

# **A Guide to the Department for Transport's Road Freight Surveys**

**Published May 2008**

**Further Information 020 7944 4261**

# 1. General questions about the Department for Transport Road Freight Surveys

## 1.1 What surveys does the Department for Transport undertake?

The Department currently undertakes two major surveys covering freight vehicles over 3.5 Tonnes Gross Vehicle Weight. These are the [Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport \(CSRGT\)](#) covering domestic road freight activity and the [International Road Haulage Survey \(IRHS\)](#) covering international road freight activity. From time to time, the Department has also conducted similar surveys on van activity and foreign vehicle activity.

## 1.2 What is the purpose of the surveys?

The surveys are used by the Department for Transport to measure the level of freight activity in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. The data collected form part of the evidence base for making decisions on transport policy. Aggregated statistics are produced which are made freely available to business (including haulage companies) and the general public.

For more information about the data sources made available, please see <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/>

## 1.3 What is the CSRGT (Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport)?

The CSRGT is a weekly survey of Heavy Goods Vehicles selected from the DVLA and DVA NI databases. It relates to the domestic (i.e. within the United Kingdom) activity of UK-registered vehicles. Approximately 400 vehicles are selected weekly, for which the vehicle operators are required to record information about their activity for one week. From the data received, DfT can calculate a wide range of information about UK vehicles, including estimates of the total distance travelled, the total tonnage lifted and the types of goods carried by HGVs.

## 1.4 What is the IRHS (International Road Haulage Survey)?

The IRHS covers the international activity of GB-registered HGVs. British HGV operators with international licences are asked to record the details of any trips which begin on a particular day or over a period of days.

Journeys are then scaled up, using counts of vehicles leaving GB from the Department's quarterly survey of Roads Goods Vehicles Travelling to Mainland Europe, to provide estimates of total international activity.

## 2. Questions about survey selection

### 2.1 Why have I been selected for this survey?

#### a) CSRGT

Vehicles are sampled randomly, on a weekly basis, from the DVLA / DVA NI databases. Each year we sample approximately 22,000 vehicles, with vehicles chosen from groups (strata) which depend on vehicle type, vehicle weight and the traffic area in which the vehicle is registered. Vehicles are not selected on the basis of name of company. However, the more vehicles that your company owns then the greater chance you have of being sampled since, in broad terms, the chances of being selected depends on the number of vehicles owned by the company.

#### b) IRHS

The International Road Haulage Survey uses the VOSA 'Applications and Decisions' licence notification publications to identify companies to be selected for survey sampling. The VOSA website listing these notifications can be found at:

<http://www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/publications/applicationsanddecisions/applicationsanddecisions.htm>.

Once our survey team has been notified that your company holds an SI licence, a pre-enquiry form is issued to assess your level of international activity in order to set the relevant survey sampling frequency for your company.

### 2.2 Can you exempt my company from your selection process?

It depends. A condition of holding an Operator's Licence is that under Section 1 of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 you comply with the completion of the survey forms as, and when, requested to complete them.

#### a) CSRGT

For the smallest companies employing less than 10 people, the Department is able to issue an exemption from the survey for up to three years after the first questionnaire has been completed. These are called **Survey Holidays**. After the 3 year exemption time, a vehicle may be picked from the DVLA/DVA NI database again and a questionnaire sent. If the company still employs less than 10 people, a further 3 year exemption period will occur.

#### b) IRHS

For the smallest companies employing less than 10 people, the Department is able to issue an exemption from the survey for up to three years after the first

questionnaire has been completed. These are called **Survey Holidays**. After the 3 year exemption time, a firm will be picked from the database again and a questionnaire sent. If the company still employs less than 10 people, a further 3 year exemption period will occur after completion of this questionnaire

### **2.3 Do foreign-registered vehicles take part in the survey?**

Only UK-registered vehicles are required to participate in DfT's surveys. Similar surveys are conducted by all European Union Member States under Council Regulation No. 1172/98 enabling a European-wide picture of road freight activity to be compiled.

