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Review of 2008

About CBR

As an autonomous administrative authority, the Dutch Driving Test Organisation (CBR) is charged with assessing the driving ability, competence and driving fitness of drivers of cars, motorcycles, mopeds, lorries, busses, aircraft and inland navigation vessels. In this way, CBR contributes towards improving safety on the road, upon the water and in the air.

CBR's services can be divided into four main categories:

- administering motorcycle, car and moped driving tests;
- administering professional tests for individuals operating in the road haulage, inland shipping and logistics sectors, as well as in the airline industry;
- assessing drivers' mental and physical fitness;
- assessing the driving fitness or driving ability of individuals suspected of being unfit to drive a vehicle.

CBR aims to be recognised by its customers and partners as the driving test organisation in the field of mobility, accessible and offering top-quality services. CBR's policy embraces core concepts such as transparency, customer orientation and innovation.

CBR's head office is located in Rijswijk. The organisation also operates five regional offices and fifty-five practical exam locations, employing a total workforce of more than 1,200 employees.

Motorcycle, car and moped driving tests

The number of tests taken by CBR in 2008 totalled 1,183,652 for cars, motor-cycles and mopeds. This figure represents an increase of close to 7%. As such, in terms of testing, 2008 was the busiest year in the new millennium so far.



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Towards better processes

CBR not only aims to offer excellent service to its customers, it aims to do so fast. Every effort was made to improve performance in 2008. Four national performance improvement teams focused on the processes surrounding theory tests, practical tests, medical assessments and reassessments, wherever possible identifying ways to improve throughput and waiting times. Examples here include the medical team introducing an additional monthly Saturday shift and a telephone helpdesk to take all incoming calls. And good results were booked. The standardised throughput time for medical assessments was achieved in more than 95% of the cases by the end of 2008. The other teams were successful too.

Theory tests

The number of theory tests taken for motorcycles rose by 1.5% to 49,414, for cars by 5.6% to 488,046, and for mopeds by 19.8% to 130,821.

News of the new practical test for mopeds may have served to stimulate candidates to pass the existing theory test in a bid to avoid the proposed practical test. The pass rates in these test categories fell slightly by 0.6% for motorcycles, 0.8% for cars and 0.4% for mopeds.

The category B theory test was renewed in close consultation with the driving school sector during the year under review. Traffic insight and danger recognition skills are tested more emphatically in order to better prepare candidates for possible risks on the road during the theory test. To offer candidates and instructors an opportunity to become familiar with the new setup, the new questions related to danger recognition will only count towards the test result with effect from 1 March 2009.

Practical tests

It is striking to note that the number of practical tests for motorcycles rose for the third consecutive year in 2008. In the last quarter of 2008, however, there was evidence of a turnabout following the onset of economic recession. The rising trend was also visible for practical car tests (category B). Some 207,569 first applications were submitted in this category, including tests for the Driver Training Stepwise (Rijopleiding in Stappen – RIS). It is noteworthy that the number of category B (car) candidates to pass the test first time round fell slightly from 47.4% to 46.6%. Expectations were that this dip would be greater following the introduction of the new practical test (see textbox). The number of candidates to re-sit tests in category B totalled 197,973, representing an increase of more than 7% in comparison with 2007.

It became clear again during the year under review that candidates significantly increased their chances of passing by opting for the Learner Interim Test (tussentijdse toets – TTT) or the RIS test. Of these candidates, 55.4% and 61.4% passed first time round respectively.

Another noteworthy development in 2008 was that the number of practical tests for cars with trailers (category BE) continued to rise. These numbers have been on the upturn since 1993. In 2008, CBR saw the number of first-time tests increase to 30,582 (2007: 27,629).



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BNOR

Passing your driving test is not a foregone conclusion; many candidates fail the first time round. Each year, around 30,000 candidates fail the regular practical tests four times or more within a period of five years. These cases are referred to the Division for the Closer Examination of Driving Ability (Bureau Nader Onderzoek Rijvaardigheid – BNOR) of CBR. Extra time is set aside during the BNOR test to put candidates at ease before and during their test.

In 2008, the number of special examinations rose for the third consecutive year. A total of 30,300 special examinations were taken, representing an increase of 13%.

