



SUMMER 2024

STANDARD MAGAZINE

STANDARD SETTERS

FORS sets out details of Version 7 of the Standard

BETTER VISION

Is your company ready for the new direct vision rules?

TRUCKSTOP UPGRADES

New grants help improve facilities for truck drivers

PLUS: FORS ADDS NEW DECARB MODULE TO ITS PORTFOLIO

THE FORCE LEAN ON FORS

OFFICERS TAKE FORS COURSES TO HELP UNDERSTAND PROBLEMS FACED BY FLEET OPERATORS



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12:57

HELLO & WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of The Standard



As I write this, we are awaiting the forthcoming general election – and whichever party proves successful, there are bound to be plenty of changes ahead for Britain. It’s always a time of some uncertainty around a general election, so it’s good to know that amid all the razzle-dazzle, the efforts of FORS to promote safety, the environment and cost-effectiveness among transport companies will remain constant.

As usual, this issue contains plenty of news, views and advice for any FORS Accredited Operators in their journey towards better fleet management.

But there are two features, in particular, that all readers need to peruse and digest. Firstly, we reveal details of the latest FORS Standard 7 which will come into effect on 2 January next year. For anyone wondering why FORS has updated the Standard, the fact is that the transport industry is an ever-changing playing field and FORS needs to keep ahead of the curve by meeting new challenges head-on. Only by doing that can FORS Accredited Operators know they are part of the elite group that runs its businesses in the safest and greenest way possible. Contractors looking for the best providers can also be certain that they will not be let down when they choose those who carry the familiar blue FORS stickers on the back of their vehicles.

The second important feature to note is regarding the upcoming changes to Transport for London’s Direct Vision Standard (DVS). Those running trucks over 12-tonnes GVW and operate in the city face some major changes – and as they come into effect in October, time is getting short to ensure that any work that needs doing is completed by then.

As the penalty charge for failing to do this is £550 per day, operators will understand the importance. Our feature gives readers all the info they need about DVS, and there’s even a handy step-by-step guide for those who aren’t sure how to act right now.

And for those who believe that FORS is purely for truck and van operators, we have news that cargo bike organisations are now joining the fold. They may technically be outside of certain transport regulations, but cargo bike operators still need to adhere to the various aims that FORS works hard to promote.

Then, we turn the spotlight on one FORS Operator who, we feel, has gone the extra mile in its commitment to FORS values. This time, we feature Galaxy Dry Lining and Insulation and see how the firm worked its way tirelessly up to becoming FORS Gold.

On the legal front, we bring news of changes to the Economic Crime and Corporation Transparency Act. If you think laws like this won’t affect your firm, then think again!

Finally, how many transport managers consider their employees’ dental health? Not many, I would imagine! Inside, readers will be surprised to learn how important this can be in times when NHS dentists have all but disappeared.

Inside, we detail how important this can be as an employee benefit as there is a recognised shortage of dentists in the country.

Read on and enjoy this latest issue...



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Transport for London is tightening up its rules on direct vision. We explain the changes in full

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How prices of second hand commercial vehicles have fluctuated since the Covid crisis



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FORS has published details of Version 7 of the Standard. We detail the key changes.



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Durite on the road with new exhibition vehicle **p9**

Slice of safety

Hovis ups its safety game with TruTac **p9**

New research talks up the EV benefits

Electric vans (EVs) can pay for themselves within three years, while non-EV users are looking to switch within five years, new research has found.

The analysis, carried out among SMEs by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), also found that van operators are increasingly adopting EVs as they recognise the significant business benefits, ensuring that EV adoption is not just being led by major corporates.

The report was commissioned by Ford Pro to better understand the broader European commercial van landscape, comprised of 23 million SMEs. This includes owner operators, which account for 99% of businesses in Europe.

The study of more than 1,000 van drivers, both company employees and owner-operators – found that these businesses are already realising significant

energy cost savings as well as improving their productivity and operations with supporting technology.

Analysis of the total cost of operating electric vans compared to diesel or petrol equivalents found electric vehicles can make up for their higher initial purchase costs within a typical three-year ownership timeframe.

Survey respondents said reduced operating costs were the top reason to switch to EVs (46.3%) supported by annual EV van charging costs of €3,700 vs €12,400 (£3,152 vs £10,562) for a petrol or diesel van.

Beyond financial benefits, the survey also found out why SMEs are turning to EVs. Access to Low Emissions Zones was the joint most common reason to switch (46.3%), followed by concern for the environment (45%) and brand reputation (45%).

Charging time was the biggest concern for those who have not yet switched to EVs (38.1%) with upfront



purchase costs also an issue (37.7%). Despite this, amongst those yet to switch, a majority (58.6%) said that they were somewhat likely to choose an electric van over the next five years.

For the operators that have switched to EVs, the study found that they are more likely to recognise the importance of technologies and services that

complement van ownership. Amongst the businesses that have adopted technology and software, the overwhelming majority have reported positive productivity impacts.

This was particularly the case for those adopting vehicle safety and security measures, fleet management solutions, and communication software. •

FORS ‘highly commended’ at Great British Fleet Awards

The Great British Fleet Awards 2024 saw FORS walk away with a well-deserved accolade. FORS was highly commended in the ‘Innovation in Risk Management’ category.

The event took place at the Marshall Arena in Milton Keynes. Fleet World magazine editor John Challen said: “Risk management is one of the most important tasks of any fleet manager and there is no doubt that becoming a FORS Accredited Operator is the best way of improving road safety.

“More and more firms are

joining FORS as the message about its environmental and risk managements benefits is becoming known and we look forward to FORS winning more of our awards in the future.” •



Below: Nicole Housh, FORS Marketing Consultant; Yasmine Packman-Barlow, FORS Training Consultant and Geraint Davies, FORS Concession Director, at the awards

Conference call

The seventh FORS Annual Conference on 15 October at the ICC Birmingham will explore how FORS can work together with operators to drive and thrive – giving a roadmap to success.

The agenda will feature speakers and panel presentations from a variety of industry experts and conference topics. A full agenda will be issued in the coming months but for now you can find out more about the topics and register to attend by visiting: forsannualconference.com



Job shortage

Lack of technicians to fix electric vehicles **p10**

Maintenance care

Workshop improves with new Totalkare equipment **p10**

New demonstration unit brings safety and compliance closer for operators

FORS Associate Durite, a leader in vehicle safety, lighting and auto electrical parts supply, has commissioned a new demonstration vehicle designed to bring its range of road safety products closer to fleet operators throughout the UK.

The Durite-branded demo van is equipped with a selection of the company's latest safety additions, including DVR kits, 4G live-streaming DVR and CCTV kits, AI and Progressive Safe Systems, innovative lighting and smart telematics tracking.

A company spokesman said: "This is a great way to help fleet operators of all types and sizes select the correct and latest technology to ensure safe vehicle operation and compliance with DVS, FORS & CLOCS. Ellipses Vision Phase 2 has proven quite challenging for everyone. We are happy to offer local support to our distributors and fleets,

showing first-hand how our DVS Progressive Safe System operates and answering any questions they might have to help them navigate their way through the new requirement."

On the road throughout the UK, the demo unit will travel from one operator to the next and managers can book a slot, with a minimum of one month's notice at any time via the Durite team or by visiting the Durite website. The unit will also be on hand at many of the major trade events this year.

Durite has been supplying vehicle cameras for more than 20 years and has provided more than 50,000 systems to operators throughout the UK. An extensive network of distributors and approved installers service the whole of UK and Ireland. •

Below: The new demo van will be showing off Durite products to potential and existing clients



Theft continues to strain UK businesses with one in five van drivers falling victim

One in five (19 per cent) of van drivers fell victim to tool theft last year, according to Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles research. While an improvement on the number of van drivers reporting incidents of tool theft year-on-year, a Freedom of Information request revealed that as many as 15,464 individual cases were reported to police forces across the UK, confirming the ongoing prevalence of the issue.

With the research indicating that the average value of stolen equipment per van stands at over £1,700, this means that UK tradespeople are facing a bill of up to £1.64 billion in stolen equipment.

In spite of these risks, 41 per cent of UK van drivers continue to leave equipment in their vehicles overnight – over a third of whom confess that the value of tools left in their van exceeds £2,000.

The impact of tool thefts on UK businesses stretches beyond replacing equipment, though, with the majority of respondents unable to work while their vans are re-stocked and locks repaired, as well as further risk of an increase in future insurance premiums for van owners who are on the receiving end of tool theft.

With downtime costing companies an estimated



Above: One in five van drivers are falling victim to theft

£550 a day per van, at a time when UK businesses are already feeling the squeeze, these costs underscore the significant disruption that tool theft can bring.

John Ricardo-Neto, Head of Product Planning at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, said: "The cost of theft is more than just the price of the tools stolen, it's the downtime while van drivers replace the stolen equipment, the higher insurance premiums and lost revenues, so it's imperative that UK tradespeople be vigilant to tool theft.

"We urge those who own expensive equipment to take extra precautions – securing or removing tools overnight and parking in a well-lit, CCTV-monitored area. For those who wish to further increase the security of their vehicles, our range of theft prevention technologies can offer extra protection, allowing van drivers to get back to focusing on their businesses." •

New probe set into problem of bright headlights

A new commission has been set up in response to an online petition about the dazzling brightness of some vehicle headlights. It comes after research from the RAC showed that drivers claim the glare from headlights is

getting worse.

The RAC has been surveying drivers on dazzling headlights since 2018, but new findings from a survey of 2,000 drivers suggests that 85 per cent believe it is more commonplace. •

Huge shortage of electric commercial vehicle technicians

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) estimates that the maintenance and repair sector has about 23,000 vacancies, with a growing shortfall of electric vehicle (EV) technicians, mechanics and electricians.

As the IMI's UK Automotive Vacancy Overview report confirms, only the hospitality sector has a higher vacancy rate.

Steve Nash, CEO at the IMI, said: "The gap between vacancies in automotive and all other UK sectors highlights the multitude of unique and ongoing challenges we face.

"With our sector currently facing around 23,000 vacancies, it's critical that everything is done to encourage more job seekers to consider a role in automotive."

The IMI's 'There's More

to Motor' campaign is already spreading the word about the wide range of opportunities for school leavers, apprentices and career changers, according to Nash. "Since launching last summer, we have already reached millions of individuals, many of whom have never held an automotive role," he said.

"However, the reality is that, even with such a high level of success, it takes time for that to translate into reducing the vacancy rate."

The IMI believes the shift in automotive technology has also intensified the challenges faced by the sector, with 52 per cent of job postings in January 2024 seeking vehicle technicians, technicians and electricians. •

Below: Britain is short of technicians who can work on electric commercial vehicles



RS Recovery uses Totalkare equipment for workshop refit



West Midlands' RS Recovery has invested in a range of Totalkare equipment as part of a multi-bay workshop refit project that will significantly enhance its fleet repair and maintenance operations.

The large-scale project has seen Totalkare install two vehicle inspection pits with adjoining tunnel, in-ground brake testers and shaker plates, a 10-metre, 35,000kg Y-MECH lift, a set of eight T8DC mobile column lifts, headlamp tester, oil hose reel dispensers and more.

