



WINTER 2024

STANDARD MAGAZINE

STAFFING ALERT

How transport operators can help solve the problem of attracting new drivers

THE GREEN ROAD

Decarbonisation does not mean yet another extra financial burden

WINTER WARMERS

Keeping your fleet safe and still moving when bad weather sets in

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HELLO & WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of The Standard



With Christmas now behind us and the news headlines seemingly getting bleaker by the week, it struck me just how much more relevant FORS is for Britain’s truck and van operators nowadays, as economic times change at an ever-faster pace. Just look at some of the problems they are facing...

First and foremost, road transport is in the midst of the biggest upheaval since the invention of the internal combustion engine with plans to replace diesel and petrol power with zero emission vehicles gathering pace. Whatever our views are on this subject, the fact of the matter is that we are all going to have to go along with these plans. There will undoubtedly be many major problems along the way – but becoming a FORS-accredited operator will certainly help to minimise them.

Then, the Chancellor’s recent Autumn Budget raised the rate of national insurance contributions for employers. The knock-on effect of this is that transport firms, many of whom already exist on wafer thin profit margins, are going to have to tighten the purse strings even more by improving the efficiency of their operations. Once again, membership of FORS will mean operators gaining invaluable insights into how to do just that.

Thirdly, a glance at our story on page 8 shows that there has been a shocking rise in the number of drug driving incidents on our roads in the past few years. Coming under the health and safety heading, this is yet another area where transport managers MUST act.

And in case anyone thought FORS was just for the big trucking firms, our story, also on page 8, shows how the one-man-bands of this country – van owner operators – are now being enticed into the FORS fold with a new route to accreditation that is tailored just for them. You certainly can’t accuse the FORS team of resting on its laurels!

The big news in this issue is our report on the annual FORS Conference, which once again brought the transport industry’s big movers and shakers together under one roof. With so many expert speakers on hand and a wealth of FORS Associates showing off their wares in the exhibition hall, delegates had

plenty of good ideas to take home with them. Once again, I was proud to be among the crowds chatting here and there – but it was also heartening to simply stand around listening to the conversations that were going on near me.

It became obvious to me that the basic FORS aims – more effective operations, better safety and fewer noxious emissions – are fast embedding themselves into the heart of the UK’s transport industry and it will be interesting for me to report on how this message is further being rammed home in 2025.

Meanwhile this issue is packed, as usual, with news, views and features which will help FORS Operators forge ahead in their various quests for excellence.

Inside, there are some timely winter driving tips to keep firms that use trucks and vans for their businesses safe and still operating as the winter weather sets in. There’s also some advice for transport industry bosses about how to tackle the crippling shortage of truck drivers – and while we are at it, there’s also a sobering article about how the drivers who are already employed are treated when it comes to stress and strain in their working lives.

Sadly, in a recent survey, some 49 per cent said they were dissatisfied with their work-life balance and 41 per cent said they were likely to leave their job in the next 12 months. It’s obvious that urgent action is required.

With that, I invite you to read on and enjoy!



12-21

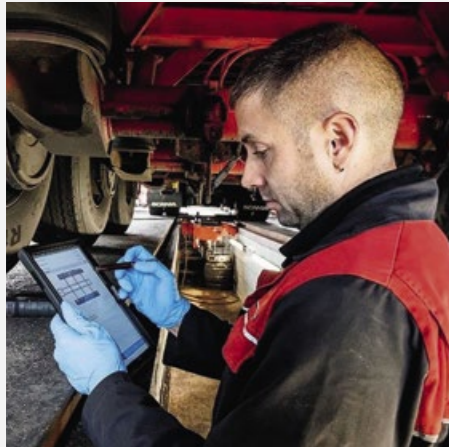
Left: Conference special

Full report and pictures from the FORS Annual Conference 2024 at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham

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Below: Sustainable working

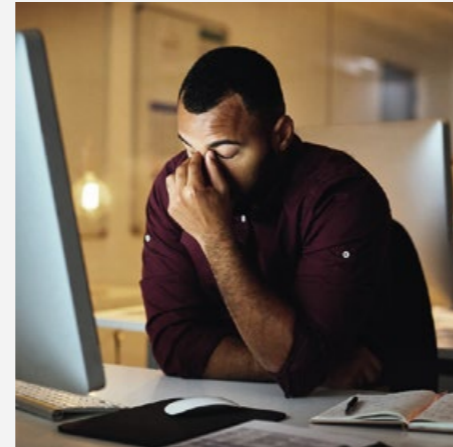
One transport fleet proves that decarbonisation does not necessarily put a financial strain on the company



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Left: Staffing issue

How to solve Britain's massive shortage of truck drivers and keep Great Britain Plc moving



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Right: Digital platform

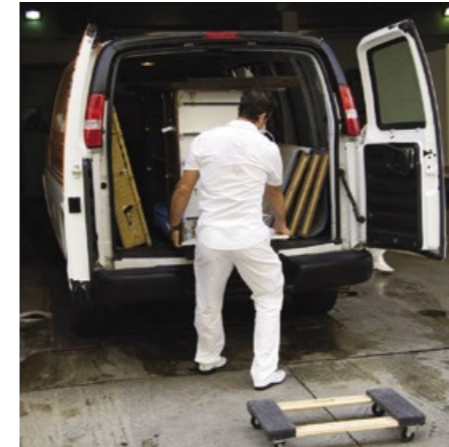
FORS launches digital tool to help transport operators keep track on their emissions



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Keeping truck and van fleets safe and operational when the bad weather sets in



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European safety organisation rates heavy trucks for the first time



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Video call

On-screen aid to help with problems over new PSS **p9**

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Driver Hire puts the spotlight on truck tyre safety **p10**

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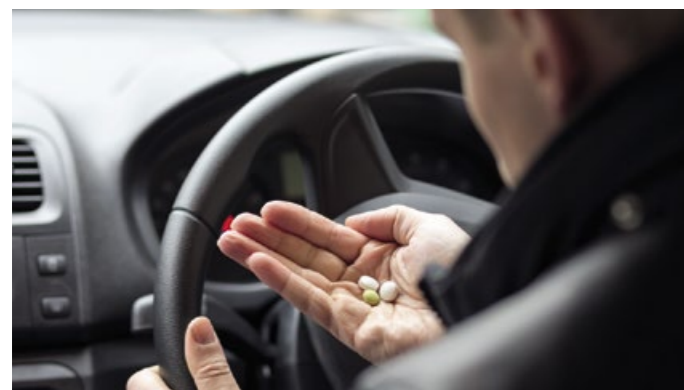
Uni gives a tick to new Durite safety system **p10**

Tacho talk

Updated rules for drivers in place as from January **p10**

Load security

DVSA updates its guidance to Britain's hauliers **p10**



Drug driving collisions rise by 170 per cent in less than a decade

The number of collisions attributed to drug driving has increased by 170 per cent in less than a decade, new analysis of data from the Department for Transport (DfT) shows. The Government figures reveal that drug-driving collisions rose from 684 in 2014 to 1,853 in 2023, with fatalities linked to drug driving increasing by 164 per cent over the same period, from 47 in 2014 to 124 in 2023.

The analysis of data by Direct Line motor insurance also reveals that drug driving deaths accounted for eight per cent of all road fatalities last year.

Over the period analysed, cocaine, benzoylcegonine, cannabis, morphine and ketamine were the most common drugs detected in deceased drivers.

A powerful stimulant, cocaine, can impair people's judgement leading to reckless over confidence, while cannabis can slow reaction time, reduce coordination and distort people's perception of the road. The most common age group for deceased drivers to test positive for illegal

drugs was 20-29, followed by those aged 30-39.

In the 12 months to the year ending March 2023, approximately 3.1 million (9.5%) of those aged 16 to 59 were reported to be using illicit drugs.

Drugs, whether legal or prescription medication, can impact a driver in a variety of ways including one's ability to judge distances, reaction times, lead to blurry or impaired vision, aggression, erratic behaviour, hallucinations, dizziness and nausea.

As per Bronze D6 Health and eyesight: A drugs and alcohol procedure shall be in place that includes the actions to take on suspecting driver impairment through drugs or alcohol.

FORS Standard Version 7.1 November 2024 44. This should include drug and alcohol testing that is conducted:

- Pre-employment or the start of a specific contract
- Routinely, randomly or unannounced
- After involvement in a road traffic collision, incident or near-miss, where reasonably practical •

All HGVs in London must hold Safety Permits by May

Transport for London (TfL) has announced that by 4 May 2025, all heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) operating in most parts of Greater London must have a safety permit under the city's Direct Vision Standard (DVS) and safety permit scheme. This measure aims to reduce road deaths and injuries by improving HGV safety.

Initially launched on 28 October 2024, the DVS requires all HGVs over 12 tonnes to meet specific safety standards to enter Greater London. Vehicles are assigned a star rating based on the DVS, which assesses the driver's visibility of the road and surrounding areas through their cab windows. Lorries must achieve a minimum three-star rating or be equipped with a Progressive Safe System designed to enhance safety and protect vulnerable road users.

HGVs granted a grace period during the scheme's initial rollout must comply with the requirements by 23:59 on 4 May 2025. Non-compliance will result in Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for operators.

A safety permit is mandatory for all qualifying HGVs to access areas covered

Vehicles are assigned a star rating based on the DVS, which assesses the driver's visibility of the road

under the scheme, with permits available for free application. Vehicles without a permit will be prohibited from operating in most parts of Greater London after the deadline.

TfL's initiative reflects its commitment to creating safer streets for all road users by addressing the risks posed by large vehicles. •



Van drivers report increasing health issues

A poll of 500 adults who drive a van for work found they typically spend three hours a day in their vehicle, whether driving, eating, or taking a break. As a result, a fifth (21 per cent) worry the amount of driving they do will impact their long-term health. Half of those polled eat in their vehicle during the working day, doing so three times a week, with a quarter admitting they have a weak spot for junk food. And £23.85 a week is spent on food on the go, resulting in £1,240 annually.

The research was commissioned by Fiat Professional, which has teamed up with former Team GB athlete and endurance coach for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, James Thie to curate the Van Driver Health Guide.



It includes step-ups which can be performed by getting in and out of the driver's seat, squats which can be done while loading and unloading the vehicle and triceps dips off the rear of the van. The advice also includes what foods to eat and what to avoid when stopping off at service stations and garages.

James, who is also the current World Masters indoor Champion over 1,500 metres, said: "Driving a van for

hours at a time requires lots of concentration which is incredibly tiring and this can mean drivers are too fatigued to exercise. It also means drivers are sitting in one position for very long periods of time, putting strain on their bodies, particularly necks, shoulders, and lower backs.

"Being behind the wheel can clearly limit where and when people eat, meaning snacks are relied on and meals are simply

Above: James Thie, helping van drivers with their health

grab and go options which aren't often the healthiest. Planning ahead could include prepping food so they don't have to skip meals, ensuring choices are suitable to eat on-the-go and saving money in the long run. What might seem like a cheap takeaway coffee and snack may not be particularly nutritious and will also add up financially." •

New video helps fleets with PSS problems

Transport for London's Direct Vision Standard (DVS) and latest Progressive Safe System (PSS) updates came into force on 28 October.

