



»» MOVING ON »»

Issue 8 August 2004

The newsletter for HGV and PSV operators



New laws on dangerous goods

Changes to the law mean that most hauliers transporting dangerous goods must now comply with international standards.

Moving On issue 6 featured news of forthcoming changes to British regulations on carrying dangerous goods. Since 10 May, these regulations have been law under the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Vessels Regulations 2004, Statutory Instrument SI 2004 no. 568.

What this means for you

The main impact of the new regulations is that the carriage of almost all dangerous goods in Britain must now meet the international ADR standard.

This means that all dangerous goods vehicles must carry, at the minimum, a wheel chock, two warning signs or lamps, fire extinguishers, and high-visibility jackets and torches for the crew. Operators will need to demonstrate the availability of this equipment at roadside checks, although they are not part of the ADR annual vehicle inspection.

Vehicles carrying all UN1202 diesel, heating oil and gas oil will be particularly affected by the new regulations. Previously, only diesel fuels with a flashpoint of 61°C or below were covered.

Because the new regulations represent such a major change, drivers of vehicles carrying UN1202 diesel, heating oil and gas oil with a flashpoint above 61°C, in Britain only, have been granted a temporary exemption from the requirement to hold and carry a Vocational Training Certificate (ADR Driver's Licence). This exemption lasts until 1 July 2005. However, you should start to make arrangements to undergo training as soon as possible.

Other changes

Other requirements of ADR also now apply to vehicles carrying diesel fuel. All dangerous goods vehicles being taken for a road test after repair, or for a statutory annual test, must now carry transport documentation and be driven by drivers with a Vocational Training Certificate. This includes empty uncleaned vehicles.

Repairers must also have access to the services of an effective Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser.

Certain new tanker or tank-carrying vehicles and their tractor units are now required to be ADR certified by VOSA before being placed in service. New tanker or tank-carrying trailers will also need a Trailer First Test before being used with an ADR-certified vehicle. For a Trailer First Test, apply to VOSA's ADR section as early as possible, to avoid any delay in putting your new vehicle on the road.

Vehicles manufactured before 10 May 2004 do not need to be ADR certified, although they must now comply with other ADR requirements.

Most VOSA test stations can now carry out ADR vehicle inspections, thanks to a major staff training programme. Check with your local test station to find out if they can provide this service.

Find out more

An information paper about the impact of the new regulations and their implementation is now available. This answers concerns raised in a number of meetings between VOSA, the Dangerous Goods Branch of the Department for Transport, the Health and Safety Executive and interested trade bodies. You can get the information paper from the VOSA website, www.vosa.gov.uk, under 'News'.

To find out more about dangerous goods transport or ADR, or to get a hard copy of the information paper, please contact the ADR Section, VOSA, Welcombe House, 91-92 The Strand, Swansea SA1 2DH, phone 01792 454 250, fax 01792 454 367 or email

Heather.Stokes@vosa.gov.uk

A copy of the new regulations is available from www.hmsso.gov.uk Click on Legislation; UK Statutory Instruments; 2004; 500-599; No. 568 The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2004.

VOSA
Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

News in brief

Changes to test

New items are to be added to the annual HGV test over the next 12 months. Following some fatal accidents, VOSA has been asked to include: checks of container twistlocks fitted to vehicles and trailers; loading arm and stabiliser legs fitted to 'site'-type vehicles; and seat belts fitted to goods vehicles.

VOSA is currently working on the pass/fail standards to apply to each of these items. We will keep you informed of these standards as well as the arrangements for bringing them into the test.

Vehicle Inspectors complete training

Twenty vehicle inspectors at the Vehicle Inspection Station in the Zarqa Free Zone in Jordan have completed their VOSA certification training.

VOSA was commissioned by Bureau Veritas (BIVAC) Jordan to provide training and technical assistance to inspectors. The workshops, which lasted approximately one month, covered a wide range of topics including inspection of light and heavy vehicles, training on new equipment and a course for drivers who drive the cars through the station as they are being tested. Upon completion of the course, all 20 participants were certified by VOSA UK as qualified inspectors to VOSA's standards.

New operator survey

The DVO Group is carrying out another MORI customer survey of vehicle operators this year. This will be followed in the autumn by a survey of drivers, fitters and presenters. Both surveys will track changes since last year, identify where improvements have taken place, consider ongoing improvements and look at operator perceptions of joined-up services. We will publish the results in future issues of *Moving On*.