This substantial investment highlights RS Recovery's commitment to customer service and ensuring the firm is up to date with the latest safety improvements and compliance.

The purchase of two vehicle inspection pits will improve RS Recovery's inspection and repair capabilities, allowing its

Above: RS Recovery has invested in new equipment from Totalkare

skilled technicians to work efficiently underneath vehicles, ensuring thorough inspections and facilitating more complex repair tasks.

Totalkare's vehicle inspection pits are pre-fabricated to order in the West Midlands in lengths to suit workshop requirements, from six metres upwards. The pits feature fully braced external walls of 5mm thick welded recessed steel pressing, with a 6mm thick pressed durbar floor which is sloped slightly towards a central sump for effective drainage.

Leonard Perry, Recovery Manager at RS Recovery said: "We are happy to be adding Totalkare's equipment to our workshop. This investment will greatly enhance our ability to serve our clients." •

See how the Hercules system from FuelDefend stacks up against its competitors

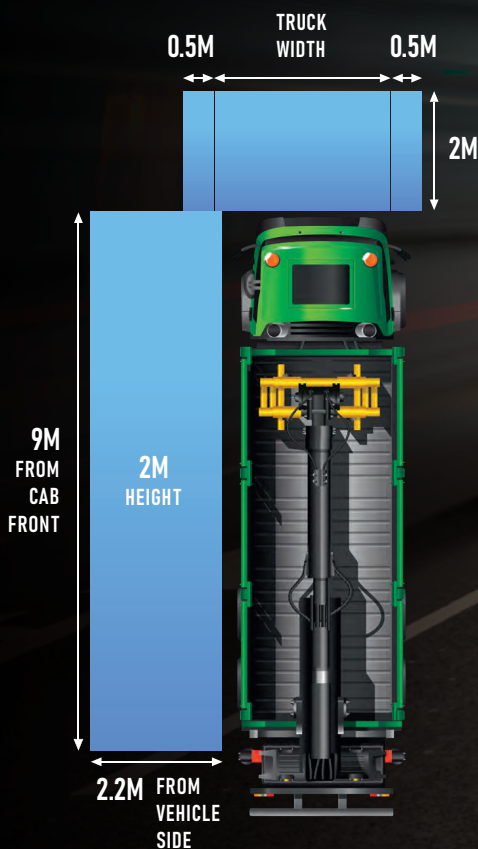


DIRECT VISION STANDARD (DVS) 2024 COMPLIANCE

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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

DON'T MISS THE TFL DVS UPGRADE DEADLINE

DVS standards for trucks in London change in October – and time is short for getting vehicles modified to conform

From 28 October 2024, heavy goods vehicles over 12-tonnes GVW operating in Greater London will either need to meet the threshold for a Three-Star rating or higher under TfL's Direct Vision Standard (DVS), or have been fitted with safety equipment conforming to the new Progressive Safe System standard, before they will be issued with a permit to

operate in the capital. Operating without a permit will incur penalty charges of up to £550 per day, which are imposed separately and simultaneously on both the vehicle's driver and its operator.

Currently, only vehicles with a Zero or One Star rating require a Safety System to be fitted and certified before a permit to operate in London can be obtained, but from October 28, both the scope of

the restriction and the capability of the equipment required to obtain exemption for it have been extended. From October 2024, HGVs with a Two Star rating become non-compliant.

An HGV cannot have its star rating changed once it is built, but it can have a Progressive Safe System installed to make it compliant to DVS standards, after which a permit can be issued to



Above: An external audible warning system must be installed to warn vulnerable road users when the truck is turning left

Some suppliers claim compliance but the equipment they fit does not offer the full coverage required

allow its operation in London.

Vehicles rated as Zero or One Star operating in London will currently have a Safe System installed to achieve compliance, but this will need to be replaced with the more sophisticated Progressive Safe System before the deadline.

Trade associations estimate that when the Zero and One Star vehicles requiring an upgrade are added to the Two Star vehicles that will require a system for the first time, a total of around 165,000 HGVs will fall within the scope of the changes – and it is claimed there is an insufficient number of qualified installers available to get the job done by the deadline.

The Road Haulage Association is lobbying for the deadline to be extended to early next year, but if it is, it is likely that the concession will only be applied

if the operator can produce evidence of a booking having been made with an installer to have the equipment fitted.

Blind spots covered

The Progressive Safe System covers the areas to the immediate front and nearside of the HGV. On the nearside, a compliant blind spot information system must be installed, in addition to a Class V mirror covering the area to the immediate nearside of the HGV's cab.

The blind spot information system can be either radar or AI camera based, but must not generate 'false' warnings from static objects such as roadside furniture or parked cars.

A visual indicator lights up in the cab when a vulnerable road user is in the immediate area and an audible warning sounds in the cab when a collision is

predicted. This is supplemented by a fully operational camera monitoring system that will completely eliminate blind-spots to the nearside.

In the case of left-hand drive vehicles, the system must be fitted to the opposite side of the HGV.

At the front of the vehicle, a moving-off information system must warn the driver of vulnerable road users in the area immediately to the front of the cab. This must cover the entire width of the cab.

A single radar sensor will usually provide insufficient coverage to the corners and operators should check the system they choose is compliant with the wording of the legislation. Some suppliers claim compliance but the equipment they fit does not offer the full coverage required.

When there is a vulnerable road user

DVS COMPLIANCE STEP-BY-STEP

Step One

Ascertain the star rating of your HGV by contacting the manufacturer or franchised dealer with the VIN (chassis number).

If the manufacturer of dealer confirms the truck has a 3 Star rating or above, go straight to Step Three. If not, go to Step Two.

Step Two

If your vehicle is of Two Star rating or below you will need to choose an installer. The Association of Vehicle Installers, which is a FORS Supporter, may be able to help you find a suitable installer (<https://theavi.org.uk/>). Your local truck franchised dealer may also be able to help.

Step Three

Visit tfl.gov.uk/direct-vision-permit to apply for your permit. Complete all required fields. If your vehicle is of less than Three Stars rating, you will need to submit evidence that the Progressive Safe System has been installed. This will be reviewed before the permit is issued.

Remember, time is running out to get vehicles equipped to meet the October 2024 deadline.

Below: Glass panels in the truck's doors help warn drivers of vulnerable road users nearby



A truck cannot have its star rating changed once it is built, but it can have a Progressive Safe System installed to make it compliant to DVS standards

in the area and the HGV's brakes are applied, a warning lamp illuminates. If the HGV's brakes are not applied, then an audible warning is triggered.

The HGV must also be fitted with a Class VI mirror covering the area.

A Camera Monitoring System can substitute for, or supplement, the mirrors.

Side under-run protection must be fitted to both sides of the vehicle unless this is impracticable.

An external audible warning system must be installed to warn vulnerable road users when the HGV is turning left and external hazard warning signage must

be displayed. Signs of at least A3 size are recommended.

New HGVs are now supplied equipped to the European General Safety Regulation Standard, which in many cases overlaps with DVS Progressive Safe System requirements. However, an audible turning alarm and nearside camera monitoring system will still be required to meet the DVS Progressive Safe System specification. ■

Below: A full length glass passenger door shows up cyclists on the truck's left hand side



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Moving Off Information System (MOIS)

A front AI sensor that detects people in front of the vehicle and alerts the driver as the vehicle starts to move forward.

Blind Spot Information System (BSIS)

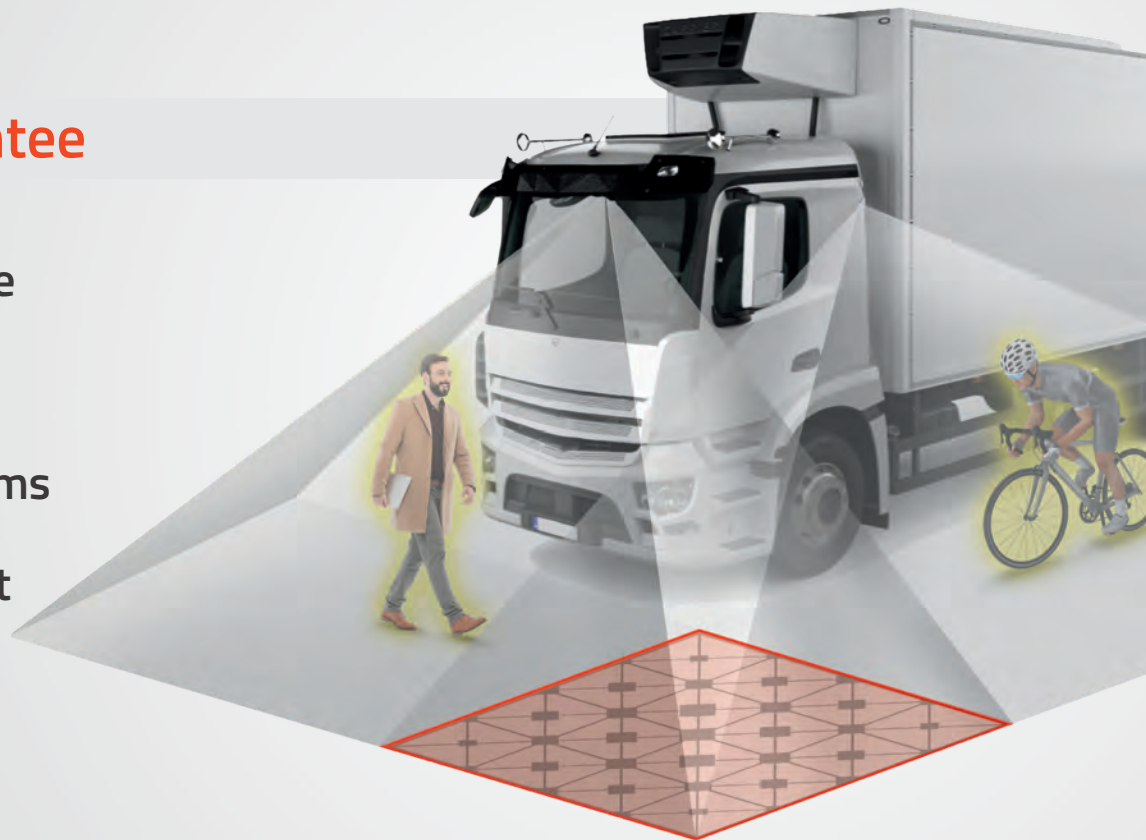
An AI sensor that detects people along the nearside of the vehicle and alerts the driver without false alerts.

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- ✓ Fast install
- ✓ Zero false alarms
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Words: **Steve Banner**

BACK ON THE LEVEL

Used truck prices finally see stability after post-pandemic roller-coaster ride

After a switchback post-pandemic roller-coaster ride with sky-high prices and acute stock shortages, the used truck market seems to have calmed down at last.

“Prices have come down quite a bit from where they were in mid-2023 and I think they’ve settled now,” said Dan Dawson, Used Sales Manager at Warrington, Cheshire-based Scania dealership Haydock Commercial Vehicles. “It doesn’t look as though they’ll fall any further. They’ve reached a level that is slightly higher than they were pre-pandemic.”

