

To: All CIF Members  
Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026  
Ref: GN-25-02 (Rev.1)

**RE: Use of Excavators for Basic Lifting Operations - GN-25-02 (Rev.1)**

Dear Member,

Further to correspondence issued on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025, I am writing to you in relation to the **training of Excavator Operators for Lifting Operations and/or Object Handling**, and to a recent announcement issued by SOLAS on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The SOLAS announcement read:

***Basic Lift Exercise - 360, 180 & Mini-Digger Programmes CSCS and QSCS - To commence on 01/05/2026***

*“Following extensive consultation between the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and SOLAS, a standalone/bolt on training programme has been developed to cover a basic lift operation on 360<sup>o</sup> excavator, 180<sup>o</sup> excavator and mini digger for CSCS and QSCS.*

*This standalone or bolt-on training is specifically designed for existing CSCS/QSCS excavator card holders who require additional training for using an excavator in lifting operations. The programme focuses on basic lift procedures and is delivered through the existing established network of CSCS/QSCS Approved Training Organisations (ATOs), utilising approved SOLAS tutors.*

*All ATOs and tutors have been briefed on the delivery of this specialised training. Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a certificate from the ATO they attend.*

*Successful candidates who undertake the experienced excavator assessment will also receive certification confirming the programme they attended incorporated using an excavator for basic lifting tasks. For those attending New Entrant programmes, a dedicated unit covering excavator lifting is incorporated into the overall programme.*

*SOLAS wish to express their gratitude to the industry representatives who contributed their support and expertise to the development of this programme, in particular all members of the SOLAS Construction Industry Advisory Group (CIAG).*

*The commencement of this programme will be on the 1st of May 2026. CSCS/QSCS documents will be issued early next week to ATO’s, and a formal circular will be issued by Construction Services Unit.”*

Following this announcement, the **CIF Guidance on Use of Excavators for Lifting Operations, GN-25-02 (Rev.0)** is hereby **withdrawn and ceases to have effect immediately**. The guidance is now **superseded in full** by the arrangements prescribed by SOLAS, the state agency with statutory responsibility for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), and by this correspondence.

For an explanation of programme changes, please note correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026, issued by SOLAS to SOLAS- approved training organisations:

**Basic Lift Exercise - 360, 180 and Mini Digger Programmes CSCS and QSCS**

*“Our records indicate that your organisation is an Approved Training Organisation (ATO) delivering 360, 180, and Mini-Digger programmes for CSCS and/or QSCS. As you may know, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) issued an advisory to the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) on September 17, 2025, clarifying that:*

*“The SOLAS CSCS excavator courses are designed to assess the competency of the excavator operator for its use as an excavator only, and not for its use as an excavator used as a crane.”*

*“Excavator operators are not permitted to use an excavator as a crane unless additional add-on training has been carried out covering lifting operations with excavators.”*

*“The employer and employee must have proof of having carried out this additional training on excavators being used as a crane.”*

*“To address these requirements, SOLAS—in collaboration with industry representatives and other stakeholders—has developed comprehensive training and assessment resources for a “basic lift.” These materials, including a PowerPoint presentation, a training video, and both theoretical and practical assessments. These materials will be integrated into the current CSCS/QSCS excavator programme, and the programme documentation is being updated to reflect these changes.*

*As an ATO, several key changes will impact your organisation.*

- *All excavator equipment must now include check valves on cylinders used for lifting.*
- *Additionally, an acoustic or visual warning device must be installed to alert operators when the rated lift capacity is reached, aligning with SI No. 2 of 2020 (effective April 1, 2020, regulation 55) – see attached.*
- *For assessments, the weight used must equal 50% of the machine’s maximum permitted lift, as specified by the manufacturer and determined by the tutor.*
- *The weight should have clearly defined lifting points, and its value must be known.*
- *A signal slinger must be present to attach the weight and guide the operator during the basic lift; should the tutor possess a Signal slinger card, they may assume this responsibility.*
- *Chains and slings must comply with regulatory standards.*

*Upon implementation, experienced operators who have completed the updated assessment—including the basic lifting exercise—will be issued a certificate from your ATO, with the wording approved by the HSA. The certificate will confirm that the individual has undergone the SOLAS experienced excavator programme, including training for basic lifting operations, and has successfully passed the assessment.*

*Your ATO will also be authorised to offer this module to existing CSCS/QSCS card holders. This training must be delivered by an approved SOLAS Tutor, with a recommended maximum group size of six.*

*Both theory and practical assessments will mirror those for experienced operators, and successful candidates will receive a certificate with HSA-approved wording, confirming completion of additional training for basic lifts.*

*For new entrants, the three-day programme will now include the lifting exercise, and documentation will be updated accordingly. SOLAS has briefed all Tutors on these new training elements and their integration into current programmes.”*

## **CIF Commentary**

The CIF Interim Guidance Note GN-25-02 (Rev.0) on the ‘Use of Excavators for Lifting Operations’, as circulated on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025, has been superseded by this correspondence, GN-25-02 (Rev.1). Following extensive consultation involving the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and SOLAS, bolt-on training specific to lifting operations will be offered on both CSCS and QSCS programmes for operators of 180°, 360° and mini-digger excavators. This bolt-on training will not address object handling / pick and carry activities.

The training package will incorporate a 30-minute video presentation, classroom-based tuition and a practical demonstration of achievement of the learning objectives. The video may be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0qT201XJMA>

SOLAS-approved training organisations (ATOs) will deliver this training from **1<sup>st</sup> May 2026**, for which contact details may be found on the SOLAS CSCS webpage at: <https://www.solas.ie/construction-lp/course-information/#cscs>

The CIF would encourage all members to support the training programme, as facilitated by SOLAS, cognisant of capacity limitations for delivery of this training. It is acknowledged that members may have already upskilled excavator operatives in lifting operations. It remains an employer’s responsibility to determine the appropriate training based on the risks presented; other certified training (e.g. NPORS or similar), or indeed in-company training delivered at an appropriate level, may be deemed as appropriate by the employer. The CIF has been advised that the HSA inspectorate will take a pragmatic and proportionate approach to enforcement.

## **For Further Information**

Please contact the CIF Safety and Health Department: [sdowney@cif.ie](mailto:sdowney@cif.ie) / [jegan@cif.ie](mailto:jegan@cif.ie)

Yours sincerely,



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