Wire-free access to data

A new system will give VOSA enforcement staff wire-free access to up-to-date information wherever they are. Staff will be able to use General Packet Radio Service, using the Vodafone signal, to access VOSA databases.

Following a successful pilot, wire-free access will be rolled out to staff over the coming months and will add to the number of new tools VOSA is using to improve our targeting.

From the editor



Welcome to the August issue of Moving On.

I'm pleased to be back as editor after having been away for a few issues. We've got important news on changes to legislation this time round. If you transport dangerous goods, you should find the information in our cover story useful. And many of you will be affected by the new working time directive, so make sure you take a look at page three.

The feature on our graduate trainee programme gives an insight into how VOSA and the PSV industry can work together. I sometimes hear that we don't really appreciate the issues facing operators. I hope that you can see how committed VOSA is to understanding the needs of our customers and making changes to provide a modern and relevant service.

Please keep the letters coming in. Next time round, we'll feature some of your comments and answer some of your queries.

Send your letters to Rachel Everington, at *Moving On*, VOSA, Berkeley House, Croydon Street, Bristol BS5 0DA or email movingon@vosa.gov.uk

Online all the time

All goods vehicle operator licence holders will by now have received an invitation to register online for VOSA's new Operator Licensing Self-Service facility. As Ian Adams reports, feedback so far has been very positive.

By the end of June, over 4,000 operators had registered to use the Operator Licensing Self-Service facility, with more joining daily.

If you've not registered yet, it's easy to sign up. Visit www.vosa.gov.uk, click on 'Operator Licensing Self-Service' in the right-hand menu and then click on the 'Register' button. You'll be asked for a few simple details and then your registration is complete.

We'll email part of your login information immediately, with the rest sent separately by post, for security reasons. You must remember your user name and the memorable word you choose – you'll need both of these as well as your password to access the self-service system.

All sorts of services

Once you've registered, at any time of the day or night you can:

- check the details of all your licences on VOSA's operator licence computer system;
- add and remove vehicles from your licence;
- transfer vehicles between licences held in different traffic areas;

- track the progress of licence applications; and
- speed up the delivery of vehicle discs for transactions done online.

Self-service for PSV operator licence holders will be available later this year, and as soon as it's ready we will inform all PSV licence holders. As well as being able to update vehicle details, bus operators will also be able to see a list of all their bus services registered with the traffic areas.

Positive feedback

Bill Buckley, VOSA's National Licensing Director, said, "This development places VOSA among the leaders in delivering online government services to business and is a taster of how VOSA plans to transform the way it delivers services to its customers. It provides the opportunity for licence holders to manage and update their own records at the time they want and without the need to send paper applications to various traffic area offices. The changes they make online immediately update the licensing database."

Plans for the future include enabling users to pay licence invoices and continue licences online.



All in good time

Next year, a new European directive covering the working time of mobile workers in the road transport industry comes into force.

Most workers in the UK have been covered by working time regulations since 1998. Last year, these regulations were amended to cover non-mobile workers in the road transport sector. But in March 2005, new rules will apply to the working time of the majority of mobile workers in the road transport industry.

How will this affect you?

The regulations will only affect drivers and crew who are subject to EU drivers' hours legislation (3820/85/EC). Personnel who do not have a fixed place of work and whose work is carried out as part of a travelling staff (including members of a vehicle crew, drivers' mates, attendants and some PSV conductors) will also be affected. Some self-employed drivers are excluded until March 2009.

Under the new rules, you must not work more than 60 hours in a single week (excluding breaks and periods when you are not working but are available for work), nor exceed an average of 48 hours per

week. Night workers are limited to 10 hours work for each 24-hour period, unless you are subject to a collective or workforce agreement.

Checks

Employers must show that they are complying with these limits, so checks should be made to ensure that staff do not exceed them. However, mobile workers are responsible for notifying their employer (in writing) of any work performed for another employer.

Employers are not obliged to use tachograph records to monitor working time, but if they do, these records will need to be kept for at least two years. Drivers will also need to use different mode switches on their tachograph to distinguish 'other work' activities from 'periods of availability'. You'll find more detailed advice on this in future issues of *Moving On*.