Ian Gedney, Remarketing Manager at Market Weighton, East Yorkshire, independent dealership Britcom, agrees that prices have dropped. “These days buyers pay £14,000 to £15,000 for something that might have cost them

£25,000 back in 2022,” he said.

He too believes that prices have levelled out.

Paying less does not necessarily mean

There are places where trucks have been sitting about for months on end, with no buyers on the horizon

that operators will end up with low-specification trucks that look as though they have been to the moon and back.

Gedney said: “We’ve acquired some

nice Renault T-range tractor units on 17- and 18-plates that have done 400,000km to 600,000km and we’re offering them at £13,500 to £17,000. What we are offering in effect is a Volvo with a French cab on and it’s an awful lot of truck for the money. Furthermore, they have got good specifications, with double bunks.”

Specification matters because hauliers need to attract reliable drivers to come and work for them, at the same time retaining the drivers who already work for them.

A price bracket of £13,500 to £17,000 makes a truck affordable for most operators and means they will not need to finance their purchases. Dawson said: “Interest rates are not tremendously high when you think of where they were in years past, but people have got used to cheap money ever since the financial crash in 2008. It can be a shock finding



Scania has seen a lot of interest among buyers with its Scania Go scheme

Renault T-range tractor units on 17- and 18-plates are available for as low as £13,500



that it is not quite as cheap as it once was, and in some cases buyers may elect to wait a few months if they possibly can if finance is required in the hope that interest rates will fall.”

Operators may also find that obtaining the funding they seek is problematic.

Pinched profit margins and cashflow issues that have proved impossible to resolve have resulted in some transport

firms going to the wall over the past few months, including some well-known names. While the situation should not be exaggerated, some finance houses may wish to limit their exposure to the sector as a consequence.

Used truck influx

The demise of these firms has resulted in their trucks being sold and this new

influx has had an impact on prices, making stock more freely available.

This incoming stock is a mixture, with some low-mileage models and some that have covered a lot of ground. The latter are joining high-mileage ex-contract tractor units that were offloaded when new ones became easier to obtain, many of which remain unsold.

Gedney said: “There are still a lot around. There are places where trucks have been sitting about for months on end, with no buyers on the horizon.”

If they cannot be retailed domestically or exported cost-effectively at a time when shipping costs are escalating, then they may end up being broken for spares.

The arrival of a somewhat-less-fraught used market has been accompanied by buyers reverting to the attitudes they had prior to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Dawson said: “The problem with customers wanting low-mileage units is that they aren’t always there to be had. Most of the units we’ve got have done around 500,000km. If you can get hold of a late-registered unit with a decent specification then it will fetch top money.”

Left: Used truck buyers are looking for high spec models as a way of attracting new drivers



Late stock arrival boosts used trucks scene

One reason for the growing willingness of many operators who have always bought new to consider acquiring late-plate second-hand trucks instead, is the extent to which new truck prices have skyrocketed.

Haulage profit margins have not increased by anywhere near the same extent, if at all.

When doing so, however, they will want the reassurance provided by a manufacturer-backed approved used package such as Scania Go.

It applies to buses and coaches as well as trucks. Scania Head of Used Trucks, Steve Legg, said: "We're talking to truck customers who are saying they want to go late-plate rather than new and fortunately we've had quite a bit of late stock in recently, including 72- and 73-plates."

Aside from price, one reason why operators may opt for used rather than new is that second-hand models are available immediately, he points out. The new truck supply chain has undoubtedly improved, but it is still not perfect.

All Scania Go trucks undergo a 300-point-plus mechanical and cosmetic inspection, with parts that are approaching the end of their lives replaced before they fail. That

**We're talking
to truck
customers who
are saying they
want to go
late-plate
rather than new**

includes big-ticket items such as the turbocharger.

A two-year-old truck embraced by the scheme will have covered no more than 300,000km and will in most cases be accompanied by a two-year repair-and-maintenance package.

The scheme also includes trucks that

are no more than five years old and have covered no more than 450,000km to 550,000km. Even the oldest trucks in the programme come with driveline cover for 12 months and at least six months remaining on their MoT.

If a Scania Go truck develops a mechanical or electrical fault during the first 30 days of ownership, then the customer has the option of swapping it for another one.

A mobility guarantee is in force over the same period, which means that if the truck breaks down and cannot be fixed by Scania Assistance at the roadside, then it will be recovered to the closest Scania dealership.

If the fault cannot be rectified within 24 hours, then the operator will either be provided with a loan vehicle or paid up to £150 for each day his own truck is off the road,

Legg said: "We've now got a number of customers who wouldn't buy a truck any other way - and we're getting their repeat business."

All other truck manufacturers offer used vehicle schemes. ■

All Scania Go trucks come with a warranty



Hi Vue Peeper Window Fresnel Lens

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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

STANDARD 7 SEES NEW QUALITY CRITERIA FOR FORS OPERATORS

The transport industry landscape is evolving – and FORS continues to adapt accordingly

With revisions to the latest FORS Standard Version 7 complete, FORS Accredited Operators can

familiarise themselves with all the latest requirements.

Central to the updated version is a focus on decarbonisation and Accredited Operators will notice a greater obligation to addressing, and reporting on, their carbon emissions.

Sustainability has always been a key pillar of FORS and here the FORS Standard has been developed to align with broader environmental regulations. Changes found in Version 7 reflect the industry ‘mood’ with respect to addressing climate change.

FORS understands that Accredited Operators will need time to implement

some of these changes. Fortunately, there’s plenty of opportunity to do this, with Version 7 becoming effective from 2 January 2025, thus giving operators scope for adjustments.

It is testament to how well the FORS Standard has been devised given how much the transport industry landscape has evolved since FORS was established in 2008. Much has changed since then and FORS continues to adapt accordingly. This goes for the FORS Standard specifically too, of course, and it remains fully aligned with the aims of the scheme.

Perhaps the most significant progress over the years has been the result of efforts to simplify and streamline the FORS Standard. Today, with version 7, the FORS Standard is more accessible and easier to use than ever before.

Devised by the industry, for the industry

It is also important for FORS Accredited Operators to understand who is responsible for updating and delivering the FORS Standard. The FORS Governance & Standards Advisory Group (GSAG) is the driving force behind the FORS Standard yet, importantly, GSAG is not responsible for the day-to-day running of the scheme. GSAG is comprised of leading fleet operators, specifiers, industry bodies and other stakeholders who, together, ensure the FORS Standard ‘is subject to continuous improvement, remains relevant to industry needs and compatible with all relevant legislation’.

This independent governance from a range of leading industry influencers gives the FORS Standard, and the scheme generally, its veracity and credibility.

Accredited Operators will need to pay particular attention to serviceability and roadworthiness, load safety, daily walkaround checks and tyre management



Safer, smarter and now even greener

With Version 7, FORS can now reveal the latest iteration of the FORS Standard. Of course, FORS remains steadfastly aligned to the guiding principles of safety, efficiency and environmental protection, though it may not come as a surprise that Standard 7 takes a deeper dive into decarbonisation – and this is reflected in updated requirements.

Accredited Operators will notice that new requirements coincide with the launch of the new ‘Introduction to Decarbonisation’ module as part of the FORS Practitioner training programme. The new module aims to equip fleet managers with a full appreciation of carbon emissions and its impact – from regulatory frameworks and decarbonisation terminology. You can read about the new module in more detail on page 22.

In terms of Version 7 updates, FORS Silver Accredited Operators will need to have a designated Fuel and Emissions Champion attend the module to satisfy the FORS Silver requirement ‘S5 Professional development’ prior to FORS Silver applications submitted on or after 2 January 2025. Additionally, it can be used as an optional module for those working towards FORS Practitioner and Advanced FORS Practitioner



safety. For drivers, changes apply to licensing, driving standards, professional development, health and eyesight and working / drivers’ hours. For vehicles, accredited operators will need to pay particular attention to serviceability and roadworthiness, load safety, daily walkaround checks and tyre management.

The FORS Standard is updated every two years to reflect the continuous evolution of best practice and the

Above: Requirement O2 on ‘Emissions, air quality and environmental impact’ has been changed to encourage greater environmental accountability

updates and any new requirements are logical, straightforward and, of course, relevant.

“The FORS Standard is not a static document,” he added, “and that’s because we operate in an extremely dynamic industry. The FORS Standard, therefore, must respond to emerging technologies and new legislation which affect FORS Accredited Operators, and always designed to instil a best practice mindset centred around safety, efficiency and environmental protection.” ■

■ A full summary of the changes can be found here: fors-online.org.uk/cms/new-standard/

The FORS Standard is not a static document and that’s because we operate in an extremely dynamic industry

qualifications.

Continuing the decarbonisation theme, FORS Bronze requirement O2, on ‘Emissions, air quality and environmental impact’, is now recommended to encourage greater environmental accountability. For FORS Silver Accredited Operators, requirement S3 ‘Fuel, emissions and air quality’ is replaced by S3 ‘Environmental impact’. FORS Gold Accredited Operators see a replacement G3 ‘Decarbonisation strategy’ and new requirement G8 ‘Environmental impact engagement’.

There are plenty of updates and revisions throughout Version 7, and particularly with respect to drivers and vehicles, reflecting the gravity with which FORS takes the issue of

scheme’s singular aim to drive up safety, environmental and efficiency standards for all road transport operations. This seventh edition of the FORS Standard, published as FORS reaches its 14th year of operation, acknowledges the increasing diversity of commercial fleets and is made more accessible for a broader range of vehicles to achieve accreditation.

FORS Concession Director, Geraint Davies, said: “Version 7 of the FORS Standard contains a far more robust commitment to helping operators build a more sustainable fleet, and in so doing, helping our industry address climate change. Our GSAG colleagues have worked very hard to bring the FORS Standard up-to-date yet ensuring any



Words: **Richard Simpson**

FORS UNVEILS NEW DECARBONISATION TRAINING MODULE

Preparing operators for the decarbonisation journey ahead

FORS has unveiled 'Introduction to Decarbonisation', a brand-new module for its popular FORS Practitioner training programme.

The new course equips fleet managers with a deep understanding of the challenges associated with reducing carbon emissions, including the emerging regulatory framework and the terminology around the topic. It is designed to deliver the fundamental principles that fleet operators need to prepare their businesses for the decarbonisation journey ahead. By focusing on the areas suggested in the training, operators can better understand how to reduce their environmental impact and contribute positively to collective sustainability goals.