### 3. Questions about completing forms

#### 3.1 How many forms will I receive for the CSRGT survey?

The number of forms each company receives depends on the number of vehicles operated, their type and the Traffic Area in which they are registered. Very approximately, if your company operates 100 vehicles you might expect to receive between three and eight survey forms per year, depending on the exact characteristics of your fleet.

For the smallest companies it may be possible to receive an exemption. See [Section 2.2](#) for further details.

#### 3.2 How many forms will I receive for the IRHS survey?

The IRHS categorises businesses by their expected number of international trips per year, with sample frequency dependent on the expected number of trips per year. Each company is surveyed for the equivalent of two weeks per year. A week is based on six days (resulting in a total sampling period of twelve days per year). The survey period categorisations are shown in the following table.

Estimated Number of Trips Per Year	Number of Days/Weeks Sampled Per Year
More than 1000	1 day per month
401 - 1000	3 days per month
101 - 400	1 week every 6 months
25 - 100	2 weeks every 12 months
24 and less	4 weeks every 2 years

An estimate of the number of trips a company expects to make annually is requested in the pre-enquiry form and on each IRHS form sent out by the DfT. The information is then kept up-to-date from subsequent completed IRHS returns.

#### 3.3 Do I have to complete the survey form(s)?

**Yes. You are required to complete the survey forms under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. Failure to return the completed form(s) could result in legal action.**

The Statistics of Trade Act 1947 was developed to ensure that the Government could obtain returns from businesses in order to analyse economic trends. More information about the Act can be found [here](#).

### **3.4 Do I get paid for completing the form?**

No. If you receive a form to complete then you have statutory responsibility to complete and return the form to the Department.

## **4. Questions about confidentiality**

### **4.1 The information provided in the completed survey is commercially confidential. Can you ensure that this remain so?**

Yes. DfT survey staff are bound by the strict confidentiality provisions of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. Data are only released in non-disclosive, aggregated forms and, as such, cannot be linked back to individual companies. Details of individual vehicle or company activity will not be shared in any form whatsoever.

Please click [here](#) for further information on the National Statistics Code of Practice, which outlines our confidentiality provisions.

## 5. Questions about the sampled company's characteristics

### 5.1 It asks on the survey form if my company employs less than 10 employees. What employees should this figure include?

The number of employees should include all drivers, office and administration staff, depot staff, and management – all staff on the payroll.

### 5.2 What if the number of employees in my company changes?

If the number of employees in your company decreases to below 10 you can indicate this on the next survey form you are sent for completion by ticking the appropriate box. Similarly, if the number of people employed in your company has increased to more than 10 this can now be indicated by ticking the appropriate box.

### 5.3 My company has ceased trading / gone into liquidation. Do I still need to complete the survey form?

#### a) CSRGT

Please send the form back to us stating the above - if necessary just write in red pen on the top of the front page where it can easily be seen. If the vehicle has been sold, please turn to the back page and see '**Section 4: Change of possession**'. Please give the name and address of the new owner if possible.

#### b) IRHS

Yes. You should indicate that your company has ceased trading by ticking the appropriate section on the reverse of the form and giving details of when the company ceased trading and the date your licence was surrendered and returned. On receipt of your completed form we can update our system and no further forms will be dispatched to you.

### 5.4 I surrendered my operator's licence several week/months/years ago. Why are you are still sending me questionnaires to complete (IRHS)?

If you tick the box on the reverse of the IRHS form stating '**No longer doing international work**', and indicate on the form when you surrendered your licence, you will no longer receive IRHS questionnaires to complete.

## 6. Questions about the surveyed vehicles on CSRGT only.

### 6.1 I have received a questionnaire which is for a rigid vehicle and the vehicle is an articulated vehicle. Do I still need to complete the form?

Yes. Please amend the details on the front of the form relating to vehicle weight and carrying capacity. Please provide us with details of trailer type, axle configuration, whether there are retractable axles on either tractor unit or trailer and the number of super single tyres that are fitted if appropriate. Please write in red pen at the top of the front page where we can see it, that the vehicle is an articulated vehicle.

### 6.2 I have received a questionnaire which is for an articulated vehicle but the vehicle is a rigid vehicle. Do I still need to complete the form?

