SkillGuard

SkillGuard Technical Summary

SkillGuard is an online system securely hosted by Reference Point in the Microsoft Azure Cloud. Monitoring of the system is 24/7 with an uptime of 99.5% (plus occasional scheduled downtime for planned maintenance).

All that is required to access SkillGuard is a device with internet access and a current web browser.

Supported web browsers: Modern versions of Microsoft Edge; Google Chrome and Apple Safari. It is strongly recommended that one of these is used as other browsers are not supported on SkillGuard.

The Smartcards

As well as the online database, individual recordholders have a smartcard (physical or virtual) and these can be securely read in a variety of ways.

About the Smartcards

SkillGuard uses high capacity, high security 13.56 MHz contactless JCOP smartcards with 1K Mifare classic emulation capable of supporting Java applets. These cards are fully compliant with the ISO 7816 and ISO 14443 smartcard standards. The SkillGuard card is contactless only, meaning there is no visible chip on the exterior of the card. SkillGuard physical smartcards are available from Reference Point and are issued by our bureau service which prints, personalises and despatches individual cards (for an additional fee per card).

About the Virtual Smartcards and Vircarda

SkillGuard can also generate a virtual smartcard for any active recordholder, and these are increasingly popular – both for convenience, sustainability and cost benefits.

The Virtual card is stored on the recordholder's own mobile device within our own app called Vircarda.

This app is available in Android and iOS versions at Google Play or the Apple App Store.
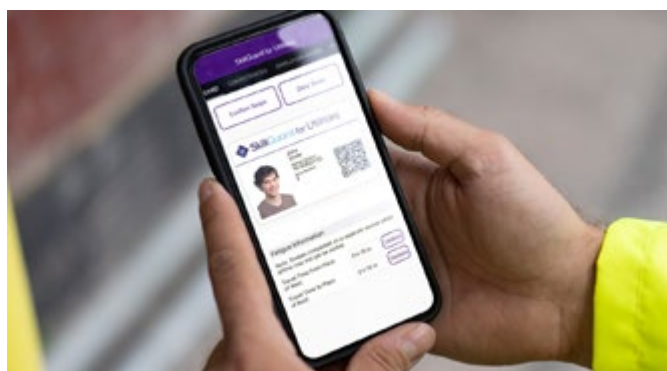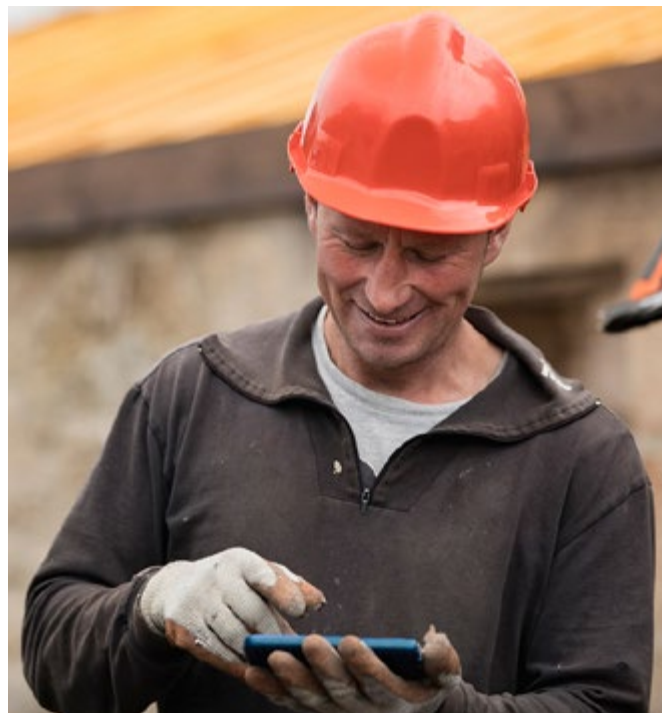
Reading Smartcards on Site

Most commonly, the cards are read using either the dedicated Android or IOS SkillGuard 5 app available at Google Play or Apple App Store.

There is also an HTML5 (Web Card Reader) option for tablet devices.

Minimum requirements for Mobile devices using the Android or iOS app

For the Android app, Android v6 or above and a rear-facing camera. NFC is enabled on our app so this can be used if available on the device.

For the iOS app, iOS v12 or above and a rear-facing camera. NFC is enabled on our app so this can be used if available on the device.

Minimum requirements for Tablet devices running HTML5 (Web Card Reader)

Rear-facing camera. Internet access and a current supported web browser from the list above. No additional software needs to be installed to run web card reader.