We're continuing to set the standard for excellence in fleet management education

Specifically, participants that complete the new module will be able to:

- Explain the importance of decarbonising the fleet and why the commercial vehicle fleet is a high priority
- Examine the regulatory landscape and why decarbonisation how this relates to the FORS Standard
- Understand decarbonisation key terms and phrases

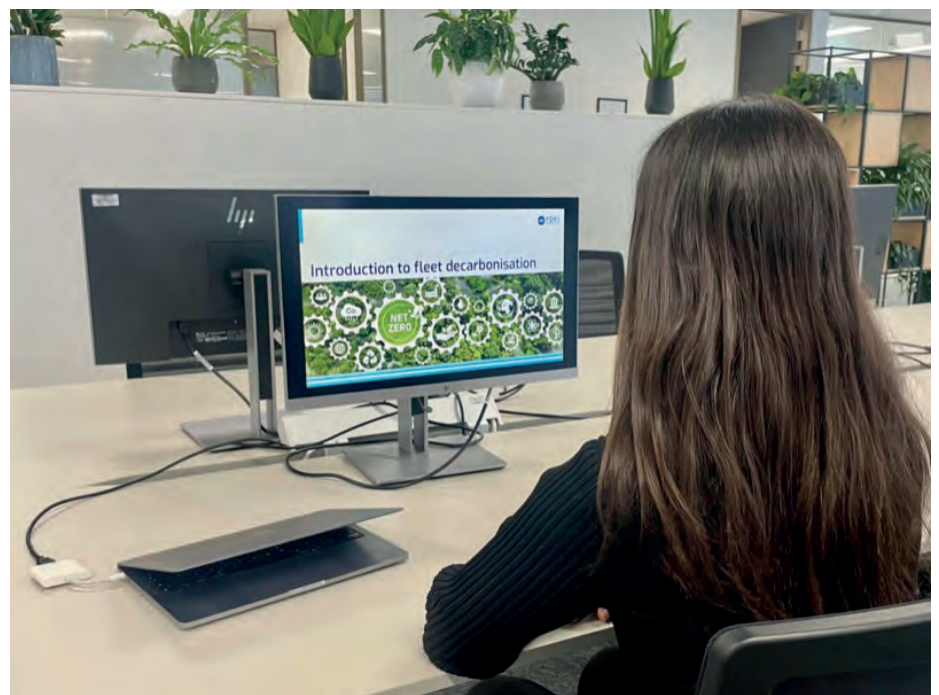
- Explore the three Rs of sustainability – record, report, reduce – and the decarbonisation options available to fleet operators.

The arrival of Introduction to Decarbonisation coincides with the launch of Version 7 of the FORS Standard and is reflected in requirements 'S5 Professional development' and 'G3 Decarbonisation strategy'. FORS Accredited Operators must have a designated Fuel & Emissions Champion attend the module to satisfy 'S5' requirements prior to FORS Silver applications submitted on or after 2 January 2025 when Version 7 becomes effective.

FORS Concession Director, Geraint Davies, said: "With the launch of our 'Introduction to Decarbonisation' module, we're continuing to set the standard for excellence in fleet management education. The time to decarbonise is now and we're proud that FORS is leading the way on the transport sector's road to net zero."

Courses started 25 June. You can book the module now via <https://www.fors-training.org.uk/> ■

Below: Fleet managers will gain a deep understanding of carbon emissions and their impact



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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

FORS: YOU TALK, WE LISTEN

Think-tank puts FORS on the front foot with hot topics of 2024



Above: The event enabled FORS Operators, specifiers, industry representatives and others within the FORS Community to come together to tackle the challenges

The first FORS Forum took place in Manchester in May, with the aim of bringing together professionals to review proposed changes to how FORS is administered, to discuss upcoming advancements for the ‘Future of Accreditation’ project and to explore how FORS, while working with accredited operators and the wider industry, can continue to make Britain’s roads safer and greener.

The event enabled FORS Operators, specifiers, industry representatives and others within the FORS Community to come together to tackle the challenges and ultimately ensure that stakeholders are consulted on any changes proposed in the scheme.

Working in teams, these groups collected ideas which were later on reviewed and discussed by FORS Senior Management Team. The subjects up for discussion touched every element of

‘Modern Road Transport’ and the core principles of FORS.

The points for open discussion included driver-based content and the training dashboard that needs to be transformed to better illustrate driver training progress. Another ‘hot topic’ was a new award scheme for high-aspiring drivers and operators. A driver induction programme and an increased focus on driver wellbeing were also highlighted as areas that could be developed.



The event was full of positivity and enthusiasm and the group worked well together, with everyone actively involved in the breakout group discussions

Wellbeing link-up

Regarding driver wellbeing, FORS has partnered with 'Mates in Mind' and the subject will be showcased at the FORS Annual Conference in October.

The presence and awareness of FORS in local communities – and especially in schools – was also deemed vitally important. To develop this, FORS is working on a community action campaign that will go live towards the end of 2024.

Decarbonisation is a subject on the lips of the entire road transport industry at present – and here FORS has identified the need for more knowledge and upskilling in preparation for the new technologies that will directly influence environmental change. Already available is a series of web-based videos entitled 'Demystifying Decarbonisation', which will also be promoted at the October conference.

The forum also identified that there was a need to help FORS Accredited Operators calculate their emissions, in addition to

helping them identify exactly how far they are along on their decarbonising journeys.

One of the most valid 'take-away' points of the forum related to the 'Toolkits & Guides' section on the FORS website and the need to create sector-specific tools, including HGV, Van and Industry Type, as it was agreed that a greater variety of sector-specific information would be of great benefit.

New templates

The forum also identified the need for new templates to be made available in the 'Toolkits & Guides' section. FORS is addressing this issue immediately and will be working with an Affinity Partner to publish a full set of policies, procedures, risk assessments and declarations that will be provided on a free-of-charge basis to accredited operators.

The event was full of positivity and enthusiasm and the group worked well together, with everyone actively

involved in the breakout group discussions.

The information, discussions and suggestions provided an immense amount of 'take away' information for FORS, which will be processed for inclusion into future developments of the scheme. FORS has another similar event planned for later in the year and will be actively looking for accredited operators and specifiers to participate.

Geraint Davies, FORS Concession Director, was extremely pleased with the day and commented: "The forum was a huge success, with a wide range of operators and industry stakeholders present. The only complaint was that we didn't have a large enough room."

Equally enthusiastic was Wayne Allen, Group Logistics Manager for Gold Accredited Operator Galaxy Insulation & Dry Lining. He said: "I was really pleased to be invited along to the forum and the fact that FORS wants to listen and value the views of accredited operators of all levels is impressive." ■

FORS FRONT AND CENTRE

Spring has been busy for the FORS teams attending key industry events. April saw attendance at the CV Show at the NEC Birmingham. June saw FORS at both Road Transport Expo at NAEC Stoneleigh and Multimodal at NEC Birmingham. All these events proved to be worthwhile showcasing for the FORS brand to a new audience, as well as established industry colleagues. ■



Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

ONLINE COURSE GIVES TRUCKERS THE INFO THEY NEED TO SAVE LIVES

Quick thinking can mean the difference between life and death

Truckers are being invited to take part in a new training session that could help them save the lives of others who have been involved in a crash.

Road safety training organisation Driver First Assist has launched Skills for Safer Journeys – a new online course for the millions of people who regularly drive for work.

With more deaths occurring from at-work road travel than in the workplace itself, Driver First Assist believes its new initiative will give all drivers crucial skills to support at the scene of an on-road incident, regardless of the type of vehicle they drive.

The 90-minute online course – which can be completed in stages – teaches how to make critical decisions using the principles of dynamic risk assessment, safely parking at the scene of an incident, gathering crucial information for the emergency services, making the perfect 999 call and providing first-aid assistance before the arrival of paramedics.

Horrendous toll

CEO David Higginbottom, said: “Last year there were 1,633 fatalities from road collisions in Great Britain – the equivalent of more than three ‘superjumbos’ falling out of the sky. In too many cases, the victims didn’t die because of the collision – they died as the first people on scene didn’t know what to do.

“We want to help employers meet their health and safety obligations by giving drivers the skills they need to be safer on the road.

“Health and safety law does not end at the factory, office or warehouse gate. When someone drives for work the roads become an extension of the workplace,

even if they are driving a personal vehicle for business purposes.”

Supporting the launch, Sir Keith Porter, Emeritus Professor of Traumatology at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, said: “We know many patients die at the scene of road traffic collisions because of a failure to open an airway, or to arrest external haemorrhage.

“The Driver First Assist course will empower drivers to deliver life-saving skills, helping to keep a patient alive in those valuable minutes before the ambulance arrives. This course also gives drivers the confidence to ensure they fully appreciate the importance of scene safety and good communication with the emergency services. The more first responders we have, the better. Could that be you?”

Quick deaths

A World Health Organization report on road traffic injury prevention found that

within high-income countries, 50 per cent of deaths from road crashes occur within minutes of the incident occurring. It pointed out those who are present or who arrive first at the scene of a crash can play an important role in contacting the emergency services, securing the scene to prevent further incidents, and applying first aid. It found many deaths from airway obstruction or external haemorrhage could have been avoided by lay bystanders trained in first aid.

Death from a blocked airway typically occurs in about four minutes, while NHS England’s target time for an ambulance to arrive if the call is life threatening is eight minutes.

Skills for Safer Journeys has been developed by Driver First Assist as an affordable and effective solution for training drivers to assess road risks. Available at dfa-online.co.uk, it costs £47.50 (ex-VAT) per driver for lifetime access, with discounts for bulk purchases. ■





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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

THE FORCE LEANS ON FORS

Training will help foster better relations with hauliers





Above: Met police officers are building better relations with commercial vehicle operators through FORS



Above: The CVU is looking to integrate more FORS content into its own training material



FORS has teamed up with the Metropolitan Police, so that officers from the force’s Commercial Vehicle Unit (CVU) can foster better relations with fleet operators.

The partnership with FORS comes as the Met Police seeks to boost engagement with commercial vehicle operators of all types, committing to a more educational approach and creating an environment of open dialogue in addition to a focus on enforcement.

Instruction from the FORS Practitioner ‘Managing Abnormal Indivisible Loads’ training module have been incorporated into the CVU’s own Toolbox Talks; a two-hour educative presentation to hauliers, which the CVU reports as being particularly well received. Content from FORS has also been described as ‘enormously beneficial’ in the CVU’s understanding of operators’ obligations.

The CVU is also looking to integrate more FORS content into its own training material. As part of this, five Response Sergeants from the Met’s CVU will complete the full FORS Practitioner programme, a series of ten individual modules covering all aspects of fleet management. Meanwhile, Sergeant Alex Burlison of the Met’s CVU, will undertake the 15-module FORS Advanced Practitioner programme.

Sergeant Burlison said: “Our responsibility for roadside enforcement is crucial but we’re also becoming increasingly focused on education and engagement with hauliers. Transport

Left: Sgt Alex Burlison (left) is one of the police officers undertaking FORS training

managers’ roles are so much more than mere compliance and FORS has really helped us appreciate the many and varied aspects of running a successful fleet operation. I think we’re all buying into the FORS best practice mindset.

“We want to build better relations with all commercial vehicle operators and our Toolbox Talks not only deliver on a training level, but they also provide a platform for operators to feed back. We’re receiving calls from hauliers every day requesting more Toolbox Talks and more engagement and FORS is helping to ensure we’re all singing from the same hymn sheet.

Through its training portfolio, FORS provides a truly comprehensive knowledge base, and it’s apparent that commercial vehicle operators are engaging with FORS directly. So, it makes sense for us to be part of the narrative. Undoubtedly we’re fostering better relations with hauliers and I think the perception of the Met Police is also improving.”