Yes. Please write in red pen at the top of the front page where we can see, that the vehicle is a rigid. Please fill out the sections for the gross vehicle weight and the carrying capacity, and whether the vehicle has any retractable axles, super single tyres or a vehicle tracking system etc. If the vehicle has a draw bar trailer please write this over the gross vehicle weight. If a draw bar trailer was used on any of the journeys, please write 'DB' at the end of each row of trip data.

### 6.3 What do I do if the vehicle is 'on-hire' during the survey period?

Please complete '**Section 4: Change of possession**', giving the name and address of the company/person the vehicle was on-hire to during the survey week. If the vehicle is hired out to more than one company during the survey period, please write this in the field for the name and address e.g. "vehicle on hire to more than one company", without giving names and addresses. This is what we call a 'multi-hire' and will be logged as such on our database when the questionnaire is returned.

The above also applies if the vehicle was on contract lease.

### 6.4 What do I do if the vehicle has been sold?

Please complete '**Section 4: Change of possession**', giving the name and address of the company/person who the vehicle has been sold to.

### 6.5 My vehicle has not moved during the survey week. What should I do?

Complete the sections on the front of the form and then turn to the back page, completing **'Section 2'** through to **'Section 5'**.

## **6.6 International journeys and the CSRGT?**

Although, CSRGT primarily relates to domestic road freight activity, it is necessary to record also the domestic legs of international journeys by GB-registered vehicles. For NI-registered vehicles, the international legs of journeys must also be recorded on the CSRGT form.

For the GB forms, no international legs of journeys should be reported at all. However, all the domestic parts of the journeys should be reported including, for instance, the domestic part of journeys to/from Docks and the Channel Tunnel. For such journeys, it is important the origins and/or destination are clearly marked with the location and its type, for instance Dover Ro-Ro Docks, East Midlands Airport, Daventry Rail Freight Terminal.

In the case of the NI form, journeys to the Republic of Ireland to Mainland Europe are covered by the CSRGT. For journeys to the Republic of Ireland please state where the vehicle crossed the land border and give all journeys carried out in the Republic of Ireland. For journeys to Mainland Europe you should state which countries have been crossed in transit and the destinations where deliveries have been made, giving both the town and country.

## **6.7 Which vehicles are exempt from completing the survey?**

Some types of vehicles are exempt from completing the CSRGT survey. These include:

- Specially fitted mobile project vehicles - the primary purpose of which is use as an educational facility when stationary.
- Showmen's vehicles.
- Snow ploughs.
- Highways Authority vehicles used in connection with weigh bridges.
- Road rollers.
- Privately-registered commercial vehicles which have vintage status and do not carry goods for commercial purposes.
- Privately-owned horse-boxes that do not carry goods for commercial purposes.
- Specialist vehicles used for medical purposes, for example mobile chest X-ray units.
- Emergency vehicles, for example ambulances and fire engines,
- Jetties.
- Passenger vehicles.
- Road sweepers.

### **6.8 Which section of the 'journeys made' table do I complete?**

Please carefully read the Guidance Notes for completing the questionnaire. In particular, the sections headed '**Journeys made on each day with four or fewer stops**' and '**Journeys made on each day with increasing or decreasing loads with 5 or more stops**'. Also look at the examples on the back page of the covering letter sent with the questionnaire which gives examples of the different types of journeys to record. If you have any questions about completing the form then please telephone the survey team for further assistance.

### **6.9 How do I record journeys for a skip vehicle?**

When the skip is carrying a load please give the type of materials and the weight of goods carried. If the skip is empty give an estimated weight of the skip, for example a 7.5 tonne vehicle would have an estimated empty skip weight of approximately 0.5 tonnes.

### **6.10 The vehicle I run is a cement mixer. I can only measure the weight of concrete in cubic metres. How should the form be completed?**

Write down the weight of the cement carried on the form in cubic metres and we will convert the amounts for you.

### **6.11 If I am running an articulated lorry, can I tick more than one box for trailer type as I use more than one type during the survey week?**

Please choose the trailer type most often used during the survey week.