VOSA is not going to be checking working time records at the roadside. However, we will respond to and follow up complaints received on our national number, **0870 60 60 440**.

Find out more

For more information on working time regulations, visit the Department of Trade and Industry website at www.dti.gov.uk For details of how the regulations affect the road transport industry, see the Department for Transport website at www.dft.gov.uk

Putting the brakes on

VOSA has put the brakes on the roller brake tester and test hall project.

VOSA has decided not to continue negotiations for the supply of a new brake performance tester. The roller brake test equipment offered by the two potential suppliers was not sufficiently developed for VOSA to be confident that it would meet our requirements.

We will therefore be reviewing our requirements and expect to initiate another procurement competition in the near future.

Meanwhile, VOSA will use existing testing equipment. We are confident that our roller brake testers will continue to perform reliably and to a satisfactory standard. However, for tests where it is not practical to apply VOSA's load simulator or where the load simulator has insufficient capacity to provide an effective load, we are considering making it a requirement for operators to bring vehicles in laden. Before making a decision, there will be further consultation with the operator associations.



The technology to target

The benefits of automated number plate recognition (ANPR) are becoming apparent.

VOSA has recently carried out an evaluation of the contribution of ANPR to more effective targeting. The results were very encouraging: we found that using ANPR made us, on average, 25 per cent more likely to stop a vehicle with a serious mechanical defect or road traffic offence. That means our examiners are able to focus more attention on non-compliant operators, and interfere less with those who comply.

The equipment has been used to great effect alongside VOSA's recently acquired Power to Stop in England and Wales, making it much easier for officers to identify which vehicles to check. VOSA's ANPR equipment has also been used in partnership with police ANPR systems to target vehicles in many larger road checks.

The future for ANPR

In a new project, we are currently looking at how we can use ANPR with weigh-in-motion sensors (WIMS). We are working with the police and the Highways Agency in the West Midlands, where we aim to install WIMS and connect them to ANPR cameras. Once the equipment is ready for use, we

will conduct a six-month trial to test the kit's accuracy and usefulness.

We hope that the installation will provide a tool to identify known offenders during road checks, as well as giving us detailed information, 24 hours a day,

seven days a week, about when defective/offending vehicles are likely to use the road. The WIMS element will add an extra dimension by allowing us, for the first time, to gain access to weight and speed information while vehicles are on the road.



A fresh perspective for the future

Ever wished you could swap jobs, or spend the day in someone else's shoes? Well, VOSA's graduate trainees get to do just that when they become part of the VOSA/VCA Graduate Mechanical Engineer Training Programme. Amy Hanton has the details.

The VOSA/VCA Graduate Mechanical Engineer Training Programme was started so that both organisations employ the right balance of engineering and technical staff. The four-year scheme ensures that our new graduate mechanical engineers have all the necessary skills and knowledge to become Chartered Engineers and valuable members of the VOSA and VCA teams. The programme also allows the graduates to experience life from our customers' point of view.

Roly Furzer, one of the graduates taking part in the scheme, is halfway through the first of his three-month long placements in the transport industry. He's currently working for The Kings Ferry, a family-run PSV operator based in Gillingham, Kent. With 76 vehicles and 45,000 litres of fuel used every week, the offices of the busy operator were the perfect place for Roly to start learning the ins and outs of

"Colleagues don't treat me any differently from anyone else. I'm just someone doing the job."



Right: Roly Furzer, left: Danny Elford

the industry. Helping him gain day-to-day experience of keeping a fleet on the road is Danny Elford, Engineering Manager at The Kings Ferry, who acts as Roly's mentor.

Roly has managed to learn a lot about the way operators work and he's had a chance to see how VOSA's work impacts on The Kings Ferry's operation. "Future VOSA/VCA managers will have a good idea of the impact of legislation on operators," he says, adding that the scheme provides information that will help VOSA and the Department for Transport decide on long-term strategy.

Roly has experienced some of the difficulties of booking MOTs, annual tests, advanced MOTs and re-tests. He has also dealt with the busy maintenance programme of a PSV operator and the six-weekly checks, as well as learning about the competitive nature of the industry.

And he hasn't just been sitting behind a desk. Roly has also got his hands dirty in the workshop, changing a set of brake drums, fixing seat belts and doing bits of general maintenance. His next stop will be in the main hub of The Kings Ferry operation, dealing with drivers' hours and customers, before moving on to another post in the industry later in the year.

