



LONDON HAULING

FORS, CLOCS, SLS and LEZ: Brian Weatherley spells-out London's safety and emissions acronyms, and examines their future for transport tenders

Where London leads today, on operator recognition and road safety schemes, other major cities are likely to follow - and soon. Why? First, because TfL's (Transport for London) programmes provide proven templates for other metropolitan authorities. Secondly, no one wants multiple, competing standards and accreditations. And thirdly, major contractors and suppliers don't recognise city boundaries, so will implement their standards everywhere.

So let's recap on London's current schemes. TfL's Safer Lorry Scheme (SLS) was introduced last September and requires vehicles over 3.5 tonnes to be fitted with Class V and VI mirrors, plus sideguards, if operated within London's low emission zone (LEZ).

While applicable to all HGVs, its target is construction vehicles - regularly cited by TfL as being involved in a

disproportionate number of collisions with cyclists.

The SLS is enforced by the police and DVSA (Driver Vehicle Standards Agency). Drivers caught with non-compliant vehicles can be issued with a £50 fixed penalty notice. The offence also carries a potential fine of £1,000 at magistrate's court. Equally important, the traffic commissioners will be notified of companies operating

vehicles in breach of the SLS.

"I'd see an SLS fixed penalty as the same as one picked up at a DVSA roadside inspection, or issued by the police for speeding," advises Andrew Woolfall, director at transport lawyer Backhouse Jones. "The traffic commissioners would want to know about the matter, because it may well impact on the operator... Why was a non-compliant vehicle sent into



London? They may also be interested in the operator's systems and procedures for managing vehicles and their maintenance."

In reality, the fitment of front projection and kerbside close proximity mirrors on trucks entering the LEZ is hardly a chore when so many have them anyway. Equally, the old argument against sideguards on mixers and tippers based on ground clearance is irrelevant in urban environments on made up roads. However, London mayor Boris Johnson is also looking to build on the existing SLS, suggesting trucks in London be mandated to fit additional lower glass panels in nearside doors.

ULTRA LOW EMISSIONS

Moving on, London's LEZ, established in 2008, requires HGVs and PSVs to meet at least Euro 4 emissions limits on particulates if they're to avoid charges. From September 2020, TfL wants to introduce an ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ), based on Euro 6 engines. The ULEZ will cover the same area as the Congestion Charge zone, which is smaller than the existing LEZ. As we go to press, there are no plans to amend the existing LEZ standard - although with a mayoral election this year, that could yet change.

Meanwhile, the Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety scheme (CLOCS) was born out of a TRL (Transport Research Laboratory) report into HGV and cyclist collisions, commissioned by TfL and published in February 2013. The report highlighted issues including blind spots on construction vehicles.

Driven by a requirement to reduce numbers of HGV on cycle collisions in London, TfL launched the CLOCS



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standard, based around inputs from three stakeholder groups: vehicle manufacturers, operators and construction companies. Together these examined safety issues ranging from improving direct vision for drivers to creating best practice guides and toolkits to drive change - including accident reporting systems, and road risk management and driver training schemes.

Among CLOCS' key outcomes have been steps taken by vehicle manufacturers (and dealers) to develop cycle-friendly construction trucks, with extra side windows in passenger doors, lowered cabs and side sensors. Likewise,

low-entry chassis cabs (hitherto used only on refuse collection vehicles) are slowly being adapted for tipper, mixer and urban delivery work.

Late last year TfL commissioned TRL to develop a common standard for cycle-safe HGVs, based on improved direct vision. This standard is due to be revealed at the March CLOCS seminar, and is understood to involve a grading system so that operators can benchmark truck models and driver vision devices, thereby aiding purchasing decisions.

Linked to CLOCS, the voluntary Freight Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) started out as a TfL-owned project. However, last year the FORS concession was awarded to a FORS Community Partnership (FCP), consisting of consultancy AECOM, the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport and fleet services support company Fleet Source. FCP administers FORS, working to standards set by the FORS governance and standards advisory group (GSAG), whose membership includes vehicle operators, trade associations, public authorities and TfL.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARD

Four primary aspects are assessed for FORS: management, vehicles, drivers and operations. Its three levels of accreditation - bronze, silver and gold - are designed to affirm and improve fleets' professional standards, compliance and best practice. Operators are independently audited and accreditation has to be renewed annually. It can also be withdrawn for breaches. "Since taking over the concession we've suspended or terminated six organisations for breaches of the FORS requirements,"

says a FCP spokesperson.

As of January, 3,650 operators were FORS accredited – up by 33% on the same period in 2015 – and comprising 3,148 bronze, 378 silver and 124 gold standard. Having originally been developed for operators running in London, FORS accreditation is now available nationwide. Currently, two thirds of FORS members are non-London based, with more running FORS vehicles on non-London work.

Indeed, one of the interesting aspects of CLOCS and FORS is that operators are now seeing them as standard requirements in large customer tenders. “FORS is used by contract specifiers to ensure the safest and most efficient fleets are used in their supply chains,” explains our FCP man. “In specifying FORS silver, for example, organisations know that their operators are aligned with the requirements of the CLOCS standard and also TfL’s work-



previously exempt vehicles, such as tippers, skip lorries, mixers and grab lorries, was challenging to enforce, but we succeeded. This single item of safety kit has delivered immeasurable benefits. We’ll never know how many vulnerable road users have avoided death or serious injury.”

Working with its principal contractors, Crossrail’s logistics team certainly showed that work-related road safety schemes can be implemented on large projects. “There’s now a fast-growing requirement in construction to demonstrate road safety credentials, and take these into consideration as part of the tendering and contract award process,” enthuses Heduan. “For many companies that implemented Crossrail’s requirements back in 2010, it’s given them a competitive advantage, driving up standards among the competition.”

related road risk [WRRR] requirements.”

Mick Heduan MBE, Crossrail’s driver training and vehicle safety programme manager, believes CLOCS, FORS and the SLS are making a difference. “In April 2010, Crossrail published its driver and vehicle safety standards as part of the works information requirements that applied to contracts at all tiers in every supply chain,” he recalls. “The minimum standards required 20 items of safety kit, setting a very high benchmark that still exists today – at least Bronze FORS and all frequent HGV drivers attending our one-day CPC course.”

SAFETY FIRST

All requirements are continuously checked to maintain contract safety standards and uphold vehicle compliance levels. “Key items of safety kit that made a direct contribution to the safety of vulnerable road users include blind spot detection systems, external turning alerts, blind spot mirrors, the Fresnel lens, cyclist warning stickers and fitting side underrun guards.”

That last item is critical, he insists. “Fitting side underrun guards to



Where to get the facts

- Safer Lorry Scheme: tfl.gov.uk/info-for/freight/safer-lorry-scheme
- London Ultra Low Emission Zone: tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone
- Freight Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS): fors-online.org.uk/cms
- Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety scheme (CLOCS): clocs.org.uk/
- TfL WRRR requirements: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/work-related-road-risk-requirements.pdf>