### **6.12 I run an articulated lorry which can use a number of axle configurations. Which configuration should I record on the survey form?**

Please choose the axle configuration most often used during the survey week, and if there is a change during the week then please indicate this in the '**Number of trailer axles if not as Q3**' column on the 'journeys made' section inside of the form.

### **6.13 I only run a delivery service in and around my local area. Does the form still apply to me?**

Yes. All business-registered vehicles with a gross weight of more than 3.5 tonnes using the public roads are required to complete the form.

**6.14 Do I have to record the weights of an empty ISO container when completing the questionnaire?**

Yes. Depending on the size of the ISO container please record the weight of the empty container. The table below gives the weights for the three most common types of containers, if the exact weight is not known. These are provided for guidance only, as the weights may vary slightly for different manufacturers.

Container Size	Empty Weight
20 foot	2,200 kg
40 foot	3,800 kg
45 foot high-cube container	4,800 kg

**6.15 I cannot provide my tachograph reading as they have to remain in the driver's possession for twenty one days and this will hold up its return.**

Check the survey form return date and let us know if you have difficulty in meeting the survey deadlines. If necessary, arrangements can be made for the questionnaire to be returned at a later date.

**6.16 I am unable to provide mileages as we do not access to any route planning software.**

As long as you can provide the origins and destinations of actual journeys carried out, we can calculate the mileages for you.

**6.17 The vehicle I operate houses mobile exhibitions. Do I still need to complete survey forms?**

Yes. Please contact the survey team to obtain further advice.

**6.18 I am tachograph and/or operator's licence exempt. Do I need to complete the form (CSRG)?**

All business-registered vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of over 3.5 tonnes using the public roads are required to complete the survey forms.

## 7. Questions about the surveyed companies in IRHS only.

### 7.1 My company is not undertaking any international trips at present but hopes to in the future. Do I still need to complete an IRHS form?

Yes. Please complete the reverse of the IRHS survey form by ticking the box section entitled '**No Work**'.

### 7.2 What happens if the number of trips my company expects to make increases or decreases?

On the IRHS survey form you are asked to estimate the total number of international journeys that will be made by your company in the next 12 months. This is the total number of international trips expected to be made by all your company's vehicles. You do not need to supply an estimate for individual company vehicles separately. This information is requested each time you are sent a survey form to complete.

Upon receipt of this information, adjustments are made to our records which may amend your company's survey sampling frequency in the future.

### 7.3 What does the survey date period mean?

For the IRHS you should only report details for those vehicles which departed the UK to carry out international haulage work on a date within the survey period stated on the survey forms. Information relating to trips made by your vehicles before or after the survey date(s) is not required.

### 7.4 I surrendered my operators' licence several week/months/years ago. Why are you still sending me questionnaires to complete?

If you tick the box on the reverse of the IRHS form stating '**No longer doing international work**' and indicate on the form when you surrendered your licence, you will no longer receive IRHS questionnaires to complete.

### 7.5 Who do I contact if any details concerning my 'O' licence require changes or I need a renewal?

Please do not contact the DfT IRHS team since we do not have any responsibility for the licensing arrangements of good vehicles. You should contact VOSA directly at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF (Telephone 0870 606 0440, Fax 01132498142) or visit the VOSA website at <http://www.transportoffice.gov.uk>.

**7.6 The vehicle I run is a cement mixer. I can only measure the weight of concrete in cubic metres. How should the form be completed?**

Write down the weight of the cement carried on the form in cubic metres and we will convert the amounts for you.

**7.7 The vehicle I run houses mobile exhibitions. Do I still need to complete survey forms?**

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**7.9 I am unable to provide mileages as we do not have access to any route planning software.**

As long as you can provide the origins and destinations of actual journeys carried out, we can calculate the mileages for you.

## 8. Contacting Us.

If you have any specific questions about completing the CSRGT survey forms then please contact:

Julia Meredith,  
CSRGT Survey Manager,  
Department for Transport,  
Zone 1/18,  
Temple Quay House,  
2 The Square,  
Temple Quay,  
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For general enquiries about the conduct of the Department's Road Freight Surveys and for information about data available then please contact:

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