His experiences at The Kings Ferry have helped Roly see how VOSA could help operators more. Test station hours mean that we can't always fit in with the PSV industry's 24 hours a day, seven days a week operations. But operators always offer their customers a flexible and responsive service and keep them well informed, so that's the standard of service they expect.

Roly has settled comfortably into his role in the PSV industry and isn't treated like the 'man from the ministry' at all. "Colleagues don't treat me differently from anyone else. I'm just someone doing the job." He admits that he often looks at things through a VOSA eye, although it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day issues at The Kings Ferry.



One of The Kings Ferry's fleet



Customer service is everything: travelling in comfort and style

For VOSA, the benefits of the scheme are clear. As a future manager of VOSA or VCA, Roly will have a good first-hand understanding of our customers and their businesses, and a picture of how the industry works as a whole.

Roly hasn't just been sitting behind a desk. He's also got his hands dirty in the workshop.

As for Roly, he sees himself working in the future as a link between the agencies and the operators. He hopes to be a point of contact that operators will find easy to approach, knowing that he understands where they come from. He also sees ways in which VOSA can improve the service we offer by being more flexible and customer focused – and working with the industry to achieve this.

And what does Roly think of the graduate training programme? "It will produce dynamic, forward-thinking managers," he says, "committed to the process of change."

The net widens...

The wider roll-out of the Power to Stop scheme has now begun, with a total of 15 police forces accrediting VOSA with the new power.

Police forces in Avon and Somerset, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, South Wales and West Yorkshire have all now given VOSA the power to stop vehicles. This is in addition to the police forces in Greater Manchester, Staffordshire, North Wales, Cambridgeshire and Northumbria and the Metropolitan Police, who had already accredited VOSA staff with the new power.

Kent, Warwickshire and Bedfordshire, West Mercia, Nottinghamshire and Wiltshire police forces have also signed up to the scheme, although VOSA is not yet operational in these areas. Agreements have been raised with 16 other forces. They have been signed by Maurice Newey, VOSA's Chief Executive, and await signatures from the respective Chief Police Officers.

A great success

A review meeting in February declared the Power to Stop pilot scheme a great success. The areas involved have been able to increase the number of out-of-hours checks and the total number of checks overall, as well as improving their ability to target vehicles.

Feedback from the Association of Chief Police Officers and the forces taking part in the trial is still very positive. As previously reported, a number of forces have seen the move as a way of working more closely with VOSA. This was illustrated at a recent check in North Wales where the police deployed two patrol cars to stop vehicles, in addition to the two VOSA vehicles that were being used.

The Transport Minister David Jamieson officially launched Power to Stop on 29 July at VOSA's Tormarton enforcement site in the South West, near Bristol. Attending the event were Maurice Newey and Philip Brown, the Senior Traffic Commissioner, as well as members of trade associations, the press and the police.



New equipment

Twenty-four Ford Galaxy vehicles are now available for VOSA staff to use to stop vehicles, while a further 12 are currently at Ford Special Vehicle Preparations being fitted with special wiring looms, light bars and livery. Once completed, they will be delivered to the relevant VOSA Enforcement Areas to begin their work.

With their more conspicuous bonnet and wider message area on the light bar, it will be difficult to miss the new vehicles.

As the number of areas covered by the new Power to Stop increases, life will become more and more difficult for law breakers.

Open a VOSA account

Pre-funded accounts have been making life easier for people since they were first offered over ten years ago. Amy Hanton discovers exactly what people are getting out of the system.



Many of you have been using pre-funded accounts to pay for your MOT bookings and VOSA goods and services since the scheme began, and there are now 8,500 account holders.

It's so easy

Eastwood Commercial Motors was one of the first to participate and wouldn't go back to the old way, simply because, as they put it, "it's so easy". Pre-funded accounts allow you to send out one cheque which can cover a number of vehicles, reducing bank charges and administration effort. According to Eastwood, the system "gets things moving quicker".

Not only do pre-funded accounts save drivers having to carry a lot of money around with them, they also ease the process of slot booking. Without an account, customers can only book a slot by paying at the time of booking. But with a pre-funded account you only need to give your details once. An account holder can simply book a slot over the phone, and if something unexpected happens at a test, the funding can come straight from the account.