But in order to give the industry sufficient time to buy, fit, and test any new

Customers are already telling us how our system has avoided serious pedestrian collisions

safety equipment in line with the new rules, operators were able to apply for a six-month grace period before the

standards were tightened.

To help these operators stay legal, FORS Associate TrafficAngel has launched a YouTube video, featuring Odri, pictured, who has her own desk and busy telephone dealing with the many customer queries and fleet managers needing help to apply for the TfL grace period extension.

A company spokesman said: "Customers are already telling us how our system has avoided serious pedestrian collisions and has even saved lives. Another key benefit of the TrafficAngel PSS when

driving in London is the sound of silence! Drivers are telling us how much quieter

their day is now the constant unnecessary bleeping has been removed from the cab." •





New tachograph rules for international journeys come into force

Effective from 2 January, updated tachograph regulations for international journeys have been introduced under Regulation (EU) 2020/1054, requiring vehicles to be equipped with advanced smart tachograph technology. From 31 December 2024:

- Vehicles currently using analogue or digital tachographs must be retrofitted with a 'full' or 'transitional' Smart Tachograph 2 to undertake international journeys.
- From 19 August 2025:
- Vehicles using a Smart Tachograph 1 must upgrade to the newer Smart Tachograph 2 for international travel.

The updated tachograph offers enhanced functionality, including:

- Automatic recording of border crossings.
- Monitoring of loading and unloading activities.
- Strengthened anti-tampering mechanisms to ensure data integrity.

The new regulations aim to improve compliance with driving hours regulations, enhance road safety, and ensure more efficient tracking of transport operations across borders. Transport operators are urged to check their vehicles' compliance and upgrade tachographs as required to avoid penalties and ensure seamless international operations.

Load security update by DVSA

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has updated its load security guidance for operators of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and goods vehicles in England, Wales, and Scotland. The revised guidance emphasises the importance of conducting thorough risk

assessments to manage load security effectively. It provides detailed instructions on covering loose loads, ensuring they are sheeted correctly when necessary. New sections address the securing of asbestos waste and precast concrete sections.

University gives its backing to Durite's DVS safety system

A leading university has successfully concluded a series of tests on a new HGV safety system that is now required under the Direct Vision Standard (DVS) in London. Loughborough University carried out tests on FORS Affinity Partner Durite's Progressive Safe System (PSS). The results confirm that it meets the specifications set out by Transport for London (TfL).

Durite spokesman John Nobbs said: "PSS providers can self-certify their systems, but HGV operators are cautious about investing

in unproven systems ahead of the October deadline. "Following requests from our customers and to offer extra peace of mind to fleet operators and drivers, we decided to get the system independently tested. "After previously fitting the Durite PSS on the Road Haulage Association (RHA) training truck, we revisited Loughborough University to proceed with the testing."

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Words: John Kendall

FORS FORGES AHEAD TOWARDS 2025

Annual Conference sees experts on hand to lead transport operators towards a better future

The seventh FORS annual conference took place at the ICC in Birmingham in October, offering a full day of presentations and discussions as well as an exhibition away from the

conference hall, where visitors could chat with exhibitors.

In addition to eight presentations throughout the day, there were two panel discussions, enabling the audience to put their questions to panels of experts.

First to take to the stage was FORS Concession Director Geraint Davies, with FORS Technical Adviser Glen Davies, presenting an update from FORS, briefly outlining the progress that FORS has made since it was launched and

introducing the changes happening with Version 7 in January 2025.

This was followed by a 15-minute presentation from Tim Bradshaw, co-founder of FORS Affinity Partner Sandstone Communications. A former Army Intelligence Officer, Tim uses his experience to form the basis of the work he carries out with clients and

audiences around the world. Sandstone Communications delivers specialist first aid training to the transport and logistics sector.

Discussion then moved on to decarbonisation and the challenges that it brings for fleets of all sizes, with a presentation from Kate Armitage, who has worked with electric mobility

since 2010, initially with EDF energy, having set up and managed the company's electric vehicles team. Kate's presentation covered the why, when, where and how of decarbonisation.

Kate's tips for introducing electric vehicles included:

- Engage with your electrical distribution

network operator (DNO) early, as lead times for upgrades are lengthy. A phone call giving the postcode should start the ball rolling. Tenanted sites may have a problem because of upgrade costs

- You may not need daytime charging. Overnight charging might be enough
- Start with the easy stuff – low mileage, return-to-depot vehicles
- Engaging with drivers, offering training and ongoing support will be critical to a successful transition.

Practice of decarbonisation

This was followed by a panel discussion considering decarbonisation in practice. The panel included Amy Carter, EV Operations Manager from DAF Trucks, William Soper, Head of Sustainability Services at DEKRA, Amber Geggus, Director of Renewables at New Era Energy, which supplies HVO and synthetic diesel among other alternative fuels and Adam Franklin, CEO of Greenergy Flexigrid. Andy Salter of DVV Media chaired the discussion.

Regarding Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, Soper said companies need to identify the relevant data and bring the strands together to develop a single strategy for dealing with them. “Over 50 per cent of customers now want data relating to environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance,” he said.

Fuel consumption is inevitably a critical cost regardless of the fuel used. Franklin told the audience: “Driver training and understanding operability is



Andy Salter: Managing Director DVV International, hosted the conference



Geraint Davies: FORS Concession Director, introduced the changes happening with Version 7

Controlling costs may not be easy when operating from leased premises

key. However, controlling costs may not be so easy when operating from leased premises.” Many operators are running from leased buildings. The Zero Emission HGV and Infrastructure Demonstrator (ZEHID) programme may help here, suggested Carter.

Operators can reduce their environmental impact before transitioning to EVs by adopting fuels such as HVO. “It’s available now and is a drop-in replacement for conventional diesel fuel made from waste materials,” said Geggus. High blend biofuels offer an alternative, suggested Franklin, but added that the fuel is not compatible with all vehicles, so checks should be made first. There may also be a short-term supply issue. Greenergy Flexigrid vehicles that had used the fuel had not experienced increased fuel consumption, he said.

All DAF demonstrator vehicles are now sent out fuelled with HVO and the truck maker has a lot of information regarding total cost of ownership when using the fuel, said Carter. From January FORS Silver Operators will be required to calculate and report their well-to-wheel emissions data, while Gold Operators will be required to set and monitor their emissions performance targets until 2040.

Gas alternative

What about hydrogen? While Franklin thought that it may have a small role in future, he highlighted some of the current drawbacks, including a lack of ‘green’ hydrogen production and lack of tax incentives. For fleets that were part of larger, diverse companies, he suggested that appropriate expertise may exist in other parts of the company. “Look for cross skills – people in other

parts of the business may have hydrogen expertise,” he said.

It will be some time before there is a genuine alternative to the internal combustion engine for trucks. Carter suggested that perhaps we need to think about things differently. DAF’s latest EVs will have a range of around 400kms, as will others, but a truck would struggle to cover more than 250km in a driver’s 4.5-hour driving period, leaving 45 minutes for re-charging before setting off again.

After lunch, Nick Chambers, co-founder of the Fleet Insights Group and an expert in gathering and using fleet data asked the question: “How can we use data to improve driver safety?” As he told the conference, there is plenty of data in the system today, so how do we make sense of it? He then outlined part of the problem. Road deaths plateaued in 2012 and there has been no significant reduction since. Some 24 per cent of occupant fatalities were not wearing seatbelts. “The scale of the issue is of concern and we need to use data to bring about change,” he said.

His recommendations included not giving all drivers the same training, but to use the data to determine who needs it most. He acknowledged that for small fleets it was more difficult to take drivers off the road for training, so suggested using facilities such as licence checks and driver monitoring systems. “Empower your workforce and engage with business leaders,” he advised.

Changes outlined

Three members of the FORS QA team, Nerija Smilgeviute, Charlotte Smith and Baljit Randhawa outlined the changes to the FORS Standard (v7) that becomes effective on 2 January 2025. The changes, compared with the previous version are



Kate Armitage: Independent Consultant



Karl Wilshaw: Fleet Director, Travis Perkins plc



Lisa Dorn: Professor of Driver Behaviour, Cranfield University



Nick Chambers: Co-founder, Fleet Insights Group



Nerija Smilgeviute: FORS Quality and Assurance Team

available on the FORS website and can be downloaded from: <https://www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/new-standard/>.

The team highlighted that the process used for the new standard was focussed on the operator’s perspective by only making changes to the Standard that were really needed. The requirements of the Standard have been aligned with the vehicle roadworthiness legislation to reassure operators that they are compliant. Consequently, the risk of potential operational downtime when dealing with enforcement authorities can be significantly reduced, if not eliminated.

Emphasis has also been placed on decarbonisation, one reason why FORS is developing the FORS Emissions Calculator, which will be freely available for all FORS Operators to use as part of their subscriptions, regardless of their accreditation level. It will be accessible from their FORS dashboard.

The tool is easy to use and once fleet profile and vehicle details have been entered, there are three simple reporting steps:

- Select the period for which you need to calculate your emissions
- Enter the data, which includes fuel type and quantities used
- View your emissions data, calculated from the information you have entered. Reports are automatically saved and can be downloaded when needed.

De-skilling fears

Delegates who felt that advancing technology was helping to de-skill drivers would have had sympathy with the presentation from Jonathon Backhouse, Legal Director of solicitor Backhouse Jones.

driver climbing out, too close to avoid a collision. The driver of the artic that he was overtaking slammed on his brakes, opening a gap to enable Backhouse to swerve across and avoid a collision. “That driver saved us from a serious collision by having foresight and being professional. He did it because he was a pro who anticipated what could happen. He was the unsung hero.”

He asked the audience: “How do we establish a culture of professionalism and are we encouraging or discouraging this with our protocols and systems and what is the impact of increasing automation?”

Few drivers today will know how to secure a load with roping and sheeting. However, with curtainsiders now popular as cargo carriers, the warehouse team often secures the load. The driver might even be given a sealed trailer. Even so, he or she will still be held accountable for the load out on the road.

The daily walkaround check is often completed with a digital device, using barcodes and photographs. Backhouse asked if this has become more important than understanding why wheel nuts, lights etc need to be checked.

FORS Silver Operators will be required to calculate and report their well-to-wheel emissions data

As an 18-year-old in 1986, Backhouse had borrowed his father’s car to drive to Wembley Arena to see rock band Whitesnake. On a foggy M6 in the Midlands, he was travelling at 70mph in the outside lane. Ahead he caught a glimpse of an overturned van, with the

He gave other examples. GPS devices, radar, mapping, height indicators and alarms do not prevent bridge strikes. Reading the road signs is still important.

Backhouse acknowledged that drivers are under pressure and are often treated as the lowest common denominator, comparing their treatment to how we treat airline pilots. "We need to expect high standards," he said, "The driver shortage has dropped standards."

Look for cross skills – people in other parts of the business may have hydrogen expertise

Fitness to drive

Regarding health and fitness, Backhouse asked if delegates were observing drivers for possible problems. He said: "We need to enable them to come forward if they have a health problem. Drivers have a specific responsibility because of the direct impact it can have on road safety. Drivers must be aware that they are not expected to drive when ill."