Professional tests

The CCV division of CBR is charged with conducting professional driver competence tests for candidates working in the road haulage, inland shipping and logistics sectors. It also conducts theory tests for aspiring amateur and professional pilots.

The number of theory tests administered for professional driving licences fell by 10%. This can be attributed to the introduction of the new European Directive for Professional Driver Competence. As a result, candidates for professional driving licences were temporarily required to pass two instead of three theory tests. CCV driving examiners administered almost 24% more practical tests for lorries (C), buses (D) and trailers (E). Growth was strongest for category C: the figure here totalled 17,882 (2007: 14,676).

Professional driving competence directive

The new European directive on professional driving competence came into effect in September 2008 for bus drivers; it will take effect for lorry drivers with effect from September 2009. The directive consists of two parts: drivers must obtain basic qualifications and they must follow at least 35 hours of refresher training every five years. CCV has revised all its theory tests within this context. Introduction of the directive is intended to reduce the number of fatalities on Europe's roads, to reduce CO2 emissions and improve the image of professional drivers. CCV is responsible for monitoring compliance with the directive.

Tests for airline industry

More than 12,500 theory tests were administered for the Dutch civil aviation industry: 75% for aspiring professional pilots and 25% for aspiring amateur pilots. With effect from 1 January 2009, the airline industry department has been

Updated driving test

CBR introduced its radically adjusted new practical driving test for cars in 2008. The aim is to better prepare young drivers for their role in traffic. The most important changes relate to candidates being able to independently plan and follow a route, choose a special manoeuvre in response to a specific traffic situation, assess traffic situations and name their strengths and weaknesses. The test even takes account of the new, 'green' driving style.

CBR conducted a survey amongst around 1,000 instructors in mid-2008. The survey shows that 68% feel that the new test better prepares drivers, also in relation to their future role in traffic. More than three quarters of the respondents believe that this type of test produces candidates who are both more aware and responsible.

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responsible for the setup and maintenance of a database of test questions for the European airline industry. Previously, the Inspectorate for Traffic and Public Works was responsible for this task.

Medical assessments

CBR also evaluates drivers' mental and physical fitness to drive a vehicle and possible vehicle modifications. This assessment takes place mainly on application for a driving test, during periodic medical examinations for lorry and bus driving certificates and on renewal of a driving licence once the applicant reaches the age of 70. A personal declaration must accompany all assessment applications. The number of declarations taken into consideration in 2008 was the same as the previous year.

Contributing its medical expertise, CBR participated in the 'driving & medicines' information working group of the Ministry of Traffic and Public Works. The ensuing information campaign for doctors, chemists and consumers is twofold, focusing on increasing widespread knowledge of medicines that can affect driving ability and, consequently, raising traffic safety.

CBR organised a medical symposium in 2008 for the parties involved in traffic-related medicine. The aim was to exchange experiences in the area of medical assessments for pilots, professional drivers, skippers and engine drivers. The meeting attracted many participants and formed the first step towards further harmonisation of the different fitness requirements.

Reassessments

If the police or public prosecutor suspects someone of being unfit to drive a vehicle, they are registered with CBR. Our Reassessment division then initiates a 'revocation' procedure. This procedure could result in the person concerned having to follow compulsory special training or cooperate with an assessment into either medical fitness or driving ability. Ultimately, the driver's licence could be revoked.

Alcohol abuse

In 2008, the Reassessment division conducted 8,327 assessments into driving fitness and/or ability, representing close to a 9% increase year-on-year. In more than 65% of the cases, alcohol abuse played a role. Because of this increase, the

Closer consultation with driving schools

It is in both the driving instructors' and CBR's interests to serve customers optimally. New milestones have been achieved in this area partly on the basis of close, constructive cooperation.

With effect from 1 January 2008, candidates can only book theory tests through the CBR website or at a driving school. This frees up time for the theory centres to focus on receiving and supervising candidates. The candidates themselves are enthusiastic about the new process: more than 80% find it easy to use the site.

In 2008, an agreement was made between the sector and CBR directed at restricting the reservation period for practical tests to a maximum of seven weeks. This plan will be implemented in 2009.