A better service

Account holders also value the automatic notification you receive if your account balance drops below a chosen 'reminder level'. Allan Birch of C D Bramall Trucks commented that they always receive a letter, and the account has helped them to build a good working relationship with test stations by reminding him when his account needs topping up.

When you set up a pre-funded account you get a personal identification number to quote at the time of payments or enquiries, ensuring a high level of security. You can also authorise account 'agents' so that more than one depot can use the same account.

Automatic statements

Another bonus is the automatic statement, which account holders find useful to keep them informed of their current balance and keep their accounts in order. Statements can be produced monthly, weekly or on request, and duplicate statements are produced free of charge. J E Douglas & Sons find that the statements are particularly useful as information on test bookings and fees is available in one document, at a glance.

VOSA is always looking to improve customer service. Judging from the positive comments operators have given us on the subject, setting up a pre-funded account appears to be one of the ways in which we can make your life a bit easier.

Tiredness kills – Sleep saves lives

How many drivers have experienced that feeling of drifting off while driving – head nodding and eyelids closing? How often have you simply tried winding down the window or turning up the radio to stay alert? Amy Hanton investigates the effects of driving while tired.

People driving when tired are usually just trying to do their best, working long hours because they are committed to their jobs. But make no mistake:

- driving when too tired is a criminal offence;
- company directors and transport managers can also be held legally responsible and may face prosecution if they encourage or ignore overwork.

The facts

- Sleepy drivers kill more people than drink drivers.
- Research has shown that more than one in five accidents on major, non-urban roads and motorways are due to sleepiness.
- Accidents caused by driver sleepiness are often far more serious than other road accidents. Drivers who are falling asleep make no attempt to avoid the accident.

Lorry drivers are at particular risk of driving while tired because:

- they often work long shifts, including night shifts;
- they drive regularly during the peak times for sleep-related accidents: approximately from 2am to 6am and 2pm to 4pm, when there are distinct troughs in our biological rhythm;
- they may be more prone to sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA); and
- being out on the road makes it difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle; a poor diet can contribute to weight problems and the increased possibility of a sleep disorder.

What can you do?

If you manage drivers, you should:

- ensure your drivers have regular sleep patterns and get enough sleep. For example, have regular confidential meetings to discuss these issues with them;
- check your drivers are not suffering from insomnia, taking any over-the-counter or prescription drugs that may cause tiredness, moonlighting at another job or hobby, or being regularly disturbed in the night (for example by a baby crying); and
- ensure your drivers' schedules are safe and sensible.

If you are a driver:

- Plan your journey properly.
- Stop for a 15-minute break if you feel tired, and make sure you stop approximately every two hours at least. Make sure you stop somewhere safe, and never stop on a hard shoulder.
- Drink a cup or two of strong coffee or an energy drink. Research undertaken with energy drinks (containing caffeine) has shown them to be effective in reducing fatigue for up to an hour.
- Caffeine takes about 20 minutes to take effect, so use this to try to have a 15–20 minute snooze. Any more, and you may wake up feeling groggy. Set an alarm clock. If you are still tired, you should not continue your journey.



- Caffeine should only be used as an emergency measure and in combination with a break from driving.

Remember though, countermeasures do not solve the problem. There is no substitute for getting adequate sleep. Lorry drivers should always remember that the rules on breaks and rest times are there for their own and every other road user's safety.

For more information, contact the Freight Transport Association on **01892 552 278**

Thanks to the Freight Transport Association for the information in this article.

Relaxed rules for Reduced Pollution Certificates

Vehicles no longer need to be registered before they are issued with a Reduced Pollution Certificate (RPC). The regulations were relaxed on 1 June 2004 to make life easier for manufacturers and operators.

VOSA has agreed that they will accept unregistered vehicles for Reduced Pollution Tests. Once the RPC has been issued, operators can then obtain first registration

and licensing from DVLA in the concessionary RP HGV or RP BUS licence categories.

To help us maintain our records for subsequent RPC tests, applicants will be asked to present the original and all copies of first RPCs of unregistered vehicles to the DVLA Local Office. The certificates will be endorsed with the allocated Vehicle Registration Mark as part of the registration process. The copies will then be forwarded by DVLA to VOSA for us to create the vehicle record. Please do not endorse the certificates with the expected Vehicle Registration Mark yourselves.

If you need any further information about RPCs, call VOSA's enquiry line on **0870 60 60 440**.