"He encouraged operators to establish a culture of professionalism among their drivers, ensuring that they are not inadvertently de-skilled. He advised: "Understand the challenges of the role and train office staff to respect the individual on the road."

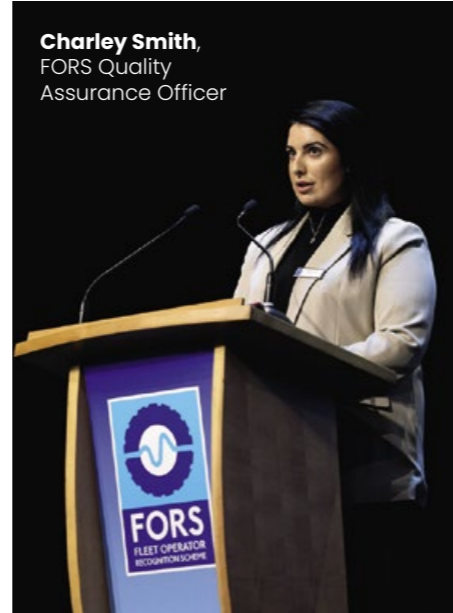
"Start reminding drivers that they are highly-skilled individuals who are expected to follow the rules of the road to keep us all safe."

Finally, if drivers cannot meet the standards set, they need to be removed from the sector. By that, he meant motorway tailgaters, speeders, heavy brakiers, drivers having too many incidents and drivers not physically well enough to do the job.

The conference had plenty to engage both those who are already accredited operators and those thinking about taking the steps to join. With so many pressures on operators and drivers, FORS accreditation offers a way for them to ensure the safety and compliance of their vehicles and drivers. ■



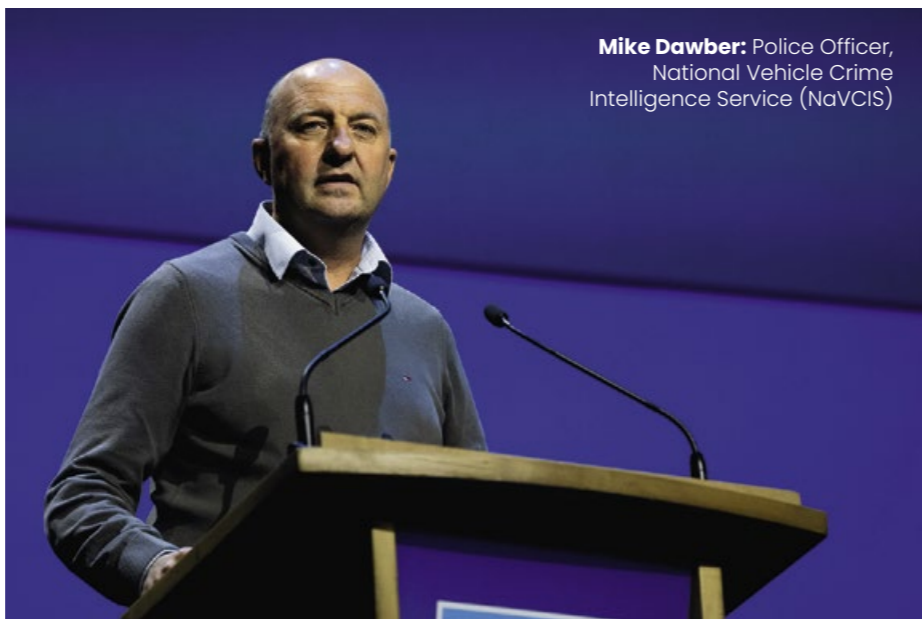
Baljit Randhawa: FORS Quality Assurance Specialist



Charley Smith, FORS Quality Assurance Officer



Jonathon Backhouse: Legal Director, Backhouse Jones



Mike Dawber: Police Officer, National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS)



How many drivers do you have on the road right now?
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Proven KSI reduction from truck blind-spots and sideswipes

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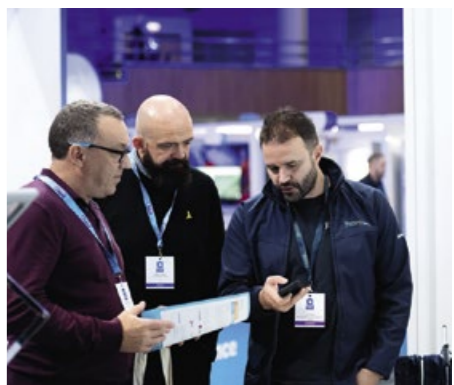
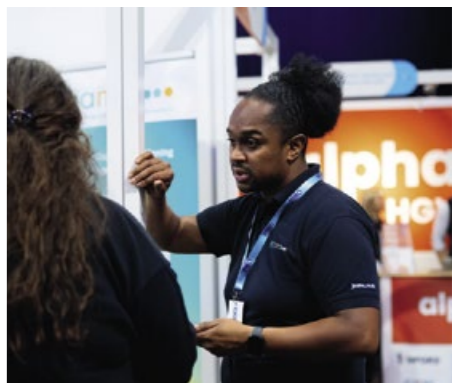
Fresnel lens stops vulnerable road user accidents

Just press-fit adhesive lens to truck window

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A number of transport expert companies that are FORS Associates were on hand in the exhibition hall to offer their help and guidance to FORS Conference delegates



EBS has built a reputation for on-time deliveries and high standards



Words: Matthew Eisenegger

MAKING SUSTAINABILITY WORK FOR YOUR FLEET

Decarbonisation does not mean an extra financial burden

At the recent FORS Annual Conference, one key takeaway echoed across discussions was that transport fleets are eager to explore decarbonisation but are often held back by concerns.

Many managers view sustainability as a financial burden rather than a commercial opportunity. However, cost reduction and sustainability don't have to be mutually exclusive.

By adopting a strategic approach to sustainable practices, fleet operators can enjoy tangible benefits like lower operating costs, enhanced reputation and compliance with upcoming industry regulations. By guiding fleet operators through the first steps toward sustainable practices and drawing on real-world success stories like FORS Gold Operator Essex Bulk Services (EBS), we highlight the practical and commercial value of becoming a sustainable fleet.

Understanding the challenges

Common concerns for fleet operators and managers include high initial costs, limited knowledge about sustainable practices and the risks of disrupting ongoing operations. Many operators worry about how implementing green practices might impact daily fleet logistics and driver efficiency. These challenges, while significant, are not impassable. By partnering with sustainability experts and utilising digital platforms tailored to

fleet needs, operators can simplify these processes, reducing both operational risks and costs over time.

The first hurdle is often a perceived knowledge gap. Sustainability can feel overwhelming due to the complex terminology and standards involved. Managers can be unsure of where to begin or how to measure success. However, with clear guidance and practical support, fleet operators can begin to see that sustainability is within reach, even for those starting from scratch.

Effective solutions

Adopting sustainable practices doesn't need to be an all-or-nothing approach. By following industry best practices, establishing strong partnerships and incorporating digital tools, fleet operators can address their concerns and overcome perceived barriers. This approach allows for a gradual, manageable transition, ensuring that the benefits of sustainable operations are realised without significant upfront costs or operational disruptions.

Testing, inspection and certification experts, such as DEKRA, provide fleet operators with tailored assessments, practical tools and continuous support to make the sustainability journey accessible. Through digital management platforms and expert advice, fleet managers can identify easy first steps and progressively implement changes that improve efficiency, lower costs, and support compliance with emerging regulations.

Case study: Essex Bulk Services (EBS)

A standout example of practical sustainability in action is Essex Bulk Services (EBS), a leader in bulk material logistics. EBS has built a reputation for on-time deliveries and high standards, achieving an impressive 99.6% on-time delivery rate. Recognising the commercial benefits of sustainability, EBS engaged with DEKRA to enhance the fleet's environmental performance and align with the updated FORS Standard.

The new standard includes stricter requirements for fleet decarbonisation. EBS saw this as an opportunity to not only enhance compliance but to set a new benchmark for sustainability in fleet operations. Working with DEKRA, EBS began its sustainability journey with a Sustainability Readiness Assessment, which took place over a five-week period and provided the firm with an in-depth understanding of its current position.

By the end of the assessment, EBS could answer all the Environmental, Social and Governance data requests of its customers.



Through digital management, fleet managers can identify easy first steps

- **Data collection and analysis:** EBS provided essential data, which DEKRA reviewed and analysed, identifying key areas for improvement. DEKRA's easy-to-use online portal enabled EBS to upload, review, and score each part of their sustainability efforts across General, Environmental, Social, and Governance sections.
- **Feedback and roadmap development:** Following the assessment, DEKRA provided EBS with a clear, actionable roadmap highlighting 17 quick wins in

the short, medium, and long term. These recommendations not only guided EBS in aligning with FORS V7 standard but also enhanced their sustainability credentials and operational efficiency.

■ **Implementation and results:** EBS achieved substantial progress by adopting DEKRA's recommendations, which led to £180,000 in cost savings. In addition, compliance with key sustainability frameworks like the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTI) and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol has positioned EBS as a

Fleet operators can enjoy benefits like lower operating costs, enhanced reputation and compliance with upcoming industry regulations



Sustainability can feel overwhelming due to the complex terminology and standards involved



sustainability leader in the fleet sector. The firm now boasts enhanced data management, streamlined reporting and improved confidence across the fleet management team.

According to Craig Childs, director of EBS: “We have not only achieved significant milestones in our sustainability journey but have also positioned ourselves as a responsible and forward-thinking company in the eyes of our stakeholders.” This success story highlights that even fleet operators at the beginning stages of sustainability can make significant progress with the right support and resources.

Act now

For fleet operators, the sustainability landscape is changing quickly. Regulators, clients and consumers increasingly expect organisations to demonstrate a commitment to reducing emissions and improving environmental practices. By embracing sustainability today, fleet managers can stay ahead of these expectations and avoid potential penalties, supply chain restrictions, and reputational damage.

The EBS story demonstrates that sustainable fleet management is more than just an environmental responsibility – it’s a sound business decision that directly benefits fleet operators.

- Simple steps to get started
If you’re new to sustainability, consider these practical first steps:
- Assess Current Practices: Conduct a simple assessment to understand

your fleet’s current environmental performance. This will help you identify areas for improvement and measure progress over time.

- Partner with experts: Engaging with industry specialists like DEKRA provides access to tools, insights, and support tailored to the unique needs of fleet operators.

DEKRA’s Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) Readiness Tool, for instance, provides a structured way to evaluate and improve sustainability performance without requiring significant investment.

- Leverage digital tools: Digital management platforms can simplify data collection, reporting, and compliance, making it easier to track emissions, implement best practices, and ensure ongoing progress.

- Set Realistic Goals: Sustainability doesn’t happen overnight. Start with achievable, short-term goals that build towards long-term improvements. Each step you take will enhance your fleet’s operational efficiency and reputation.

