

# DRIVER TRAINING AT BENDIGO TRAMWAYS

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## 1. APPLICATION FOR DRIVER TRAINING.

People who wish to be a driver of our trams must write to the tramway to be considered for training. The application then goes to the Tram Committee for approval. It is not a *fait accompli* — some applications are politely deferred for various reasons.

Our drivers are more than drivers. They are our shop front, so to speak, welcoming passengers, selling tickets, giving a talk about the Bendigo Trust and the trams, then selling souvenirs in the shop. It helps to have a sense of humour, too. Our drivers need to be able to answer questions about the Trust, the trams, Bendigo and other tourist attractions.

So, wanting to drive a tram and passing the tests are not the only pre-requisites for the job.

## 2. MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

When applicants are accepted they have to undergo a medical examination of eyesight, hearing and general fitness. They must also have held a car driver's licence for 3 years.

## 3. DRIVER'S MANUAL.

After passing these tests, the applicant is given a Driver's Manual containing questions and answers to various situations that can occur while operating a tram. They are required to read the manual thoroughly.

## 4. DRIVER TRIP JOURNAL.

When training commences, the applicant is given a Trip Journal which is a record of the number of trips, type of tram and the comments of the instructor.

## 5. DRIVER TRAINING.

The applicant is now ready to drive a tram, gaining experience in the various air brake systems — manual lap, self lap and Birney — and controllers — GE, Westinghouse and MMTB. Also covered are how and when to apply sand; emergency braking — first, second, third and fourth — and handbrake driving. To make it harder the driver has to learn the commentary tapes, when to actuate and stop them, and how to regulate the speed of the tram to coincide with the commentary on points of interest.

## 6. DRIVER EXAMINATION.

When the applicant has completed 10 trips he or she receives a Restricted Certificate which allows them to

drive trams within the depot confines without supervision. After completing 30 trips the applicant is ready for the test, which comprises a written test of questions with Yes/No answers, followed by a driving test.

## 7. CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY.

The full Certificate is presented at the Tram Meeting or some special occasion by the Chairman of the Tram Committee.

## 8. ACCIDENT REPORTS.

We have two Accident Reports and an Incident Report:

The Yellow Tram Accident Report is for the tram driver to complete after being involved in an encounter with another tram or any other object, car, truck, trailer or member of the public likely to involve an insurance claim. The Blue Report is for the Traffic Inspector or Supervisor to complete.

The White Special Day Report is for drivers or conductors who are involved in minor accidents or anyone who may have been a witness to a minor accident.

## COMMENTS, DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS:

1. At Bendigo, the main instructor is the Tramway Superintendent. The time taken to complete the training depends on the person.
2. Bendigo has no government testing. It was noted that New Zealand has government testing.
3. There is no refresher training at Bendigo. It was noted that Adelaide has refresher training, including skid training and ensuring continued familiarity with all types of tramcar. It was suggested that drivers who have not driven for some time might need to be re-certificated.
4. It was noted that knowing theory is not always the same as being able to react appropriately in practice, and that training could therefore include coping with various deliberately induced faults and problems.
5. Bendigo has three fully-paid drivers as well as volunteer drivers. It was reported that there was felt to be no clash of interests between the two. Some paid drivers acted as volunteers on their days "off". Volunteers rarely received payment of expenses.

6. Most COTMA organisations are run by volunteers, who need to be welcomed and enjoy their hobby. It was noted that some volunteers would not be taken on as employees. Rosters may need to be juggled to cater for such.

7. **Tram conductors at Bendigo:**

In a system similar to driver training, potential conductors are given a booklet to study, do practical training with an observer, and undergo a

test. The Public Relations nature of this job is stressed; if applicants are thought not to be sufficiently outgoing they are told "thanks very much, we have enough conductors at the moment".

8. Should training include cutting out motors?

9. Should there be a regular medical review? What standards should be used for this?