **Audit Team Member:** A minimum of 2 years Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering experience. Completion of at least 5 Road Safety Audits as Audit Team Leader, Member or Observer in the past 24 months. The Audit Team Member should have attended at least 10 days of formal Accident Investigation or theoretical foundation on which to base

practical experience. They should also demonstrate a minimum of 2 days CPD in the field of Road Safety Audit, Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering in the past 12 months.

- **Observer:** A minimum of 1-year Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering experience. The Observer should have attended at least 10 days of formal Accident Investigation or Road Safety Engineering training.”

Within the UK organizations are putting together ideas for achieving Certification, for example the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) the leading organisation with regards to road safety is working with the Highways Agency on the creation of a procedure to enable auditors to achieve recognition of their experience, thus enabling them to carry out road safety audits on the Trans European Road Network (TERN).

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Brazil has a long path to walk towards improvement of road safety. RSA is a clear powerful tool to reduce and prevent accidents. This paper had the intention to bring what has been made in Europe and UK about road safety auditor certification. The examples of best practices could be a start point to tailor directives that are suitable for our conditions. The UK and Europe know the benefits of road safety audits in a long run. Continuing development of knowledge about road safety, road safety audit is fundamental to preserve lives in road environment. A key element in road safety audit is the road safety auditors, thus is important to set minimum qualifications for them. Establish recognized CPD courses that allow potential road safety auditors acquire knowledge (and upgrade/update knowledge for former auditors) is essential, specially to assure common vocabulary and principles. It is important to point out that in UK is fundamental that road safety auditors have continuous education in road safety and road safety audit to be able to continue perform RSA. But even in Europe and UK they do not have well establish the road safety auditors certification, the majority of State Member until now just set the minimum qualifications; with the exception of Denmark, where that the Road Directorate provides the training and the certification of road safety auditors.

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