A competitive advantage

For fleet operators, sustainability offers a competitive edge that goes beyond environmental impact. By following EBS’s example and taking manageable steps, fleet managers can start seeing real benefits, from reduced costs to improved compliance and brand reputation. The journey to sustainability is not only feasible but also an investment in your fleet’s future success. ■

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Words: **Scott Bell** (Partner in road transport law at JMW Solicitors)

SOLVING THE HGV DRIVER SHORTAGE

The UK is grappling with a significant shortage of truck drivers, a problem that has far-reaching consequences for transport operators and the broader business community

This issue, which has been building over the past few years, is now at a critical juncture where immediate action is necessary to prevent widespread disruption and compliance failures.

In 2021, the Road Haulage Association (RHA) estimated a shortfall of around 100,000 drivers and in November 2023, it was estimated that the EU driver shortage would triple by 2026 if measures were not taken.

This shortage has been attributed to several key factors. Firstly, an ageing workforce means many experienced drivers are retiring and there needs to be an influx of new drivers to fill these positions. Recent reports claim that fewer than two per cent of HGV drivers are under 25 and the average age is 55. To put this in perspective, Statista reports that 45 per cent of heavy goods vehicle drivers in the UK will reach retirement age in the next five to 10 years.

The government introduced measures to facilitate HGV training and tests, but the problem persists and is expected to peak at Christmas this year. This is in large part due to widespread misconceptions about the nature of the job. Despite the fact that the pay for HGV drivers is above average, many potential candidates are deterred by outdated perceptions of the profession. Resolving this shortage is not a straightforward task but a complex, long-term challenge.

Improving working conditions is crucial, as well as ensuring that drivers have adequate rest facilities and more predictable schedules. Recognising HGV driving as a skilled occupation would also help to elevate the status of the profession and attract more recruits.

Furthermore, the decision for the UK to leave the European Union was another contributory factor. This move introduced significant barriers for non-



Fewer than 2% of HGV drivers are under 25 and the average age is 55

UK citizens wishing to work and reside in the UK as HGV drivers. As a result, many EU nationals working in the UK chose to return to the continent, where they found better financial opportunities and more stability in the wake of the Brexit vote's implications. The restrictions on freedom of movement meant that the UK lost a substantial portion of its HGV driver workforce, exacerbating the existing shortage and putting additional pressure on the transport sector.

Lockdown woes

Then, the Covid-19 pandemic compounded the situation. Lockdowns and restrictions led to a backlog in driving tests and training, delaying the entry of new drivers into the industry. The combination of these elements

has created a challenging environment for transport operators struggling to maintain staffing levels necessary for efficient operations.

The shortage impacts not only logistics companies but also retail, manufacturing and other sectors reliant on timely deliveries. Without adequate staffing, the entire supply chain faces potential disruptions.

The driver shortage has several direct impacts on transport operations. Companies are experiencing delays in deliveries, leading to inefficiencies and increased costs. When there are not enough drivers to meet the demand, companies must make difficult choices about which deliveries to prioritise. This can result in missed deadlines and dissatisfied customers, damaging a company's reputation and customer



Above: Non-compliance with working time regulations can lead to severe penalties

relationships.

Operational costs are rising as companies compete to attract and retain drivers. Many firms have had to increase wages and offer better benefits to lure new drivers and keep existing ones. This increase in labour costs is often passed down the supply chain, leading to higher prices for goods and services. Furthermore, the pressure to meet delivery schedules with a limited workforce can lead to overworked drivers, which raises concerns about safety and compliance with working time regulations.

The budget in October which raised National Insurance contributions by 1.2 per cent lowered the threshold for National insurance being payable from £10,000 to £5,000 is likely to have a significant impact on the employment, retention and growth of logistics businesses, when overall profit margins remain so low across the sector.

The shortage also forces transport companies to make greater use of subcontractors. While this can be a short-term solution, it often leads to service quality and reliability inconsistencies. Subcontractors may adhere to different standards than the primary operator, further complicating compliance and operational efficiency. All of these factors multiply the pressure to find drivers, which in turn can present various compliance difficulties.

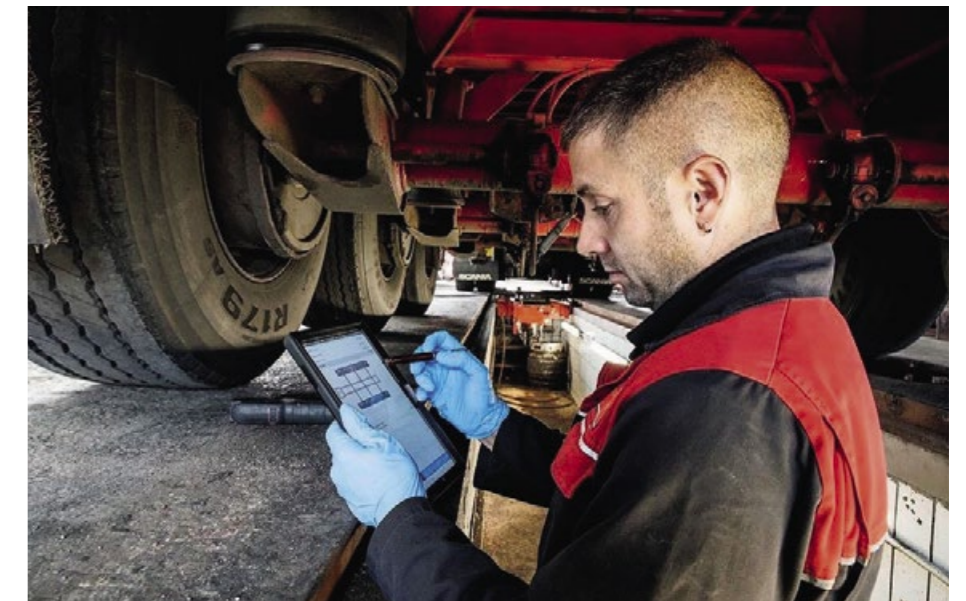
Compliance challenges

Amid efforts to offset shortage forecasts, there are questions being raised around compliance. One of the primary areas affected is the adherence to drivers'

hours and working time regulations. These rules are designed to prevent driver fatigue by limiting the number of hours a driver can work within a given period. However, the shortage of drivers means that those who are available are often pushed to their limits, increasing the risk of regulatory breaches.

Non-compliance with working time regulations can lead to severe penalties for transport operators. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) conducts regular checks and has the authority to impose fines and other sanctions on companies that fail to comply. Repeated violations can result in even more severe consequences, including the suspension or revocation of operator licences by the Traffic Commissioner.

Vehicle maintenance is another area of concern. With fewer drivers, companies may prioritise keeping vehicles on the road over regular maintenance checks. This can lead to safety issues and



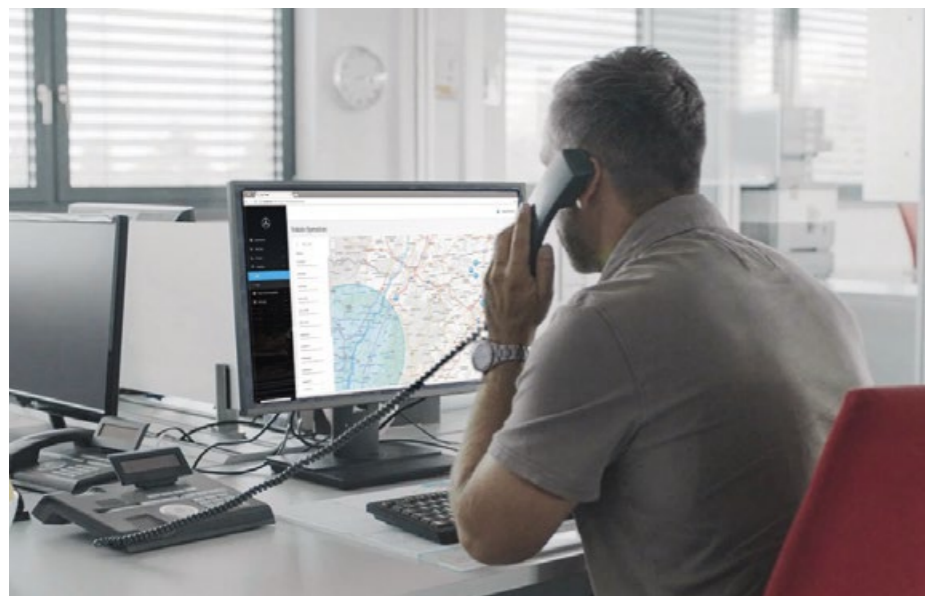
The shortage impacts not only logistics companies but also retail, manufacturing and other sectors reliant on timely deliveries

potential breaches of legal requirements. Poorly maintained vehicles are more likely to fail inspections and can be taken out of service by authorities, further exacerbating the shortage problem.

The shortage also complicates record-keeping and monitoring. Ensuring that all drivers' hours and maintenance records are up-to-date and accurate becomes more challenging when the workforce is stretched thin, especially where transport managers and directors are required to drive to plug gaps in the workforce. Any lapses in documentation can lead to compliance issues during audits and inspections. Transport operators must, therefore, invest in robust systems to manage compliance, even as they navigate the complexities of the driver shortage.

We also see an increased use of self-employed drivers by transport businesses as the recruitment of PAYE drivers becomes more difficult. Both HMRC and

Above: Poorly maintained vehicles are more likely to fail inspections and can be taken out of service by authorities



Above: Ensuring that all drivers' hours and maintenance records are up-to-date and accurate becomes more challenging when the workforce is stretched

the Office of the Traffic Commissioner have stated that commercial vehicle drivers can only be self-employed if they provide their own vehicle and hold their own operator licence.

The effects of the driver shortage extend beyond the transport sector, impacting the broader business community. Most notably, this is manifested in supply chain disruptions. Delays in deliveries affect retailers, manufacturers, and various other industries that depend on the timely transport of goods. For example,

risk of delays, tying up capital that could be used for other investments.

The shortage also impacts international trade. The UK relies heavily on road transport for the movement of goods to and from ports. A shortage of drivers can lead to congestion and delays at ports, affecting the country's ability to trade efficiently. This can have a knock-on effect on the UK's competitiveness in the global market.

The economic ramifications are not limited to direct costs. Inefficiencies and delays can also lead to potential losses in business opportunities. Companies may find it challenging to expand or enter new markets if they cannot guarantee reliable delivery services, which can stifle innovation and growth within

the backlog caused by the pandemic. Government support in the form of funding and incentives for training can play a crucial role. Apprenticeship schemes and partnerships with educational institutions can help create a steady pipeline of new drivers.

Improving working conditions is another essential strategy. This can involve offering more flexible working hours, ensuring better rest facilities for long-haul drivers, and enhancing overall job satisfaction. Providing career development opportunities and creating a positive work environment can help retain drivers in the industry.

Policy changes are also necessary. The government and industry stakeholders must collaborate to create policies that support the transport sector. This could include relaxing certain regulatory requirements temporarily while ensuring safety and compliance are not compromised. Additionally, exploring options to bring back skilled drivers who left the industry due to Brexit could provide immediate relief.

Transport operators must leverage technology to improve efficiency. Advanced scheduling and route optimisation software can help better use available drivers and reduce unnecessary mileage. Implementing telematics and other monitoring tools can enhance compliance and safety, ensuring that vehicles are well-maintained and drivers adhere to working time regulations.