The Commercial Vehicle Unit is the largest dedicated Met police unit. It has 65 officers based at multiple locations across London. They respond to incidents involving large vehicles, providing specialist advice to colleagues and are responsible for dealing with incidents at the Blackwall Tunnel.

Working in partnership with DVSA, one team, the Industrial HGV Taskforce, is a mix of police officers and DVSA Vehicle and Traffic Examiners.

The CVU targets unsafe and non-compliant operators who pose the greatest risk to road safety & the reputation of the UK Transport & Logistics industry. ■

Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

FORS PUSH FOR SAFETY

London-based firm, Pedal Me, becomes the first
FORS Accredited cargo bike operator

FORS has expanded into the cargo bike sector, announcing its first accredited fleet bicycle operator, Pedal Me.

The new partnership comes in response to growing demands for the professionalisation of vocational cycling, with operators seeking to reduce costs and carbon by deploying cargo bikes within their supply chain.

Since its inception in 2017, London-based Pedal Me has been a standard-bearer for best practice in the cargo bike sector and an advocate for the safe and effective deployment of cargo bikes in fleets.

Serving multinationals, SMEs and private individuals, the business uses a fleet of hi-tech, e-assist cargo bikes – piloted by highly trained riders – to transport goods and people. In championing operational excellence and the highest standards of road safety, Pedal Me is closely aligned with the ethos and framework of FORS.

Experienced instructors

Pedal Me's team of experienced cycling instructors – most of whom have previously worked with FORS to deliver the popular FORS Safe Driving training programme to HGV drivers – are key to upholding the company's high professional standards. FORS' wide-ranging training courses have already begun to further enhance the operator's ability to improve security and safety in the wider transport sector.

Geraint Davies, Concession Director at

FORS, said: "Welcoming Pedal Me into our community heralds a new chapter for FORS. By refining the Bronze audit to suit cargo bike operations, we're not only diversifying our offering, but we're also aligning with forward-thinking partners, like Pedal Me, who are just as committed to reshaping urban transport as we are. It's a major step towards a safer, greener, and more efficient future for everyone."

CEO, Ben Knowles at Pedal Me, said: "For too long, cycling logistics has suffered a reputation for 'cutting corners' when it comes to demonstrating best practice. That's why we've made it our mission to show that cargo bikes can offer an exceptional service, backed by comprehensive training and operational excellence that drives up sector-wide standards.

"Now that we have FORS Bronze accreditation and the support and benefits it brings, we have all the tools



we need to continue setting benchmarks in safety and efficiency within the industry. We're looking forward to working with FORS to showcase the unique capabilities that cargo bikes can offer to all types of businesses." ■

Below: CEO, Ben Knowles at Pedal Me – "For too long, cycling logistics has suffered a reputation for 'cutting corners' when it comes to demonstrating best practice"



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## Welcoming Pedal Me into our community heralds a new chapter for FORS



Pedal Me employs a team of experienced cycling instructors

Most of Pedal Me's instructors previously worked with FORS to deliver the FORS Safe Driving training programme to HGV drivers







Words: **Richard Simpson**

# GALAXY – A FORS GOLD STAR ORGANISATION

How FORS has helped an own-account fleet in the construction materials sector to thrive





Wayne Allen, Galaxy Insulation and Dry Lining's Northern Compliance Manager

**G**alaxy Insulation and Dry Lining supplies building materials from 14 locations across the UK. The company was established in 2009, with sites in Leeds and Sheffield, while material manufacturer Hush Acoustics joined the group in 2021.

Employee-owned since 2022, Galaxy Insulation and Dry Lining has expanded into different areas across interiors, acoustics, facades, HVAC and fire protection, plus expert technical services are on offer to support customers with their compliance needs.

A diverse fleet of vehicles includes three 44-tonne artics and 65 26-tonne rigids, which include two electric Volvo 6x2s and make up the backbone of the delivery operation, aided by Moffat forklifts.

There are an additional three 7.5-tonners and 22 3.5-tonne diesel vans, plus a single electric van so the company has achieved carbon-neutral status. Rationalisation of supply routes saw 30,000 gallons of fuel saved in 2021-22 compared to 2019-20.

The company car fleet is being switched to electrics and employees are



encouraged to acquire their own electric vehicles through a salary sacrifice scheme, with chargers being available in the workplace. All diesel vehicles run Euro VI/6 engines and the depots' forklifts are all now electric.

Becoming FORS-accredited was regarded as an essential step for the company when it opened two depots in London as so many customers in the area required

**Above:** An electric van is another green initiative

it. Galaxy achieved Bronze status for its first London depot in 2019. The firm then worked to gain Gold status for all depots across the country by June 2021, incorporating the management of vehicles, personnel and operational structures.

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Volvo bodywork is by Fred Smith & Sons

**Safety systems**

FORS provided a mechanism for ensuring that all depots were kept up-to-date and compliant with all legislation and spurred the introduction of vehicle safety systems such as 360-degree cameras, plus driver training and governance.

**Below:** The Galaxy team proudly show off their FORS credentials

The cameras' introduction also saw a reduction in false claims made against the company. With the FORS Gold Accreditation came formal processes for near-miss and collision reporting. There is a dedicated phone line operated by Galaxy's insurer to quickly handle any claims incidents that may occur.

Galaxy uses RAM Tracking to monitor

its drivers and line managers read the generated reports weekly. The feedback is given to drivers is never punitive, but always supportive.

Training and individual certifications are entered on a fleet sharepoint portal, which will alert drivers and managers to anything which requires refreshing. Van drivers follow the same courses as the HGV drivers and the company pays for Driver CPC courses and any other obligatory training, alongside 'growing its own' drivers through the Warehouse to Wheels programme.

In addition to reminders, monthly training communications that include updates on regulations, new technologies, and tips for improving driving efficiency and safety are tailored





## Becoming FORS-accredited was regarded as an essential step for the company when it opened two depots in London

to address common issues and provide continual education.

### Customer needs met

A strong emphasis is placed on maintaining service continuity to ensure that customers' needs are consistently met or exceeded.

Each branch operates semi-autonomously, allowing for more localised and responsive service management. This structure ensures any issues or changes in customer requirements are quickly addressed. Operations managers are empowered to make decisions and allocate resources effectively to maintain service levels, and individual vehicles are switched between depots to cover any local spikes in demand.

Galaxy's vision for the next five years is focused on sustainable growth, technological advancement, and operational excellence. The fleet will expand and diversify, continuously

incorporating the latest advancements in technology.

It remains dedicated to sustainability across all aspects of operation. As an employee-owned trust, Galaxy will continue to cultivate a deeper sense of ownership, commitment, and motivation among staff, ensuring everyone has a stake in its future success.

### Volvo FE Electrics join the fleet

Decarbonisation will continue to be a big focus for the team too. Two Volvo FE Electric 6x2 rigids are the latest additions to the Galaxy fleet as it continues its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint. The two electrics are direct replacements for diesel trucks of similar size.

Used for local deliveries, one truck is based in Galaxy's depot in Sheffield and the other runs out of its Birmingham premises. They are fitted with 8.5m curtainsider bodies built by Fred Smith & Sons of West Bromwich.

Wayne Allen, Galaxy Insulation and

Dry Lining's Northern Compliance Manager, said: "With these vehicles, we wanted to underline that it is not just London that is embracing electric mobility.

The Volvo team has worked tirelessly to fully evaluate how and where these electric trucks can thrive in our fleet."

The trucks have been specified with the maximum of four batteries, yielding a range of around 190km, while recharging takes 2.3 hours using a 150 kW DC charger.

Two electric motors drive through a two-speed transmission. A unique traction control system allows the trucks to handle slippery surfaces.

Hartshorne Group supplied the trucks on a Volvo Gold Contract, which covers all maintenance and repairs including proactive monitoring of the batteries and associated components. The trucks are on the road five days a week and are expected to remain on the fleet for five years.

Wayne Allen adds that the trucks are already popular with their drivers, who say they are smooth and enjoyable to drive, and far more peaceful and relaxing than the diesel models they have replaced. ■

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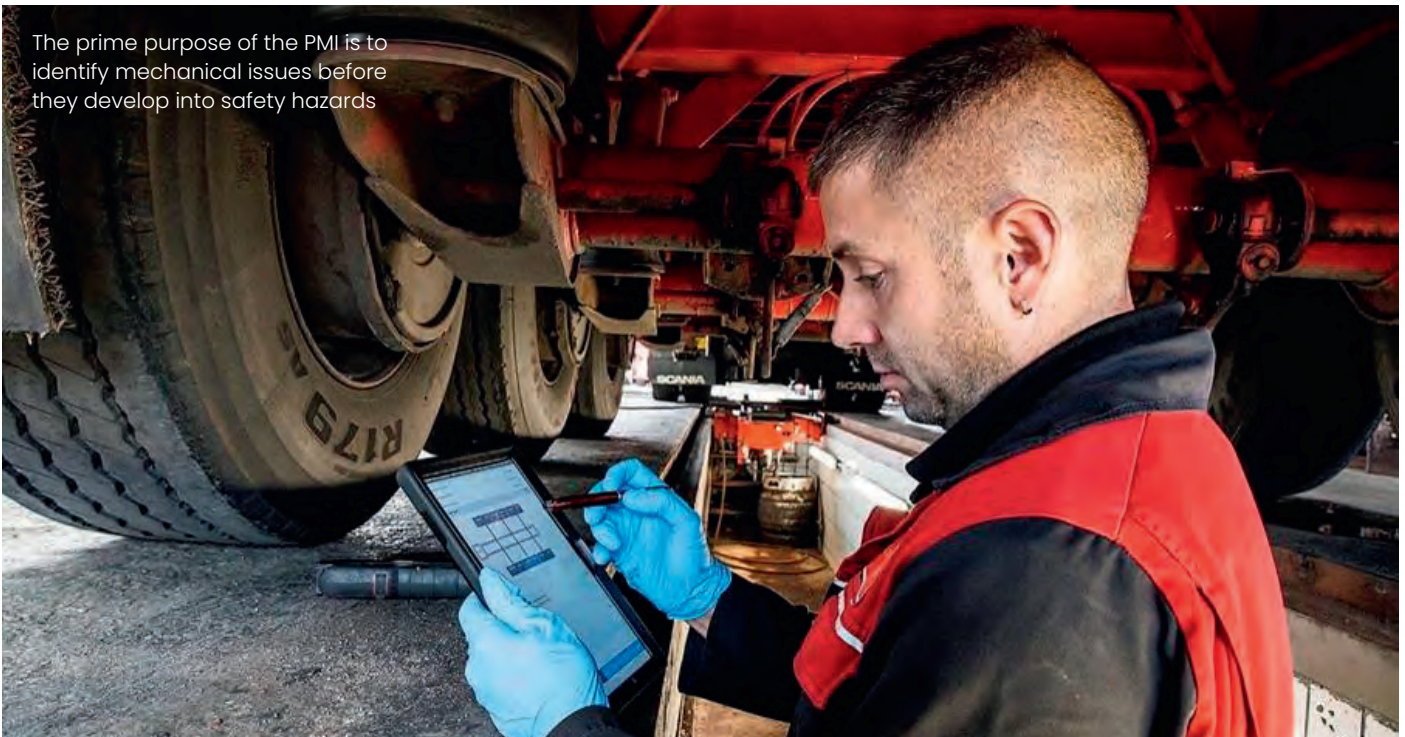


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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

# NEW AFFINITY PARTNER KEEPS TRUCKS ON TRACK

Lloyd Morgan offers a range of solutions to keep vehicles roadworthy



The prime purpose of the PMI is to identify mechanical issues before they develop into safety hazards

**F**leets with operating licences must meet a range of operational and legal requirements, one being to maintain their vehicles in roadworthy condition. This includes daily checks and regular preventative maintenance inspections (PMIs).