Progress on the Thelwall Viaduct



Good news for the thousands of road users who travel every day through the road works on the Thelwall Viaduct on the M6 in Cheshire: a deadline of spring 2005 has been set for its reopening.

Work began in July 2002 when an extensive study revealed serious problems with the support bearings. A significant number were found to be cracked and corroded. The bearings that failed were installed when the viaduct was refurbished in 1996. The fact that they failed so quickly is under close scrutiny and subject to legal proceedings.

Replacing the bearings is a complex and time-consuming operation, but unseen experts are working

as quickly as possible to 'jack up' the viaduct 140 times – once for each of the bearings that need to be replaced. That's no easy task when you consider that the viaduct weighs 58,599 tons – the equivalent of 5,000 double-decker buses.

It takes around a month to install each of the new 'slider' bearings, as the beams need to be strengthened above each bearing location before they can be jacked up. John Martin Construction (JMC) has been awarded the contract to replace the 140 bearings.

Highways Agency project team leader David Brindle said: "While there are few visible signs on the

viaduct itself, underneath is a hive of activity. The design and installation of these bearings is a complex technical operation, but drivers can be assured that we are doing everything we can to fully re-open Thelwall as soon as possible.

"We realise that this essential work is causing disruption to road users, but the safety of the travelling public is of paramount importance," David added. "The Highways Agency would like to thank road users for their co-operation during the repair work."



Change at the top at VCA



Moving On has been speaking to Paul Markwick, the new head of the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA), to find out how he's settling in.

Following the retirement of Derek Harvey in April this year, Paul Markwick was named the new Chief Executive of VCA.

Wide experience

As an automotive engineer, Paul has worked in the motor industry for more than 25 years, for everyone from manufacturers such as Jaguar and Land Rover to service organisations such as Ricardo and IVM Automotive. After two months in his new post, we caught up with Paul to ask for his thoughts on his appointment, his initial impressions of life in VCA and the Driver, Vehicle and Operator (DVO) Group as a whole, and where he sees VCA in the future.

"I was very excited to be appointed to this position," says Paul. "Having worked in industry for many years, I was aware of VCA and knew its integrity and the professionalism of its staff to be held in very high regard. I am obviously on a very steep learning curve, getting to know how things tick and also becoming aware of the workings of the wider DVO family."

What the future holds

"VCA is fairly unusual in government in that it has to compete for work in a very competitive market place, and this provides constant challenges. The automotive industry is continually changing and I want VCA to be at the forefront of this, maintaining our technical integrity and quality and growing our technical portfolio."

VCA is the UK authority for the type approval of motor vehicles, their systems and components to given environmental and safety standards. VCA approves the majority of vehicle types, including cars, trucks, motorcycles, tractors, etc.

VCA is currently co-operating with VOSA and the Department for Transport to develop an approval scheme for buses and coaches. The scheme will tackle issues such as multi-stage build and it is hoped that it will provide a sensible framework that takes account of the needs of the industry and the consumer alike.

New publication on the way

VOSA is working on a new best practice guide to help operators ensure the safe and legal use of all goods and passenger carrying vehicles. The *Safe Operators Guide*, compiled with the trade associations and the Traffic Commissioners, is intended to be a sister publication to the *Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness*.

The procedures and systems explained in the *Safe Operators Guide* are aimed at both new and established operators and should ensure compliance with all aspects of road traffic legislation, including drivers' hours regulations, driver licensing and operating within maximum permitted weight limits.

We hope that the new guide will be available by the end of the summer.

You can get both the *Safe Operators Guide* and the *Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness* by calling our national number, 0870 60 60 440, or visiting the VOSA website at www.vosa.gov.uk



How much can you save?

The Department for Transport is funding development of a series of tests for devices that claim to reduce fuel consumption or improve operational efficiency. Chris Hodgson from the TransportEnergy BestPractice programme has more details.

Fleet managers are frequently bombarded by sales literature for products that offer fuel savings that can seem too good to be true – aftermarket fuel additives, for example, or combustion improvers and lubricating oils and additives. With fuel accounting for an average of around 30 per cent of the costs of operating a fleet of HGVs, it is essential that operators are able to assess the validity of these claims.