Engaging with industry associations and participating in collaborative initiatives can provide transport operators with additional resources and support. Sharing best practices and learning from successful strategies implemented by others in the industry can help mitigate the impact of the driver shortage. Events such as the RHA National Lorry week looks to promote the role of the driver and encourages transport operators to highlight the important role that the sector provides.

Resolving the UK's driver shortage is necessary for maintaining compliance and avoiding legal issues. Transport operators must adhere to drivers' hours regulations and vehicle maintenance schedules to prevent fines and safety risks. Investing in compliance management systems and continuous driver training is essential. Staying updated on regulatory changes through industry engagement will help ensure legal adherence. Transport companies can mitigate risks by prioritising these measures. ■

the UK economy.

How can the shortage be solved?

Addressing the driver shortage requires a comprehensive strategy that involves both immediate and long-term solutions. Recruitment and training are critical areas that need attention. Initiatives to attract new drivers into the industry must be bolstered. This includes promoting the profession to younger demographics and highlighting the career opportunities and benefits of being a professional driver.

Training programmes must be expanded and accelerated to reduce

Resolving the UK's driver shortage is necessary for maintaining compliance and avoiding legal issues

retailers may face stock shortages, leading to empty shelves and lost sales. Manufacturers might experience delays in receiving raw materials, disrupting production schedules and increasing costs.

These supply chain issues can have a cascading effect on the economy. As businesses face delays and increased costs, these are often passed on to consumers through higher prices. Inflationary pressures can arise as a result, affecting the overall economic stability. Moreover, businesses may need to hold larger inventories to mitigate the



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The FORS Emissions Calculator is designed to revolutionise the auditing and accreditation experience

FORS REVOLUTIONISES AUDITING AND ACCREDITATION EXPERIENCE

Online digital tools help transport operators on their path towards net zero

FORS has announced the launch of two online digital tools as part of its transformation programme designed to revolutionise the auditing and accreditation experience.

The FORS Audit Platform replaces an offline template developed in 2015 and supports the core Bronze audit service. The FORS Emissions Calculator provides operators with a default solution to the

new decarbonisation requirements of the FORS Standard version 7 which is effective from 2 January 2025.

The FORS Audit Platform is a new mobile-first application that digitises all of the elements of the Bronze audit. It provides a standard audit template that enables the capture of consistent data, shared reports and collaboration within and across audit providers.

The Bronze question set has been

completely revamped, supporting an objective audit experience with much clearer grading criteria. Going forward, the Bronze audit will also be much more meaningful as it now focuses specifically on regulatory and safety critical requirements.

The output report, findings and action plan informs operators on exactly what needs to be done to meet the FORS Standard and when. This encourages a

The Bronze audit will now focus specifically on regulatory and safety critical requirements

supportive and inclusive approach from all FORS Audit Providers.

Developed in association with Transport for London and Zemo Partnership, the free and easy-to-use tool aims to help operators better understand their fleet emissions, improve air quality and combat climate change.

Fully aligned to the new decarbonisation requirements of the FORS Standard, the FORS Emissions Calculator will help operators on their net zero journey and provide a recognised, consistent method of calculating and reporting well-to-wheel emissions data. It will also provide operators with the information they need to report emissions data to other organisations as part of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

Reduction information

With a detailed breakdown of fleet emissions, operators will be able to identify where best to make emission

reductions. The tool will also help inform fleet replacement decisions based on operational profile and the different vehicle power sources available.

Once the input information has been entered, the tool will calculate the total estimated tailpipe NOx (in kg), tailpipe PM (in kg), total absolute WTW GHG emissions (in tCO2e) and selected WTW GHG emissions intensities (e.g. gCO2e/km) for each set of vehicles with the same characteristics (vehicle type, propulsion type, fuel type, etc.). These will be totalled to give the estimated emissions for the entire vehicle fleet and displayed alongside the fleet total from the previous year.

Detailed analysis

Well-to-wheel (WTW) GHG emissions include both the well-to-tank (WTT) emissions from fuel or electricity production and the tank-to-wheel (TTW) emissions from vehicle use. The GHG emissions are measured in gCO2e where

GHGs other than CO2 are converted into 'CO2 equivalents', based on their Global Warming Potential (GWP) – a measure of how potent they are in terms of contributing to the greenhouse effect.

The range of inputs an operator will input, depending on their fleet composition, are:

Vehicle type, propulsion type, fuel type, fuel blend (applicable for renewable fuels including Biodiesel, Renewable Diesel (e.g. HVO) and Biomethane), fuel used, second fuel type and fuel used (applicable for diesel and hydrogen dual fuel vehicles and plug-in hybrids), emissions standard (applicable for vehicles with diesel or gas engines), typical use (applicable for vehicles with diesel or gas engines), distance travelled, number of vehicles.

It also allows for Fuels Assurance Scheme (RFAS) declaration (applicable for renewable fuels including Biodiesel, Renewable Diesel), Biomethane (compressed or liquified) and Renewable Hydrogen). ■

Below: The new FORS Emissions Calculator helps transport operators on their road to net zero





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The screenshot displays the Webfleet interface for a specific trailer. The main header shows the Webfleet logo and navigation icons. The central panel features a large image of a white truck on a road, overlaid with a circular data visualization. The left sidebar contains various icons for navigation and settings. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- TRAILER LOAD:** Shows current load (23.62 t) and current speed (68 km/h). A graph plots load and speed over time from 07:00 to 09:00.
- BRAKE PERFORMANCE:** Shows a brake performance percentage of 65.0% with a 'Passed' status.
- EBS STATUS:** Shows 'No events detected'.



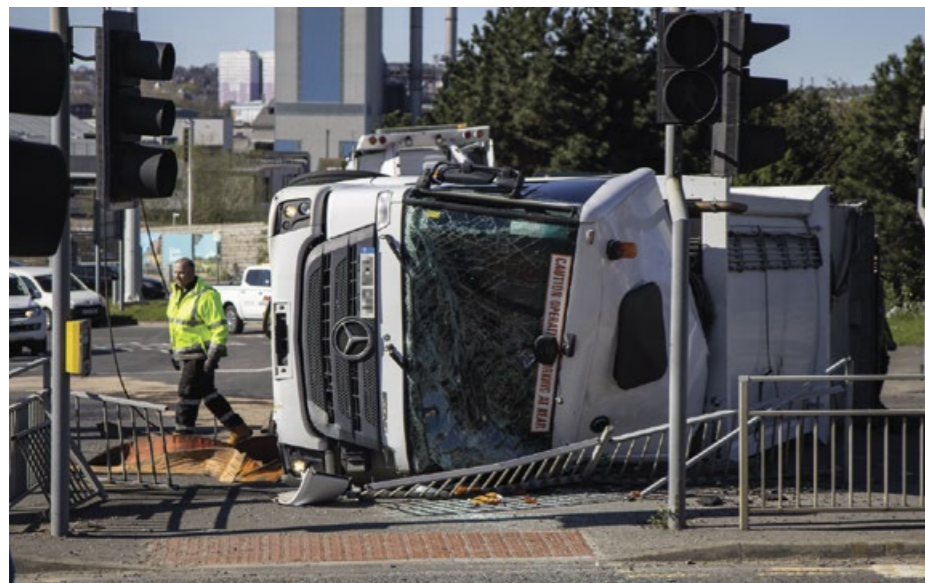
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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

SAFETY CHARITY CALLS FOR EXTRA VICTIM SUPPORT

Brake launches Road Victims Charter, demanding national standards in post-collision response



Road safety charity Brake used the recent UK Road Safety Week to launch what it calls The Road Victims Charter, turning the spotlight on the various problems faced by people after being involved in collisions.

The charter demands essential action to ensure all those affected receive the respect, support and justice they deserve. It includes a call for Government to establish national standards in post-collision response and commit to extending the rights of those impacted by road harm, regardless of where they live or whether a crime has occurred.

The charter has been written in collaboration with bereaved families, trauma consultants, support staff and professionals from across the criminal justice and medical sectors.

Road deaths and serious injuries show no significant sign of reduction for more than five years. The latest government statistics show that, in 2023, 1,695 people died on UK roads. A further 28,967 were seriously injured.

Brake has revealed that, over the same period, the charity's National Road Victim Service provided specialist emotional and practical support to

more than 1,500 families across the UK, helping them cope with their grief and navigate the complex procedures that often follow a road crash.

Support given

At any point in time, around 700 road victim families are receiving support from Brake, including parents, grandparents, siblings, friends and people who have witnessed a traumatic incident. Many of the families supported have been involved in multi-fatality incidents and around seven per cent of support cases involve the death of a child. Around 12 per cent of cases involve someone who is considered high risk or vulnerable.

Ross Moorlock, Chief Executive at Brake, said: "Road casualties are not just statistics. Behind every number is a grief-stricken family whose lives have been changed forever in an instant. The demand on our service continues to grow as road deaths and injuries show no sign of reducing. Every year, more families suffer the devastating impact of a road collision. Every year, more and more families come to us in their darkest and most difficult times.

"By comparison, at a Government

Left: Brake provided specialist emotional and practical support to more than 1,500 families in 2023

level, funding for support for road victims is inadequate – so we and other charities that support bereaved and seriously injured families rely on the generosity of other supporters to fund our vital work. We know that the right support at the right time can change the course of someone's life.

"Every road victim deserves the highest standard of support and, for that to happen, we need a co-ordinated approach and national standards that meet best practice for post-crash response. We need national, multi-year funding for the provision of support to the affected road victim community, so that every family has access to trauma-informed, face-to-face support within their community, according to their needs.

Forgotten people

"Road victims have been the forgotten and neglected victims for far too long and that has to change. Our families have told us what they want and what they need – and that includes recognition of the trauma of sudden road death and injury, parity with other victim groups, sentencing to fit the crime and lessons learned to prevent future road death and injury.

"Until we achieve a world where no-one is killed or harmed on a road, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that everyone affected by road death and injury receives the respect, support and justice they deserve."

Brake has also published the results of a public opinion survey carried out in April 2024, revealing that 79 per cent of people surveyed agree or strongly agree that families bereaved or seriously injured from a road crash should be able to access the same level of support as homicide victims. A further 74 per cent agree that they should be able to access the same level of support as victims of terrorism. ■

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At its core, the system integrates radar auto braking technology, fundamentally transforming safety outcomes. By detecting objects within its configurable danger zone, the system promptly alerts the driver with an audible warning, and should the driver fail to respond, the Reverse Smart Safety system, as a final protective measure, automatically applies the brakes bringing the vehicle to a halt for 3 seconds, safeguarding all those in the Danger area. This proactive action not only averts frequent repairs to rear light clusters, bumpers, and doors but also has life-saving capabilities.