The daily checks are normally carried out by the vehicle's driver at start of shift and should occur at least once in every 24-hour period that the vehicle is in use, while the PMIs are undertaken at intervals stipulated on the operator's O licence – normally every six weeks, although this period may be shorter if the fleet is old or undertaking arduous work.

The prime purpose of the PMI is to identify mechanical issues before they develop into safety hazards. They also

serve as a backstop to drivers' daily checks. If an easily identified issue such as a bald tyre or broken lamp has not been recorded on a driver's daily checksheet, but is then highlighted at PMI, then it means that the driver's checks have probably not been done properly.

Records of both driver checks and PMIs must be kept by the vehicle's operator for at least 15 months.

#### **Records needed**

If an operator is called to a Public Inquiry by a Traffic Commissioner, it is very likely that the records for both will have to be presented for scrutiny.

A failure to keep proper records, or evidence of a slapdash approach to daily checks or PMIs and rectifying the problems revealed by them, will put the

operator's licence at risk.

PMIs can be undertaken in-house, or by third-party workshops. However, either approach can raise questions. In-house PMIs are open to the challenge that issues may be overlooked or ignored in response to operational or financial pressures, while some operators may feel that they are vulnerable to a third-party workshop either skimping the inspection to save time or finding issues where none exist to generate revenue.

Lloyd Morgan offers a safeguard against both.

It undertakes checks and inspections which it says are fully compliant with the Department for Transport's Guide to Roadworthiness.

The service also offers a wide range of training courses which can be used to ensure that in-house workshops are fully



up to speed with the latest best practice and provides a PMI audit for when a third-party workshop is undertaking the work.

This latter service is vital as the Traffic Commissioners' view is that while the PMI itself can be contracted out to a third party, the responsibility for ensuring its quality remains with the O licence holder.

#### **Daily check challenge**

It is always a challenge to ensure that daily checks are done thoroughly and consistently. While some drivers are incredibly careful others may take the view, particularly on a cold, dark, winter's morning that all was OK yesterday so all will be OK today. In other cases, drivers can be persuaded

that a particular issue is not serious enough to take a vehicle off the road because to do so would cause too much operational disruption.

Lloyd Morgan's 'gate checks' cover vehicles leaving the operator's premises. They are subject to a second check by one of its inspectors, who can then report on what faults, if any, the driver has missed.

Lloyd Morgan director Emma Thompson said that the company, which was established in 2007, employs only IRTEC-accredited or above qualified technicians.

The company covers the whole of the UK, and can also handle operators based abroad, and fleets of any size from one vehicle up can be accommodated. Freight and passenger fleets are catered

for, and the company will also handle smaller vehicles that are below the O licence threshold.

Lloyd Morgan doesn't have depots of its own. Instead, its assessors visit the company's premises.

Most importantly, Lloyd Morgan's assessors offer an unbiased and independent view of the mechanical health of the fleet.

Thompson said: "FORS operators will benefit from using our services because while we aren't a maintenance provider or repair agent, we do review their service provision.

"This proves very useful for the fleet operator as we highlight any anomalies in communication, paperwork, inspection quality and vehicle serviceability." ■

*Want to find out more? Follow this link: [fors-online.org.uk/cms/fors-transport-compliance-solutions](https://fors-online.org.uk/cms/fors-transport-compliance-solutions)*

## **It is always a challenge to ensure that daily checks are done thoroughly and consistently**



Daily checks are normally carried out by the vehicle's driver at start of shift

Words: **Richard Simpson**

# THE CHANGING FACE OF TRUCKSTOP FACILITIES

Government funding and matched private investment could lead to much-needed improvement in roadside facilities for HGV drivers



One of the reasons why Britain is so short of truck drivers is that the job of driving an HGV is not deemed to be an attractive one to younger people. Now the Government is planning to boost the image of lorry driving by offering millions of pounds in grants to truckstops

for upgrades such as new showers and restaurants, better lighting and secure fencing around rest areas so drivers can feel safe and secure.

The British industry's long-term reliance on low-waged drivers saw many forced, out of necessity, to use overnight allowances to support their households. 'Night-out' money paid tax-free by

**Above:** Wages are only a part of what makes truck driving an attractive occupation

employers was pocketed by some drivers who would park where they could for nothing, cater for themselves in the cab and put up with the resultant lack of roadside comforts.



In addition, some drivers found that motorway services were regularly targeted by organised fuel and cargo theft gangs and felt safer taking their chances in isolated laybys.

**Spiral of decline**

This caused a spiral of decline. The falling spending power of drivers saw roadside provision for them drop in quality or

disappear altogether, while new entrants to the industry were less than impressed by parking overnight and finding the only 'bathroom' facilities in the layby were in the field behind a hedge.

A classic example of the decline in proper facilities is the famous Jacks Hill Café on Watling Street in Towcester. The last surviving example of the 1930s 'Tower' transport café chain, it provided overnight parking for 50 artics on the

**Above:** Today's drivers expect to be able to park somewhere safe and be offered comfortable facilities

closure in late 2021.

Reasons cited included the impact of lockdown, local road improvement schemes hampering access, the rising cost, poor availability of food supplies and staff shortages. The site has since been sold to a private investor who



**Rest, refreshment and sanitary facilities have a considerable impact on the realities of employment in the industry**

busy A5. The final owners to operate it as transport café had worked hard to enhance it, gaining a five-star hygiene rating and giving it a dual purpose as a destination for motorcycle enthusiasts on weekends. But they announced its

**Left:** Some drivers found that motorway services were regularly targeted by organised fuel and cargo theft gangs

intends to demolish the historic Art Deco buildings and let the 1.74 acre plot out for £170,000 a year, but has found no takers so far.

This loss of facilities has been going on for decades. From the 1970s, many of the smaller traditional transport café sites were acquired by the Little Chef/Happy Eater chain with the backing of Trust House Forte, which then refused to serve

**Right:** Truckstops are being offered Government grants to improve their facilities

truck drivers on the grounds that they had no suitable parking facilities.

Oil giant BP stepped in to fill the gaps with a chain of large truckstops based on the American model of Pilot Flying J and similar chains, where extensive facilities are essentially supported by revenue from fuel sales. However, rising wholesale fuel prices and duty destroyed the viability of this business model in the UK. BP withdrew from the business, and most of the sites have now closed.

**Government intervention**

Last year saw Government intervention to help preserve and improve surviving roadside facilities for drivers, with ‘welfare grants’ to site operators, after its 2022 National Survey of Lorry Parking found a crisis in provision in the English east, south-east and east midlands regions.

These grants have to be more than matched by investment from the site operators themselves and are intended to pay for restaurants, together with an increased number of parking spaces.

When combined with the contribution from the site operators, the two tranches of funding announced total £35.5 million spread over 77 sites, ranging from big chain motorway service areas to individual truckstops run by transport companies.

**New opportunity**

Now the electrification of the UK’s long-haul truck fleet offers an opportunity to return to the model of using fuel sales to subsidise driver facilities. Earlier this year, Kent’s Ashford International Truckstop, one of the largest truckstops in Europe, was acquired by bp pulse, the oil giant’s electric vehicle charging arm.

GSE Group’s Ashford International Trucks Stop Ltd subsidiary will lease the site back from bp pulse, but the new owners plan to instal around 20 megawatt chargers, plus ten 400kW and 125 100kW chargers, subject to grid capacity restraints and demand from operators.

The first megawatt chargers are expected to open on site in 2026. These chargers can put up to 500km of range into an electric truck in 45 minutes.

Currently, there is parking for 660 trucks at Ashford, plus facilities for drivers, which will continue under GSE management, while bp pulse manages the charging operation.



**Above:** Currently, there is parking for 660 trucks at Ashford, plus facilities for drivers

**Below:** Well-cooked food is one way of attracting drivers to use truckstops

**Fastest charging corridor**

BP opened Europe’s first truck charging corridor in Germany early last year on 600km of the Alpine-Rhine corridor. Arval pulse, bp pulse’s German brand, now operates 21 truck charging stations in Germany, serving 750km of multiple routes. Bp pulse plans to link its German sites with a pan-European route of charging stations that will extend to the Ashford facility. ■



# THE DIRECT VISION STANDARD IS CHANGING. ARE YOU READY?

12

The Direct Vision Standard requires all goods vehicles over 12 tonnes to possess a permit to drive into Greater London.

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Greece proved the ideal testing ground for Volvo's range of trucks



Independent truck review by: **Matthew Eisenegger**

# POWER TO THE TRANSPORT PEOPLE

Volvo has every corner covered – diesel, electric and hydrogen fuel cell

**V**olvo recently took over an out-of-season holiday hotel in Greece's second largest city, Thessaloniki, to present a dynamic showcase of its latest developments to the world's truck press.

The chosen location is an interesting place. As well as being a popular holiday destination for holidaymakers from Germany and the Balkans, it is also a significant commercial port and a key staging post on the road to the east, leading to Bulgaria and Turkey, and onwards to Iran and its neighbours.

Although road transport in Greece is important, the relative lack of wealth and the mild rust-reducing climate mean that trucks have a much longer service

life than in Britain. In fact, we discovered a cottage industry salvaging perfectly useable cabs from previous eras. For those needing a straight, rust-free cab for a first-generation FH or anything else from that period, it's the place to go. This long life means that while Volvo is the market leader, its actual annual sales numbers are tiny by comparison with the UK. Otherwise, the most remarkable fact is that this city of 1.3 million people doesn't appear to have a single cyclist.

## **FH460 Aero I-Save**

The headline act in this month-long event was undoubtedly the new Volvo FH16 780 but we'll start with a close look at arguably the most important truck present, the Volvo FH460 Aero I-Save.

In the past couple of years, Volvo's FH with the I-Save package has promised class-leading fuel economy and operator feedback seems to support that promise.

Incremental changes to both the efficiency of the D13K turbo-compound engines and accompanying software and to the aerodynamic detail of the cab have paid off at the pumps. The new Aero version adds what should be a significant improvement to that progress.

The new Aero cab is visibly smoother than the existing version and looks contemporary but still recognisably a Volvo. Being very much aimed at economy and having the lowest power rating of the trucks present, the FH460, not unexpectedly, had the lowest relative performance of the day, but the deficit was barely noticeable on the level and only needed an extra one or two downshifts on the biggest hills.

