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Date: 10 March 2005

Dear XXXXXX

RE: Request for Information.

I refer to your request for details of VOSA's targets in respect of compliance with the requirement for public service vehicles to be licensed and an explanation of the Performance Gain points system. I'll try and address each of these points in turn.

VOSA does not set targets in respect of compliance with the requirement for PSV's to be licensed. All operators of PSV's should be licensed under the operator licensing scheme if:

- The vehicles being operated carry passengers by road for payment (hire and reward) and
- The vehicles are classed as Public Service Vehicles.

VOSA examiners will check that PSV's are correctly licenced during roadside checks as well as compliance with all other relevant road safety legislation e.g drivers hours, vehicle excise duty etc. Operators found not to be O licenced when they should be run the risk of being prosecuted.

With regard to Performance Gain (PG). In 2001/02 VOSA (with the support of the DfT) changed the way it measured it's effectiveness. We moved away from measuring effectiveness in terms of hitting hard numerical targets (e.g number of vehicles inspected, number weighed etc) to focussing on the outcome of what we do. PG has three broad objectives:

1. to encourage more effective targeting
2. to reduce the burden of enforcement on the compliant and
3. to improve the understanding and awareness of operators and drivers through education and advice.

It also allows VOSA to direct its resources more effectively.

Enforcement activity falls into three broad categories:

Deterrent – the deterrent effect of our roadside checks, operator visits etc.

Education – improving operator and driver understanding of the rules and regulations so as to stop offences being committed through ignorance or misunderstanding

Sanction - penalising the non compliant vehicle/driver/operator through prohibitions, prosecution or public inquiry and mitigating the road safety risk through prohibiting unsafe vehicles.

Each outcome is given a value relative to its estimated contribution to road safety and environmental standards. The points value ranges from 1 point for a vehicle check to 100 points for an immediate prohibition with a safety critical steering, tyre or brake defect. This means we can reduce the number of checks and reduce the burden that routine checks create for the compliant operator, if, through improvements in the range and quality of intelligence and data, we can target our resources more effectively.

PG has meant that the nature of some of VOSA's objectives have changed. There are still a small number of numeric minima e.g. exhaust emission check minima which reflects the Government's continuing commitment to reduce environmental pollution and a tachograph chart minimum which is an EU requirement.

Performance Gain has been tuned to support important changes and new initiatives since it's introduction. It has also helped resolve tensions that had been created in trying to improve effectiveness and reduce the burden on the compliant whilst at the same time having to meet numeric targets.

The details of VOSA's performance are contained in our annual Effectiveness Report. This report is available electronically via the VOSA website the URL is: www.vosa.gov.uk/vosa/aboutvosa/corporatereports.htm

Yours faithfully

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