Specifically, this auto braking feature ensures a reliable stoppage, surpassing the limitations of merely applying the park brake. This proves especially crucial in sectors where drivers contend with multiple responsibilities while reversing or manoeuvring, such as overseeing crew movement or ensuring pedestrian and road user safety. Moreover, the system's adaptability extends to forward motion, activating below a predetermined and adjustable speed threshold. For instance, in scenarios like road sweeping, where drivers need to monitor the kerb line while being conscious of their surroundings, this feature proves immensely beneficial.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collision Avoidance • Improved Safety for Vulnerable Road Users • Enhanced Driver Assistance • Reduced Rear-end Collisions • Minimized Repair Costs • Preservation of Fleet Reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life saving capabilities • Enhanced Operational Efficiency • Positive Environmental Impact • Compliance with Safety Regulations • Insurance Premium Reduction
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Considering these merits, it is strongly advocated that certain industries, including waste management with bin lorries, road sweeping, road rolling, and tar spraying, make radar auto braking technology a mandatory inclusion in their vehicle fleets. Local authorities are urged to consider and prioritize this advancement for their vehicle fleets, ensuring a safer operational environment for all.

If you would like to contact us to discuss in more detail on any of the above, you can do so by phone on [01785 714447](tel:01785 714447) or you can email sales@air-brake.com



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- **Proactive Brake Performance Monitoring:** Webfleet Trailer's Electronic Brake Performance Monitoring System (EBPMS) continuously monitors your trailer's braking system, providing real-time data and generating reports to ensure compliance with DVSA regulations. This

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- **Enhanced Safety Features:** Beyond braking, Webfleet Trailer offers comprehensive safety features. Set geofences to monitor trailer locations, receive alerts for unauthorised movements, and identify potential theft. By understanding your trailers' behaviour, you can take proactive steps to protect your assets.

STREAMLINE OPERATIONS AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

- **Reduce Downtime with Real-Time Data:** With Webfleet Trailer, you can reduce downtime by scheduling maintenance based on real-time data. Automatic coupling detection simplifies operations and improves efficiency.
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BE PREPARED – AND KEEP MOVING SAFELY THIS WINTER

FORS provides some timely advice for drivers to keep Britain moving – and safe – as the bad weather hits us

Checking the weather forecast for warnings will allow drivers and managers to plan around every weather

It is the responsibility of a driver to make allowance for severe weather. Following the simple steps here can help ensure their own safety and that of other road users. There are three key points to be considered:

- Check the forecast
- Check the vehicle
- Plan for hazardous conditions

Checking the weather forecasts for warnings will allow drivers and managers to plan around the severe weather and pre-warn customers of delays. The Met Office (www.metoffice.gov.uk) produces alerts for high-sided and vulnerable vehicles.

Drivers can help by informing their managers and customers in advance that journey times may be affected by bad weather.

Planning ahead and knowing approximate journey times is essential during winter. Drivers should plan their routes in detail, identify any potential hazards and determine where they will stop for rest breaks.

Thorough vehicle checks are essential throughout the year, but pay particular attention to the following checks during bad weather:

- Worn tyres reduce starting traction by 30–50 per cent. It is good practice not to allow tyre tread depth to get below 3mm. The legal limit for HGV/PSV (vehicles over 3.5 tonne maximum authorised mass) is 1mm and 1.6mm for vans/cars/minibuses (vehicles

under 3.5 tonne maximum authorised mass).

- Check that the brake lines are not frozen and, if defrosted, have not split.
- Windows, windscreen wipers and mirrors should be cleared of snow and cleaned to ensure good visibility. Check windscreen wipers are working correctly to maximise visibility in poor weather conditions.
- Ensure that the vehicle's fluids (water, oil, power steering fluid, brake fluid, anti-freeze fluid, windscreen wiper fluid and AdBlue) are topped up.
- Check the vehicle's exhaust system to make sure it is clear of snow.
- Remove as much snow as possible from the vehicle's windows, lights, registration plates and doors using a long, clean, non-abrasive snow broom.

Equipment must-haves:

- De-icer and an ice scraper. It is a legal requirement to ensure front and rear windscreens are clear of snow and ice before driving.
- Carry warm clothing including boots, hat and gloves and consider packing a blanket too.
- Don't rely on the torch on a mobile phone – carry a spare torch.
- A shovel and a bag of sand or salt. Some minor roads are not treated during severe weather conditions and therefore it's easy for a vehicle to get stuck.
- Road atlas in case the sat-nav doesn't



Make sure all screens are clear and free from ice and snow

harshly can unsettle the vehicle, leading to loss of control.

- In snow and ice, stopping distances can increase by as much as 10 times compared to good conditions.
- Plan alternative routes. Have a back-up route planned to any destination.
- Black ice is invisible to the eye. In freezing conditions, it can form without warning.
- Heavy rain will limit visibility and double the stopping distance. Keep well back from the vehicle in front. If the steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means that water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- Anticipate what other drivers might do.

Driving in fog

- Headlights must be used when visibility is seriously reduced. This is generally when drivers cannot see for more than 100 metres ahead (328 feet).
- Using front and rear fog lights can help keep a safe distance from the vehicle in. Remember to switch them off when visibility improves.

When driving in fog, drivers should:

- Be able to pull up well within the distance they can see clearly. This is particularly important on motorways and dual carriageways as vehicles are travelling faster.
- Use windscreen wipers and demisters.

- work.
- Extra food and drink. Essential in case of being stranded for a long period of time.
 - Carry an in-vehicle charger – in the event a mobile phone runs out of battery.
 - Consider carrying a portable battery/charging bank.

Driving in icy conditions

- When making deliveries or planned stops in snow and ice, stepping out

of a vehicle, drivers should be aware that they may be stepping out onto a slippery surface, so must take a extra few seconds to familiarise themselves with their surroundings. Passengers should ensure they disembark from the vehicle in a safe area where possible and be made aware of the conditions around them.

- One of the most important actions to take when driving in snow or icy conditions is to reduce speed.
- Braking, accelerating or turning



Leave a sufficient gap between vehicles for an emergency stop

Drivers can help by informing their managers and customers in advance that journey times may be affected

- Beware of other drivers not using headlights.
- Not accelerate to get away from a vehicle which is following too closely.
- Check mirrors before slowing down or apply the brakes.
- Stop in the correct position at a junction with limited visibility and listen for traffic. When it is safe to emerge, do so confidently and do not hesitate in a position that puts the driver directly in the path of approaching vehicles.

Driving in windy conditions

- High-sided vehicles are vulnerable to strong gusts of wind, which can even overturn them. When driving on bridges or viaducts, the effect of the wind can be even greater.
- Drivers of vehicles that are high sided should be cautious when unladen as the wind will affect the vehicle more.
- With a curtain sided trailer that is empty, curtains should be tied securely to lessen the effect as the wind will pass through the empty trailer.
- Plan journeys and look out for road and bridge closures that affect high-sided vehicles such as large HGVs, large coaches and double decker buses.

Driving in floods

- Assess the depth before attempting to drive through any standing water. Avoid driving through water more than four inches deep. When a road that is flooded has water that seems to be moving, do not drive through it.
- If safe to do so, approach the flooded area at 1-2 miles per hour and then build up to 3-6 miles per hour in order to create a ripple effect, displacing some of the water.
- If it is safe, drive through the centre part of the road as this will be slightly higher than the edges.
- Dry the brakes. This can be done by gently applying them at low speed. The friction will create heat and dry them out. ■



Worn tyres reduce starting traction by 30-50 per cent

FORS REACHES OUT TO OWNER VAN DRIVERS

New Bronze audit aims to raise the standards in this hard-to-reach sector



FORS is turning the spotlight on owner van drivers in a bid to spread its message of safety, efficiency and environmental awareness even further.

The move is aimed at driving up standards in this relatively hard-to-reach sector.

Key to the move is a FORS Bronze audit to suit owner van drivers. While van operations are regulated, the requirement to evidence compliance, conduct checks, undertake training and retain records is less stringent than for

businesses operating under O-Licence conditions. The FORS Bronze audit includes management responsibilities, driver competence and fitness, vehicle roadworthiness and operational management.

A dedicated toolkit has been developed to assist owner van drivers in preparing for audit. Once registered, FORS provides access to the extensive FORS Professional training portfolio as well as further benefits and incentives from FORS events and partner offers.

FORS has already engaged with leading

Above: FORS is expected to gain traction with self-employed owner van drivers more widely

courier and parcel delivery specialist Cargo2Go via the Transport Exchange Group – where business is shared among self-employed van drivers and where FORS is now in place to serve as a best practice requirement. Van operators are invited to adopt FORS, after which, accreditation will be viewed by the courier and parcel delivery companies as an advantage in earning new business.

Right: The FORS Bronze audit is aimed at driving up standards in this relatively hard-to-reach sector

Following a successful roll-out of this new route to accreditation, FORS is expected to gain traction with self-employed owner van drivers more widely, encompassing last mile parcel deliveries and tradespeople representing a diverse range of professions. Today, some 4.5 million vans are registered in the UK – over 50 per cent of them registered to individuals. With the growth in eCommerce, increasing numbers of owner van drivers are fulfilling urban and last-mile deliveries. The market is competitive and with many owner van drivers wanting to differentiate and gain recognition as a good operator, FORS is there to provide relevant accreditation.

Geraint Davies, Concession Director at FORS, said: “Following our assessment of owner van driver operations, we identified a market gap in the availability of resources, information and training for this growth sector. Over the past decade, fleet industry practices have developed to address some of the key safety and environmental concerns, and we found that self-employed drivers needed more targeted communications on these issues and a different approach to achieve the requirements of the FORS Standard.

“There are some excellent examples of best practice in the owner van driver sector and they are proud of the small businesses they run. Through FORS accreditation, we want to recognise these drivers and ensure potential customers are able to identify good operators in their buying decisions. We wish to make FORS easily accessible for everyone, including owner van drivers, and that’s why we’ve carefully looked at the FORS audit, support material and cost of accreditation for this vital and evolving sector.”

Richard Mosley from Roving Richard, a FORS accredited van operator, said: “After seeking to improve standards and professionalism in our small business, gaining FORS accreditation was, without a doubt, simple and beneficial. We joined to be part of a community dedicated to safety and efficiency, and we’re confident FORS will help raise the bar for the entire van industry.” ■

Right: Some 4.5 million vans are registered in the UK – over 50 per cent of them registered to individuals



Gaining FORS accreditation was, without a doubt, simple and beneficial



Words: **Steve Banner**

NEW EURO NCAP TESTS PUT TRUCKS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tractor units examined and given star ratings in bid to increase truck safety

Car and van safety assessment body Euro NCAP is targeting heavy commercial vehicles for the first time with the launch of Truck Safe. It wants to help the UK and other European countries heighten road safety and achieve Vision Zero, hopefully putting an end to traffic-related fatalities.

Tackling tractor units first, the test regime Euro NCAP is implementing puts three aspects of a vehicle under the microscope. Areas addressed by Safe Driving include how effective the driver's direct and indirect vision is, whether a driver monitoring system is in place and whether drivers are reminded to put their

seatbelts on. Collision Avoidance looks at how good the truck's ADAS is when it comes to helping drivers avoid frontal, low-speed manoeuvring, and lane change collisions. Rescue considers how easy it is to get casualties out of a badly damaged cab during the so-called 'golden hour' after a crash and the quality of the

rescue information provided by the manufacturer. A percentage score is awarded for performance during each stage and the scores are then collated to determine an overall star rating, with a maximum of five stars. The trucks were evaluated at various Euro NCAP-accredited testing facilities around Europe, including HORIBA MIRA in the UK. A CitySafe accreditation has been added over and above the star rating for vehicles that offer design features or technology that can help to prevent the sort of collisions that typically occur in congested urban thoroughfares. Dr Michiel van Ratingen, Euro NCAP's secretary general, said: "We will add passive safety – collision protection – by 2030 to further address the problem of truck-to-car crashes."