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Customers always come first

One of CBR's objectives is to offer customers excellent service. In concrete terms, this is reflected in the development of a test especially for candidates suffering from a fear of failure. If candidates fail to pass the regular practical test four times in a row in the current situation, they are retested by a special CBR driving ability advisor of the Division for the Closer Examination of Driving Ability (Bureau Nader Onderzoek Rijvaardigheid – BNOR). By contrast, in the new situation, candidates suffering from a fear of failure can directly request a 'customised' test. It is noteworthy that during the test, the candidates themselves are given the freedom to request time-outs during the drive and that the test takes 90 minutes instead of 55 minutes to conclude. This means that the most favourable conditions can be created for these candidates. A large-scale pilot project was launched for testing candidates suffering from a fear of failure in 2009.

number of participants obliged to participate in a compulsory 'EMA' course by virtue of the Alcohol and Road Use Education Order rose. But the reasons also included drivers being confused, aggression and the possession of and driving under the influence of drugs.

In the end, driving licences were revoked in 9,458 cases, representing an increase of 33.6%.

EMG and LEMA

In 2008, CBR developed two new courses for potentially dangerous drivers by order of the Minister of Traffic and Public Works: EMG (on road (mis)behaviour) and LEMA (on alcohol abuse and driving, like EMA, but lighter). The courses were developed in close cooperation with the police. The two new courses are intended to prevent recurrent irresponsible behaviour. The individual's driving licence is revoked if he or she refuses to participate in the prescribed course.

Drivers (whose licence was obtained less than five years previously) apprehended with a blood-alcohol level of between 0.5 and 0.8 must participate in the new LEMA course by virtue of the Light Alcohol and Road Use Education Order. This relates to some 2,000 drivers a year. If the blood-alcohol level is between 0.8 and 1.3, the individual is obliged to participate in a compulsory three-day EMA course by virtue of the Alcohol and Road Use Education Order.

The EMG and LEMA courses were launched in 2009; the police could register apprehended drivers with the Reassessment division after 1 October 2008.

Financial results and outlook

Total income in the year under review rose by € 12.3 million (+12.3%) from € 99.8 million in 2007 to € 112.1 million in 2008, largely as a result of the increasing numbers of tests and reassessment procedures.

Fees from theory tests totalled € 25.7 million in 2008 (2007: € 24.3 million). Fees from practical tests rose in 2008 by 8.2% to € 53.4 million (2007: € 49.4 million).

Turnover rose largely as a result of the increased number of tests.

Total costs during the year under reviewed rose by € 22.1 million (+22.4%) to € 120.9 million. In 2009, CBR initiated several organisational changes, with four main processes at the heart of the new setup. A provision of € 8.6 million was set aside for the reorganisation. Taking account of this provision, a loss of € 8.4 million was generated in 2008, which has been deducted from shareholders' equity.



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Outlook for 2009

Current economic developments are sure to have a negative impact on CBR too. The haulage sector has, for example, been hit particularly hard. CBR therefore expects the effect of the 'crisis' to first become visible for professional tests; the impact is expected to affect the private test market at a later stage. Given the unpredictable nature of these factors, coupled with the intended organisational changes, the management board cannot make any concrete predictions in relation to the expected results.



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	Number taken	Number passed	Pass rate
Theory			
Motorcycle (A)	49,414	28,247	57.2
Car (B)	488,046	235,249	48.2
Goods and passenger transport (CCV)	95,389	67,433	70.7
Moped	130,821	68,562	52.5

Practical

Motorcycle (A)			
- Vehicle control	33,196	28,206	85.0
- Traffic participation	37,004	26,753	72.3
Car (B)			
Lorry (C)	17,882	10,593	59.2
Bus (D)	3,079	1,674	54.4
Cars with trailer (BE)	39,629	28,687	72.4

Other figures

Interim tests	73,490
Closer examinations	30,300
Medical declarations	562,617
Examinations (Withdrawals)	8,327
EMA courses	10,825
Turnover (in millions of euros)	112.1
Workforce (FTEs)	1.057,30
Number of driving schools	5,323

Further information

Residents of the Provinces of Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe can contact:

CBR Northern Region

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Residents of the Provinces of Limburg, Noord-Brabant and Zeeland can contact:

CBR Southern Region

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Residents of the Provinces of Overijssel, Gelderland and Flevoland can contact:

CBR Eastern Region

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Residents of the Provinces of North Holland and Utrecht can contact:

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