In the past, attempts to test alleged fuel saving devices have focused primarily on off-road track testing, usually over short distances and limited durations. More often than not, this type of ‘snapshot’ testing has produced inconclusive results. This leaves fleet engineers unclear about the potential benefits, or otherwise, of the products being tested.

TransportEnergy BestPractice is now developing guidance for operators to perform in-use trials within their own HGV fleets. By carrying out trials consistently, under normal operating conditions and



over extended time periods, fleet managers will be able to collect reliable and robust results.

The evaluations will enable operators to test the benefits of a variety of devices. They will also provide manufacturers of components and devices with the opportunity to show the effectiveness of their products under normal operating conditions.

The evaluations will be independently monitored and audited, and the results reported in a series of TransportEnergy BestPractice case studies.

HGV operators and manufacturers of components and devices who want to contribute to the development of these tests should contact Chris Hodgson on **0870 190 6701**.

You can also find out more about fuel saving devices in the free TransportEnergy BestPractice guide *GPG313: Fuel Saving Devices*.

Driving change

When it comes to delivering fuel economy, the driver is king. For the vehicle operator, the benefits of a fuel-efficient driving style are not just lower fuel bills, but also lower maintenance and insurance costs. One Norfolk-based tanker operator spent £9,500 on monitoring all drivers’ fuel consumption figures before implementing a driver training programme. The fuel cost savings in the first year alone were £46,000. The insurance premium saving was £8,000.

Find out more in the free TransportEnergy BestPractice guide *GPG2100: Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) Guide*.

To sign up for Department for Transport-funded SAFED training, call **0870 190 6354** or visit www.safed.org.uk

TransportEnergy BestPractice is funded by the Department for Transport and provides authoritative and impartial advice. The programme produces free information through publications, videos and software, together with seminars, workshops and other events.

To order publications or for more information, call the TransportEnergy Hotline on **0845 6021425** or visit www.transportenergy.org.uk and click on ‘Make Your Fleet More Efficient’.

Higher fees for a better service

Fees for commercial vehicle testing, operator licences and international permits are soon to increase. Roger Trubridge explains why, and what VOSA is going to do with the extra money.

On 30 August 2004, fees for commercial vehicle testing, operator licences and international permits will increase by an average of 10 per cent. This is as well as an annual inflationary increase of 3 per cent.

Before announcing the fee increase, VOSA consulted lorry and bus operator trade associations and many of their members. We answered a lot of their concerns, about both the fee increases and the standard of service. But the biggest question was “Why are the fees going up at all?”

More investment

There are two reasons. First, extra income from the increased fees will be used to invest in facilities and to improve services.

Operators and presenters will benefit from an improvement in VOSA’s test station infrastructure and the introduction of online test bookings, e-payments and operator self-service. VOSA’s aim is to provide a testing and operator licensing service worthy of the 21st century.

Covering costs

Fee increases have also been necessary because the cost of testing and issuing operator licences has not been met by the income we have received. As a result, the accounts for testing and operator licensing are in the red. And because VOSA is a trading fund, we need to break even in all areas of our work. Any imbalance between fee income and costs cannot be ignored for long.

Costs have risen with the steady increase in the numbers of multi-axle vehicles and trailers in recent years. These vehicles take much longer to test than those with two axles – almost twice as long if the vehicle has four axles. Despite efforts on our part to contain costs with efficiency and value-for-money measures, costs have exceeded our fee income. On top of this, operators and presenters of two-axle vehicles were subsidising those presenting multi-axle vehicles, which is clearly unfair.

Another reason for the higher costs was that re-tests (both free and paid) were costing VOSA more than the income they generated. Operators and presenters whose vehicles passed first time were therefore subsidising those whose vehicles did not.

Higher re-test fees mean the new fee increase is much lower for most people than it would have been otherwise. Paying more for a re-test should also encourage better preparation of vehicles for the annual test.

For further details of the fee increase, call the VOSA national number on **0870 60 60 440**, call your local test station, or visit the VOSA website at www.vosa.gov.uk

Agency details

Driving Standards Agency (DSA)
0115 901 2500
www.dsa.gov.uk

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

Drivers’ enquiries
0870 240 0009
drivers.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk

Vehicle enquiries
0870 240 0010
vehicles.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk
www.dvla.gov.uk

Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)
0117 951 5151
www.vca.gov.uk

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA)
0870 60 60 440
www.vosa.gov.uk

Department for
Transport

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