Backing up that new smooth look is Volvo's entry to the world of aerodynamic mirror cameras, CMS (Camera Monitoring System). Since the first applications appeared on the Mercedes-Benz Actros in 2020, Volvo has consistently said that it would only enter the fray when it had a system that was significantly better.

It has partially succeeded in that CMS is indeed much better than Mercedes-Benz's first attempt, but so are all of the



systems now available.

The Volvo system is now at least as good as any, to the point where it's hard to see where further improvements could be made. CMS is currently a two grand option but will most likely be bought as part of an added value options pack.

The new EU General Safety Regulations, in force from July 2024, also apply to trucks, so the speed limit detection and warning system is now standard, bonging gently whenever a speed limit changes and more vigorously when it is exceeded.

However, it's now built into the latest I-See predictive cruise control, which should ensure that drivers never break a speed limit inadvertently. I-See now includes detection of road features such as bends and roundabouts, adjusting speed appropriately.

Combined with the proactive lane keeping function, Pilot Assist will maintain the truck's path between them in an unintrusive manner as long as clear lane markings exist. Let go of the steering wheel, though, and an escalating warning system is invoked, up to the point where it assumes the driver is incapacitated and brings the truck safely to a halt, with hazard and interior lights on and doors unlocked.

So long as the driver remains alert to I-See and lane detection becoming unavailable, driver stress levels should be greatly reduced.

The final major change is a new

infotainment platform, which now includes the Sygic truck-specific sat-nav app. It goes much further than that, though, giving easy access to a vast array of apps, vehicle and driving information and settings. One disappointment is that Apple CarPlay is still not included, but we understand that it may not be too far away.

#### **FH16 780**

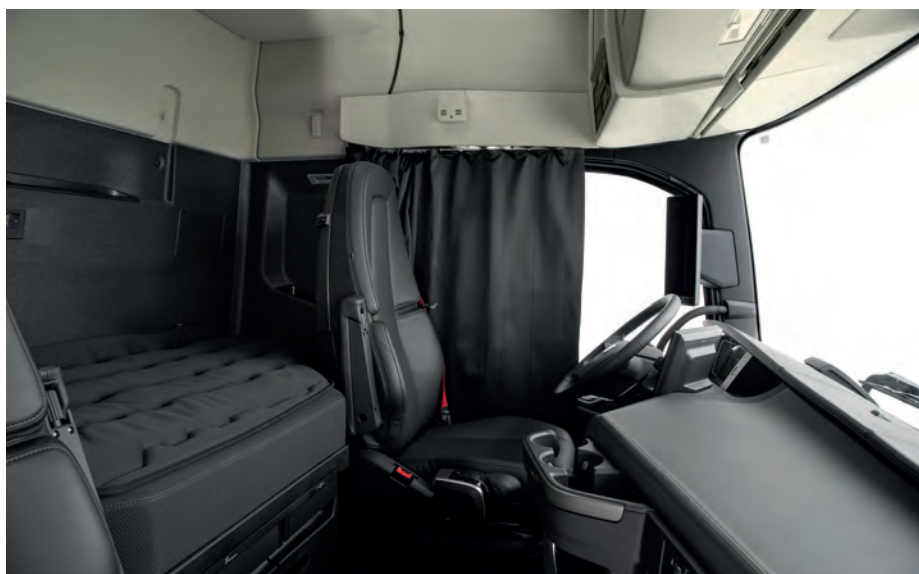
And so to the star of the show – the new holder of the title for Europe's most powerful production truck, the FH16 780, nudging past Scania's previous leader by 10 horsepower, no doubt leaving the door ajar for this game of leapfrog to continue for a while longer.

**Above:** The FH16 780 is the most powerful truck on the market

Despite retaining the FH16 name, the new engine actually displaces 17.3 litres and will be available at ratings of 600hp/3,000Nm, 700hp/3,400Nm and 780hp/3,800Nm.

While raising the bar for high power may seem wrong in the current climate, it's worth remembering that the Volvo FH range is a global product, needing to satisfy those markets within Europe and as far afield as Australia where permitted

**Below:** The FH16 780 features an all-black cab





gross weights are significantly higher than in Britain.

Even in the UK, there are enough operators in demanding sectors, such as heavy haulage and forestry, where high power is an asset. To be honest, driving the FH16 780 is a bit of an anti-climax. Apart from a unique black-themed interior, it has all the attributes of the lesser FH, but just effortlessly takes whatever obstacles are placed in its way.

#### FM500 Globetrotter

The third of the diesel-powered trucks available proved to be surprisingly impressive in many ways. While clearly not intended for intensive long-haul transport, the only thing that the FM500 lacks in comparison to the FH range is ultimate interior space.

Drivers probably wouldn't want to live in it for weeks on end, but it still has more than enough room for a few nights out every week.

If truckstop cred is important, it doesn't have the same bragging rights, but it makes up for that with easy access and visibility that makes the driver feel far more at one with the outside world. With largely the same drivelines and tech as the FH, the FM500 is proof that bigger is not always better.

#### FH Electric

The arguments for and against operating heavy duty battery electric trucks are well rehearsed. Range limitations, lack

of charging infrastructure away from base and the eye watering purchase cost are the main reasons not to go electric, but there are a growing number of firms operating them profitably, thanks to environmentally aware customers prepared to pay the premium.

The angle not fully explored, though, is how they measure up from the drivers' perspective. Many drivers, usually those with no actual hands-on knowledge, will vow never to drive one.

## Volvo's FH with the I-Save package has promised class-leading fuel economy and operator feedback that promise

But having spent a decent amount of time at the wheel of the FH Electric, I have to admit to my conversion and now believe that the last person to be against them should be the driver.

Just consider the facts. Here is a 40 or 44-tonner with the equivalent of 660hp

**Above:** What noise there on the FH Aero Electric is comes from tyre noise and a modest amount of wind noise

that drives with total smoothness and silence around town and doesn't get much noisier out on the highway.

What noise there is comes from a combination of tyre noise, which varies markedly according to the road surface and a modest amount of wind noise. In fact, the only annoying sound came from the now old-tech ignition key which has a separate remote locking fob which dangles against the dash and is all the justification needed for a keyless system.

The basic driving controls and technique are identical to a diesel FH, apart from a minor change to the fuel gauge, so there's nothing new to learn.

Add in the smoother than ever I-Shift transmission and as much secondary braking as anyone could ever need, with the clincher of never having to stand in a puddle of diesel to refuel. What's for a driver not to like?

Summing up, perhaps the most reassuring thing to come out of this event is that while Volvo is a significant manufacturer of battery electric trucks, it intends to offer operators the choice of battery electric, hydrogen fuel cell and ICE.

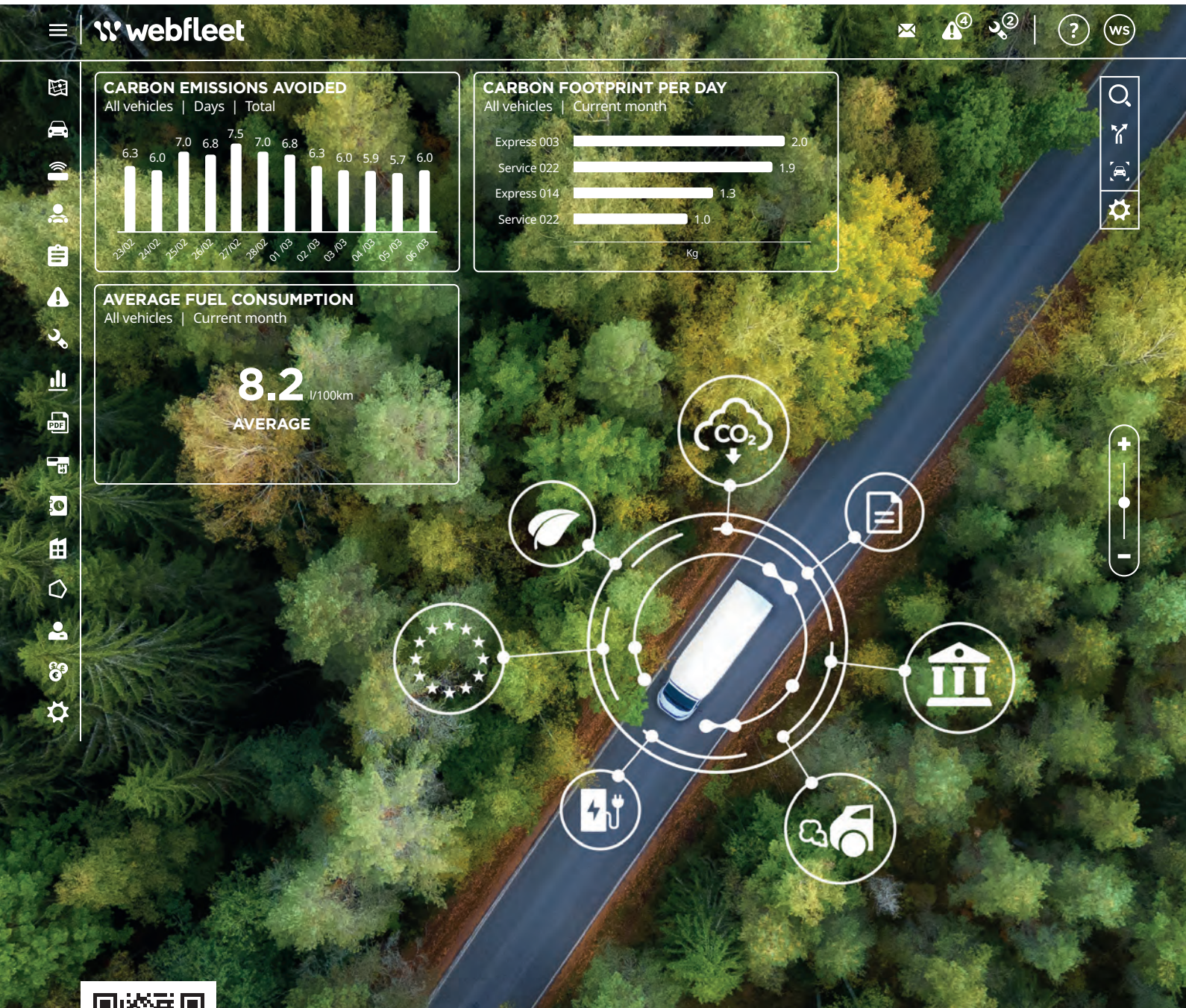
It still sees a future in continuing to develop the internal combustion engine, even if the fuel may not always be DERV as we know it. ■



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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

# GOOD DENTAL HEALTH MEANS A HAPPY WORKFORCE

Do you know how dental insurance can protect your employees?

**G**et Dental Plans has been offering company dental insurance plans in the UK for many years. The firm takes the hard work out of sourcing the best plans for employees by working with Bupa. By doing this, Get Dental Plans has negotiated the best

prices for FORS operators.