Top manufacturer
Volvo has emerged top in the first round of testing, with its FH Aero and FM both driving off with five stars.



The manufacturer was applauded by the testers for the amount of direct aid for the driver, including CMS, Camera Monitoring System. Volvo Trucks won further praise for the availability of automated braking, which will bring the vehicle to a rapid halt if it begins to swing across a cyclist's path. Both are classed as CitySafe, with Safe Driving scores of 80 per cent and 87 per cent respectively. 'Collision Avoidance' and 'Rescue' percentages were rated at 89 per cent and 80 per cent. It should be noted that every truck tested by Euro NCAP recorded an 80 per cent Rescue score.

Above: Star ratings are revealed for all truck manufacturers
Scania's R-series received three stars but it does not qualify for a CitySafe sticker. The testers said: "The vision fundamentals are good, but the end result is limited by obstructions from conventional mirrors and a CMS is not available." Safe Driving and Collision Avoidance percentages are 64 per cent and 62 per cent. DAF's XF won three stars, as well as a CitySafe accolade. The testers commented: "It achieves a Safe Driving



Volvo has emerged top in the first round of testing, with its FH Aero and FM both driving off with five stars

Renault Trucks' T has been accorded four stars, thanks primarily to what the testers describe as its 'high-quality ADAS'. Safe Driving is at 72 per cent and Collision Avoidance at 70 per cent. However, it has not been given a CitySafe rating. "The Renault would benefit from a cyclist turn-across-path function," the testers contend. Scania's G-series is viewed as CitySafe. The testers conclude that it is a 'solid performer with a balanced approach across Safe Driving and Collision Avoidance'. It garnered a four-star rating, with Safe Driving at 71 per cent and Collision Avoidance at 62 per cent.

Left: Euro NCAP is targeting heavy commercial vehicles for the first time

performance that is class-leading for a flat floor long haul cab." Safe Driving is at 85 per cent and Collision Avoidance at 35 per cent. While all the manufacturers referred to above provided trucks for assessment, MAN, Daimler Truck and Iveco did not do so. As a result, Euro NCAP felt it had no choice but to source examples of their vehicles from elsewhere. None of them were deemed to be CitySafe. MAN's TGX is categorised as a three-star performer, with Safe Driving at 56 per cent and Collision Avoidance at 60 per cent. "Euro NCAP was able to source, test and rate the latest GSR2 (General Safety Regulation 2) compliant model equipped with all the relevant safety options," the testers said. "The TGX offers a solid

three-star safety performance, well-balanced between Safe Driving and Collision Avoidance.”

Turning to Daimler Truck, Euro NCAP had to obtain a Mercedes-Benz Actros L, which was granted three stars. Euro NCAP said: “We tested and rated the most recent, well-specified vehicle obtainable – a vehicle first registered in July 2024. The manufacturer informs us that it is not representative of the safety performance of the latest generation, which only became available later in 2024.

Good range

“As tested, the Actros L offers a solid three-star safety performance. It provides a very good range of crash avoidance technologies but the performance of some of the functions was limited.” Safe Driving is assessed at 72 per cent and Collision Avoidance at 51 per cent.

Iveco’s S-Way’s Safe Driving and Collision Avoidance ratings are 32 per cent and 19 per cent. It collected one star. The testers commented: “Euro NCAP tested and rated the most recent, well-specified, vehicle available. As tested, the Iveco S-Way offers marginal direct vision and few of the ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance System) features that Euro NCAP considers in its rating.

“The manufacturer informs us that it is not representative of the safety performance of its latest generation vehicle that complies with GSR2 regulations, but first deliveries of these are not expected until later in 2024.”

While Europe’s GSR2 may not as yet be mandatory across the entire UK, the vast majority of new trucks sold here are

Trucks make up less than 1.5 per cent of vehicles, yet are involved in almost 15 per cent of all highway deaths

likely to comply with its requirements. It requires the installation of a broad assortment of safety devices, including a MOIS (Moving Off Information System) intended to eliminate the risk of a driver pulling away from rest and running over a vulnerable road user directly in front of the vehicle.

Euro NCAP insists, however, that further measures are vital, given that trucks make up less than 1.5 per cent of vehicles on Europe’s roads, yet are

involved in almost 15 per cent of all highway deaths.

Truck Safe will not be limited to tractor units. The next set of tests will encompass rigid trucks used on long-haul work and the findings will be revealed next April. The urban distribution sector will come under scrutiny next, with the results scheduled to be published in October. ■

Below: Volvo Trucks topped the Euro NCAP table for safety



Trucks line up for examination by Euro NCAP to experts

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ALLISON HELPS FLEETS TO REDUCE COSTS AND EMISSIONS

Transmission specialist offers three-way strategy to save money and help green up the planet



Left: Biffa Skips has benefited hugely by using Allison's three-pronged system

demands as well as modern fleet's fuel economy priorities. This simple adjustment costs nothing but can reduce fuel consumption and overall costs by up to three per cent.

Allison's FuelSense 2.0 is a unique transmission software and electronic controls package that delivers quantifiable fuel savings of up to six per cent without sacrificing any performance, reliability, durability or productivity.

Every 100rpm reduction in engine speed translates to a one power cent fuel cost saving

Reviewing and adapting the frequency of transmission fluid and filters replacement, waste and recycling fleets can accrue big savings. For example, Biffa has reduced truck transmission servicing costs by £200,000 per year from service schedule changes advised by Allison.

Allison determined the optimal axle settings for Mercedes-Benz Econic refuse collection trucks with 270hp, 300hp and 350hp engines. By running simulations on its iSCAAN software program, Allison identified that switching these trucks from the standard 6.84:1 axle ratio to a shallower 6.0:1 ratio, also offered by Mercedes-Benz, could reduce fuel consumption by up to three per cent.

Darren Judd, Biffa's Head of Fleet Development, said: "Every 100rpm reduction in engine speed translates to a one power cent fuel cost saving. Over a fleet of vehicles and many years, these seemingly small savings accumulate significantly." ■

Businesses and local authorities in the resource and recycling sectors can take action to reduce the running costs of their fleets while contributing to environmental goals.

Allison Transmission has developed a powertrain support programme for waste and recycling vehicle fleets that does exactly this by addressing high fuel prices and reducing tailpipe emissions. It involves three easy measures of a software upgrade, reviewing transmission service intervals and specifying different axle ratios.

The potential impact of the three-pronged package – as demonstrated via an initiative with Biffa, the UK's leading sustainable waste management business – is substantial because the de facto transmission choice for many commercial vehicle fleets operating

in the waste and recycling sector is an Allison fully automatic transmission.

The three initiatives Allison offer are:

- Retrofitting in-service diesel engine vehicles with FuelSense 2.0 transmission software. Biffa achieved fuel savings of up to nine per cent or £600,000 in diesel costs per year, which translates into by 1.6 million kilograms fewer carbon emissions, annually.
- Extending transmission servicing intervals can be achieved without compromising performance, efficiency or durability. In the case of Biffa's 1,150 Allison-equipped Dennis Eagle Elite and Mercedes-Benz Econic trucks in the UK, it saved £200,000 per year and 33,500 litres of diesel.
- When specifying new vehicles, fleets can choose different axle ratios that better suit UK roads and vocational



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STRESS: THE ILLNESS THAT STALKS BRITAIN'S TRUCKERS

One in five truckers struggle with their mental health and wellbeing, alarming new research has found.

Speaking to 500 professional drivers, fleet management specialist Samsara discovered less than half (49 per cent) are satisfied with their work-life balance and 41 per cent said they are likely to leave their job in the next 12 months.

The findings coincided with World Mental Health Day in October, an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. It was first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health, a global mental health organisation with members and contacts in more than 150 countries.

As the darker winter months set in and workload becomes heavier, many truckers find themselves working longer hours, which will in turn increase stress and mental health challenges. Samsara says there is a greater need for managers to foster supportive cultures around mental health, encouraging open discussions and necessary care.

Philip van der Wilt, senior vice president and GM EMEA at Samsara, said: "Conversations around mental health should be encouraged industry-wide, and organisations should closely monitor driving hours and support their drivers."

"Fortunately, technology can support them in doing so by monitoring driver behaviour and flagging potential hazards before they happen."

"With the right technology and open-minded approaches towards mental health discussions, we can prioritise safety and wellbeing across the industry."

Managing stress on the road

Stress is one of the leading causes of absenteeism in the workplace. In fact, 76 per cent of workers report moderate-to-high or high levels of stress and one in five

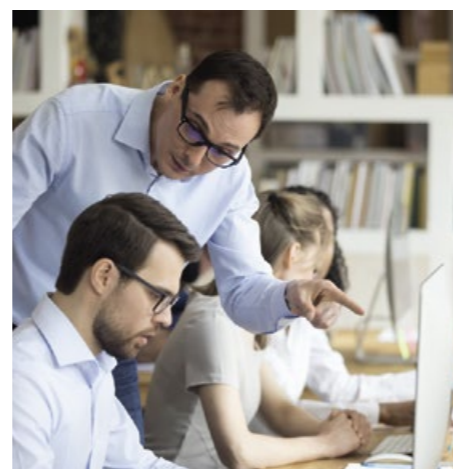
have taken time off in the past year due to stress.

For fleets, unmanaged driver stress and fatigue can have significant safety consequences – as well as impacting your business operations and productivity.

Volkswagen Financial Services (VWFS) Fleet highlighted the impact of stress on fleet drivers – and how that stress can affect their ability to drive safely. VWFS Fleet is an accredited member of Driving for Better Business, which has recently partnered with CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) to produce a toolkit and various resources that help educate organisations on managing stress levels, whether in the physical workplace or on the road.

Stress can affect people in a variety of ways. However, there are a number of common risk factors associated with driving while stressed, which can result in an increased likelihood of driving errors or accidents. These include distraction of focus. When stressed, drivers are far more likely to not be fully concentrating on the road and driving task because of other

Below: Have regular, open and honest conversations with drivers



Bottom: A stress-free environment leads to a happy workforce



things on their mind.

This often means they are not paying enough attention to their surroundings, which can increase the reaction times of responding to hazards on the road, potentially leading to incidents or collision that could have been avoided. Drivers may be operating on 'autopilot' as their focus is elsewhere.

Stress can also impact a person's ability to sleep well, so can potentially cause physical symptoms such as drowsiness and fatigue. Eating habits or a person's appetite can also be affected – again leading to physical symptoms such as nausea or dizziness.

The physical side-effects of stress can increase the risk of drivers being involved in a road incident. Furthermore, stress can increase driver aggression, which can lead to higher levels of road rage.

This can also result in increased instances of speeding and heavy braking, which not only increases risk for drivers and those around them, but also increases wear and tear on the vehicle itself.

