

## Time for new rigour on vehicle emissions

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With the VW scandal dominating the headlines, as we go to press transport engineers are wondering why one of the planet's giants of engineering could have allowed software to cheat emissions tests. They might also wonder how much more than the £4.7 billion VW has set aside this is likely to cost the company when lawyers around the world get stuck in. Current estimates top £11.5 billion in US Environmental Protection Agency fines alone.

Closer to home, people could be forgiven for speculating that other manufacturers might have taken similar courses, and be 'fixing' NOx and particulates emissions tests to improve fuel efficiencies. If so, that could backfire big time not only on companies concerned (and human health), but transport as a whole, gifting the anti-diesel lobby ammunition. It could also decimate fleets' residual values.

What about light commercial vehicle makers, too? And heavy-duty truck and engine manufacturers? As yet, there is no suggestion that any are implicated. It's also fair to say that emissions testing on CVs, certainly in Europe, is tightly controlled. Indeed, Euro 6 trucks will be required to prove compliance in operation for a full seven years via ODB (onboard diagnostics). Not so for Euro 5 and earlier though...

Speculation aside, VW's woes should also shine the spotlight on the relevance of current vehicle emission testing, based, as it is, on the world harmonised transient cycle. As TRL principal consultant Tim Barlow puts it, today's testing methods are "outdated and offer room for error or optimisation". He and many others in transport are pushing for a better test regime based on much more realistic duty cycles, or even emissions recorded from vehicles on the road.

If any good is to come out of this sorry saga, it is to be hoped that the EC revisits emission testing as a matter of urgency. The industry needs to regain the confidence of operators and the public.

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