Dental can be an overlooked benefit, as some employers feel that employees already have access to NHS care. However, there are many other benefits to good oral health. Offering employees this benefit can help to protect their overall health and that of their family

and can be a strategic investment in a workforce's health and productivity.

Dr Neil Sikka, Chief Dental Officer, Bupa, UK Insurance, said: "The rising cost of dental care, coupled with the well-documented NHS dentistry crisis, is putting a strain on many employees' wallets and overall well-being. A recent

There is a strong link between oral health and overall well-being





Over 63 per cent of people are struggling to get an NHS dental appointment

study by Healthwatch found that people are experiencing financial hardship due to the lack of access to NHS care.”

Employee expectations regarding benefits are rising, with a strong focus on health and well-being. Many employees view dental insurance as a core element of any benefits package. Get Dental Plans offers a variety of plans that cover all conditions, including pre-existing ones, namely:

- Check-ups
- X-rays
- Hygienist
- Fillings
- Crowns
- Bridges
- Implants
- Root canal
- Extractions
- Periodontal treatment
- Emergency and accidents
- NHS & private
- Worldwide cover

There is no need for employees to change dentists.

Dr Neil has compiled the top five key reasons to consider offering dental benefits to employees:

### 1. Promote a culture of prevention

All dental insurance plans include check-ups and hygienist visits, the benefits of which are huge and can help to prevent further oral health issues developing. This helps to ensure that employees stay in work and stay healthy. Early detection of problems allows for less invasive and

more affordable treatment down the road and less staff absenteeism. All plans can cover the whole of the family, ensuring that the prevention message extends to all.

### 2. Empower employees to manage chronic conditions

Chronic oral health conditions such as gum disease are quite common. Dental insurance empowers employees to better manage their dental care through regular check-ups and deep cleanings. This proactive approach can significantly improve their overall oral health. If employees are experiencing any pre-existing conditions Get Dental Plans can offer immediate cover.

### 3. Invest in a healthier, happier workforce

Extensive research demonstrates the strong link between oral health and overall well-being. Untreated conditions like gum disease can exacerbate existing medical conditions, including diabetes and heart disease. By promoting preventive care, dental insurance contributes to a healthier lifestyle and reduces the likelihood of sickness absence in employees and their dependants.

### 4. Boost productivity and reduce absenteeism

The Journal of Dental Nursing reports that three in ten people take time off due to toothache, leading to millions of lost working days annually. Dental

pain and discomfort are significant productivity disruptors. By making treatments more accessible and affordable, insurance plans can minimise employee absenteeism and reduced productivity due to illness.

### 5. Meet growing employee demands

With many NHS dental services struggling to meet demand, employees are increasingly looking to employers for solutions. Reports show that over 63 per cent of people are struggling to get an NHS dental appointment. Offering dental insurance demonstrates your commitment to their well-being and allows access to immediate care, bypassing NHS waiting lists that can stretch for months.

By offering dental insurance, employers are not just providing a valuable benefit, they are investing in a healthier, happier and more productive workforce. ■

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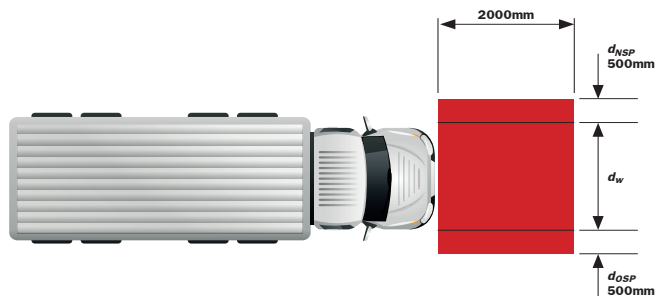
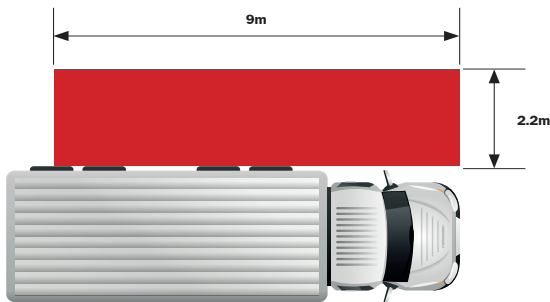
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Words: **Jo Dawson-Gerrard**, Senior Associate Solicitor & Marketing Consultant, Backhouse Jones Solicitors



# RUN YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH A COMPANY?

There are some legal changes you need to know about



**Above:** Companies will need to provide and maintain an email address for correspondence

It's not an area of law that hits the headlines that often and it may seem a little dry if you are a transport operator, but certain provisions of Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (2023 Act) are now in force. This will have an impact on company law and is relevant to you if your business is a UK company, limited liability partnership or limited partnership.

## What has changed and why?

A number of the provisions of the 2023 Act came into force on 4 March 2024. This piece of legislation is intended to give UK Companies House greater powers to prevent UK companies from being used for economic crimes. Below we summarise four key changes.

## Providing more information to Companies House

Companies House will have the power to require a person to provide information to enable them to determine whether the company has complied with its filing obligations. Timely responses to queries raised by Companies House are therefore important. Don't just ignore a request and seek legal advice if you don't know what to do.

Companies and every officer (which for this purpose means: director, company secretary, and manager – not just the directors) that receive requests for additional information will commit a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment for up to two years and/or a fine, if they fail to provide the information within the time specified in the request, without reasonable excuse.

## Email

You will need to provide and maintain an email address for correspondence with Companies House. This will need to be provided when your next confirmation statement is filed. We understand this email address will not be made public, but make sure it is an email address that is regularly monitored by the company.

Failure to do this without reasonable excuse will be a criminal offence punishable by a fine. The offence will be committed both by the company itself and every defaulting officer of the company.

## Registered office

The company's registered office needs to be what is known as an 'appropriate address'. This means an address where documents delivered will come to the



**Above:** The legislation is intended to give Companies House greater powers to prevent UK companies from being used for economic crimes

## Timely responses to queries raised by Companies House are important

attention of the company and where delivery can be acknowledged. Hopefully, most businesses do actually do this already, but if you don't, you need to now. This rules out, among other things, using PO Box addresses.

If you cannot satisfy this, consider using a company secretarial service for this provision.

Failure to do this, without reasonable excuse, will be a criminal offence punishable by a fine. The offence will be committed both by the company itself and every defaulting officer of the company.

### **Statement for lawful purpose**

When you incorporate a company now, the subscribers (shareholders) will need to confirm they're forming the company for a lawful purpose. You will also need to confirm the company's intended future activities are lawful on the confirmation statement.

The intention of these new statements is to make it clear that all companies on

the register, new and existing, have a duty to operate in a lawful way.

### **What's next?**

Other changes are expected later in the year which cover (among other things) a ban on corporate directors, changes to filing obligations; accounts and identity. We will provide further information in due course to help operators to prepare for this.

### **Balancing act of tariff and non-tariff injuries**

The Supreme Court recently handed down judgement in relation to the case of *Hassam v Rabot* [2024] UKSC11. This case concerned two defendants appealing against claims for personal injuries regarding the amount of damages awarded to the claimants for pain, suffering and loss of amenity (PSLA). In this case the claimants had suffered both whiplash and non-whiplash injuries.

Under the Civil Liability Act 2018, the damages payable for whiplash injuries are limited by reference to the duration

of the injury as set out in the Whiplash Injury Regulations 2021 reg 2. This can be contrasted with PSLA for non-whiplash injuries, which are not limited by such a tariff.

### **Ruling**

The Supreme court dismissed both the appeals and the claimant's cross appeals. They held that the correct approach was one where general damages for PSLA caused by whiplash and non-whiplash injuries should be assessed by considering both injuries separately. Their totals should be added together and, if appropriate, a reduction in damages should be applied, as per *Sadler v Filipiak* [2011], in order to prevent double recovery.

This judgement has demonstrated the balancing act that needs to be undertaken in limiting the amount of damages recoverable for whiplash injuries as per the Act and also ensuring fairness is maintained with regards to over-compensating. ■



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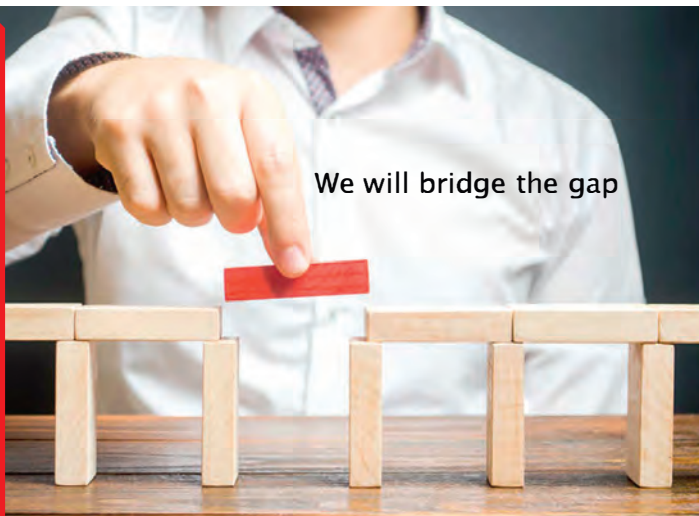
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## DVSA reveals that 88.5% of almost 11,000 LCVs stopped at the roadside annually are overloaded

With plans to pull over more LCVs on the roadside and potentially to enforce HGV-like legislation on the LCV market, it's about time you checked your van's laden weights, especially the individual axle weights, as SvTech has discovered many more vans have overloaded rear axles than previously thought. Any overload could invalidate your insurance, and if severe enough, could affect your braking and handling.

SvTech is seeing an increasing amount of van uprates at the moment, especially under 3500kg, where we are uprating from 2800kg to 3000/3200kg and from 3200kg up to 3500kg. This additional 300kg of payload is proving vital for many van owners, as it is very easily to overload these vehicles.

Whilst we uprate 3500kg vans by up to 500kg, there are some issues to take into consideration when going above 3500kg. A van over 3500kg needs a speed limiter fitted and, if carrying goods commercially, the van will need a tachograph to be fitted.

In addition, it means that the van can only be driven by someone who either passed their test before 1997 or by someone with a C1 entitlement on their driving licence.

These factors often make the uprate over 3500kg unviable or impractical for some fleet operators, however if the van is being regularly overloaded, SvTech would recommend uprating. We offer fleet discounts and can advise on the next steps. Please contact us to discuss your fleet needs.

"SvTech can help with uprating your LCV to give you more payload, keeping you safe and legal. Most makes and models are catered for."

### Caution

*It's important to remember that if a driver doesn't possess the C1 entitlement, and they overload a 3500kg van, in the event of being stopped, it would also be considered as a licence offence, which can hold strict penalties. It's worth weighing the van in an unladen and fully laden state to ascertain your limits.*

*Fleet discounts are available for uprates on 5 or more vehicles.*

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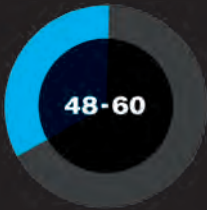
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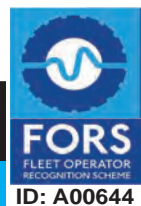
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