Spotting the signs

It is important that fleet operators are able to recognise and monitor the impact of stress on their drivers. It is an employer's duty of care to ensure provisions are put in place and made available to support drivers

and help reduce their stress levels.

"We shouldn't underestimate the impact stress can have on drivers' personal wellbeing and their ability to drive safely," said Emma Loveday, senior fleet consultant at VWFS Fleet.

"By regularly checking in with drivers, offering a clear support system and harnessing the insights offered by telematics data, fleet operators can begin to spot the signs of stress and better support drivers."

Drivers may be operating on 'autopilot' as their focus is elsewhere

"On top of this, regularly reviewing driving schedules to ensure regular breaks, minimise back-to-back travel and factor in additional time for journeys to take traffic into account, can also positively impact stress levels."

"In turn, all of these measures will improve staff wellbeing, enhance safety on the road and help with feelings of stress."

There are a number of steps fleet

operators can take to prioritise driver wellbeing and reduce the safety risks that come with driving while stressed.

- Schedule regular check-ins with drivers – have regular, open and honest conversations with drivers. This will give them the opportunity to talk to you about any concerns or stresses they have, which might impact their ability to drive safely.

- Have a clear support system in place – ensure drivers have access to impartial, additional support for stress, such as an employee assistance programme. Make sure these support systems are clearly signposted.

- Monitor telematics data – where possible, use insights from telematics data or remote monitoring software to identify changes to driver behaviours that may be a leading indicator of stress, such as increased instances of harsh braking, rapid acceleration or instances of vehicles incidents and/or collisions.

- Regularly review driving schedules – take the time to assess individual driver's schedules, ensuring they aren't driving for too long without sufficient, dedicated rest periods. ■

Below: Unmanaged driver stress and fatigue can have significant safety consequences





Words: Matthew Eisenegger

The arrival of the first electric truck is a milestone not only for Welch Group but also for the decarbonisation of road freight transport in the UK

WELCH GROUP MARKS 90 YEARS WITH ELECTRIC HGV MILESTONE

Arrival of first electric heavy truck is a statement of intent for haulier

Ninety years ago, Welch Group started its journey as a small family business in Cambridgeshire. Fast forward to 2025 and as the company celebrates its 90th anniversary, it marks another significant moment of innovation with the introduction of its first fully electric 42-tonne heavy goods vehicle (eHGV) – a milestone not only for Welch Group but also for the decarbonisation of road freight transport in the UK.

In a flurry of firsts, FORS operator Welch Group's Renault Trucks E-Tech T 4x2 is the first eHGV on the road for the eFREIGHT 2030 consortium, part of the Government's Zero Emission HGV and Infrastructure Demonstrator (ZEHID) Programme that is funded by the

Department for Transport and delivered in partnership with Innovate UK.

It is also the first deployment of a Renault Trucks E-Tech T in UK customer operation. Following its arrival in October, the truck went straight to work and has already been proving its worth in real-world applications.

Equipped with six 90 kWh batteries and three electric motors, the Renault E-Tech T delivers an impressive 490kW of continuous power and a torque of 2,400Nm. And crucially, it achieves this with zero tailpipe emissions. A second E-Tech T will join the company's 80-strong fleet in the coming weeks.

For Chris Welch, the group's Managing Director, the focus is on the practical benefits, especially the increased capacity of the fully electric HGV.

"Significantly, our new Renault E-Tech T allows us to offer 26 pallet loads to be transported net zero, whereas previously we could do just 14 in a single delivery. This makes the 100% electric option much more cost effective for customers to consider."

Statement of intent

Operating an eHGV isn't just about cutting emissions, it's also a clear statement of intent that resonates with eco-conscious customers which is already bearing fruit for The Welch Group, further strengthening collaborations with prestigious clients. The company has invested significantly in upskilling its technical team and retooling its truck and van centre to handle the maintenance and repair of

these sophisticated electric vehicles. This expertise extends beyond their own fleet, with the company now offering specialized electric HGV repair and maintenance services to other operators transitioning to zero-emission vehicles.

Aaron Makinson, Warehouse and Storage Manager for British Antarctic Survey, praised the collaboration: "BAS has worked with Welch's for many years to support our logistics operations. We are excited to collaborate with a haulier that is making significant strides towards sustainability."

The partnership demonstrates how sustainable logistics can support crucial scientific research, with the electric HGV transporting everything from heavy plant equipment to everyday necessities required for Antarctic expeditions.

For Welch Group, a family-owned business that has been operating since 1934, this innovation represents both a continuation of their legacy and a bold step into the future. "We've developed our logistics services in line with our customers' needs for 90 years now and will continue to adapt and support their business goals into the future," notes Welch. "It's quite a privilege to help organisations like BAS, who exist to research how our planet can be more sustainable."

Sustainable logistics

The company's commitment to sustainable logistics extends beyond individual projects. As part of the eFREIGHT 2030 consortium, which is introducing 100 eHGV tractor units and 32 new charging locations over a multi-year real world evaluation, The Welch Group is actively involved in pushing the boundaries of what's possible within the SME environment. The company's success in implementing electric HGV technology demonstrates that zero-emission freight is not just an aspiration but a practical reality for the transport industry.

From its headquarters in Duxford, Cambridgeshire, Welch Group continues to expand its comprehensive range of services, including general haulage, pallet distribution across the UK and Europe, dangerous goods movements, warehousing and eCommerce fulfilment. The pioneering work with electric HGVs represents a significant step forward in the industry's transition to sustainable logistics.

For Welch and his team, it's all in a day's work – but for the rest of the industry, it's real-world proof that sustainability and operational efficiency can, indeed, go hand in hand. ■



Above: The new electric truck gets a top-up from its driver

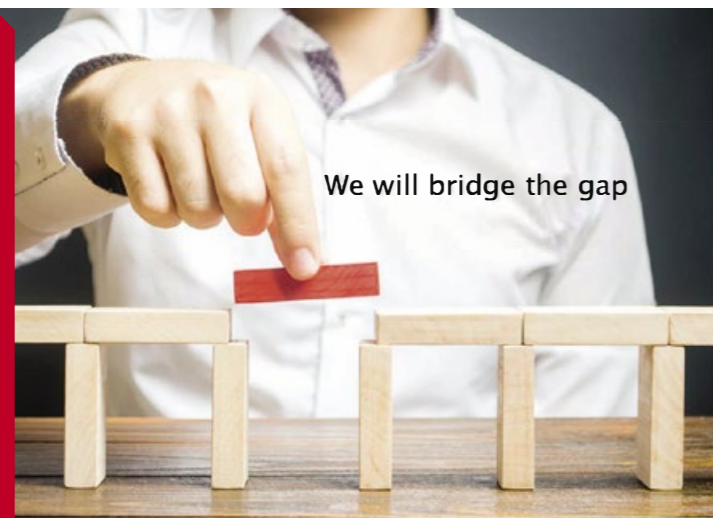


Our new Renault E-Tech T vehicles allow us to offer 26 pallet loads to be transported net zero

Left: Chris Welch, Managing Director, The Welch Group

Below: The firm proudly shows off its commitment to zero emission transport





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FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION: MAKING ROAD SAFETY A REALITY FOR UK FLEETS

As the heartbeat of UK road transport, fleet operators play a pivotal role in keeping our roads safe

Road safety isn't just a priority, it's a proactive commitment to protecting drivers, vehicles and the wider community. Today, the focus isn't only on mitigating risks as they occur, but on using advanced telematics and maintenance tools to prevent these risks from arising in the first place.

One of the key ways fleet operators can strengthen road safety is through diligent vehicle maintenance. In a busy fleet environment, it's easy for scheduled maintenance to fall behind.

However, integrated telematics solutions are making it easier than ever to keep up with these schedules.

Webfleet for example, Bridgestone's fleet management solution, allows managers to plan maintenance using real mileage data from each vehicle's odometer. This ensures services are scheduled at the ideal time, reducing the chance of costly breakdowns and potential accidents caused by mechanical faults.

Fleet management dashboards also offer at-a-glance maintenance reports, providing full visibility over a fleet's needs, with the ability to manage tasks across all vehicles and track service intervals in one place.

A preventative approach is equally crucial to keeping vehicles roadworthy.

Diagnostic tools can pull engine fault codes directly from fleet vehicles, alerting managers to issues in real-time. Whether managers are at their desks or on the move, they can receive alerts, enabling them to schedule necessary repairs immediately.

Tyre safety, a frequently overlooked yet vital aspect of road safety, is another area where telematics solutions are proving invaluable. Bridgestone Mobility Solutions has integrated a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) within Webfleet. Sensors constantly monitor tyre temperature and pressure, preventing potential blowouts and improving vehicle handling to keep drivers and other road users safe.

Fleet operators are uniquely positioned to shape safer roads

Video telematics takes safety to the next level

Webfleet Video uses connected dashcams equipped with AI and machine vision to monitor driver behaviour actively. This technology identifies risky behaviour such as distraction or fatigue and alerts drivers in real-time, encouraging self-correction. The cameras also capture footage that can exonerate drivers following incidents, reinforcing accountability and enabling a proactive approach to road safety.

The tangible impact of these technologies is clear. Since adopting Webfleet, Svella Connect has seen a 40 per cent reduction in accidents thanks to the insights and safety features that Webfleet provides.

Fleet operators are uniquely positioned to shape safer roads, and with the right tools and commitment, road safety can truly become a core pillar of fleet management. ■

Left: A preventative approach is equally crucial to keeping vehicles roadworthy





Vans and Light Commercials

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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Left: Behind every truck, van and trailer on the road, there's a Sapphire workshop ensuring it's running at its best

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At Sapphire Vehicle Services, we're committed to reducing our carbon footprint and helping our customers do the same. We're actively implementing sustainable practices like using electric forklifts and partnering with innovative companies like SunSwap to facilitate the transition to greener fuels.

We're at the forefront of helping our customers reduce their carbon emissions too, partnering with innovative companies like SunSwap to facilitate the transition to greener fuels. SunSwap's Endurance unit, powered by batteries

Sapphire Vehicle Services offers a variety of services designed to take the hassle out of managing your fleet of commercial vehicles. Whether you're a new business just getting started or an established company looking for a more efficient way to manage your fleet, Sapphire Vehicle Services is here to help.

Depot spotlight – Faverdale Darlington

Our Faverdale depot, your trusted DVSA-approved tachograph agent, provides a full suite of commercial vehicle services including MOTs, accident repairs, breakdown and recovery, parts for trucks, trailers, and vans. Our impressive 99.27 per cent first-time MOT pass rate speaks volumes to our commitment to quality and reducing your VOR downtime.

Dean Greaves, VMU manager, said: "Behind every truck, van and trailer on the road, there's a Sapphire workshop ensuring it's running at its best. We're

Right: Our Faverdale depot provides a full suite of commercial vehicle services



We're proud of our reputation for excellence, even among those who may not yet know our name

and solar energy, is revolutionising refrigerated transport by offering a zero-tailpipe emission solution without compromising performance. Sapphire Vehicle Services is proud to be a key player in deploying this technology and guiding our customers toward a net-zero future. ■

■ **To find out more about any of our services at Sapphire Vehicle Services, please get touch on 01530 274700 or visit www.sapphirevs.com**



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