

Wider and DEEPER

The originally London-based FORS and CLOCS schemes are spreading their wings nationwide. Brian Weatherley looks at developments

Last year saw changes to FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) and CLOCS (now Construction Logistics and Community Safety). While both were instigated by TfL, today they are standalone, with a remit to spread best practice, compliance and safe operation throughout Britain. And, despite remaining voluntary, operators bidding for work on major construction projects or delivering into urban areas are increasingly finding FORS and CLOCS contractual requirements.

Last September, a new FORS standard (version 4.0) was unveiled, which - while continuing the bronze, silver and gold ratings - included revisions on emissions

recording, driver licence checks and noise assessments. Why? "They're in line with the principles of the UK accreditation service," explains FORS concession director John Hix, adding that FORS runs on a two-year updating cycle.

In detail, silver and gold FORS members now have a new NOx reporting requirement, with calculations based on Euro emissions standards and a weighted average drawn against the national fleet profile, according to DfT HGV and LGV statistics. Hix points to a "simple tool" on FORS Online that calculates the required data. And for operators wanting to extend their green footprint, NOx recording is an obvious route.

On driver licence checking, updates



are more subtle. Under section D1, Hix confirms that operators must now ensure that licences and qualifications for all drivers (including agency) are checked using a risk-based system that accesses the DVLA database. This has to be done prior to driving and then at least every six months. It applies to bronze, silver and gold members.

Furthermore, gold FORS members are now required to assess the impact of noise created by their operations and review mitigation opportunities. "We're looking for a simple assessment ... and the actions being taken to reduce them, if needed," explains Hix. Useful resources include the Noise Abatement Society, DfT and TfL websites.

Is FORS membership still worth the effort? For time-critical UK and European transport operator OSE European, the answer is 'certainly'. "It shows we operate at a particularly high level," comments sales executive Jamie McTeer. "Plus, our customers are becoming increasingly interested in knowing whether we're FORS members before they allow us to deliver to certain sites. The fact that we





are shows we take safety seriously – and that immediately reduces competition.”

Mcteer reports the same positives from working to CLOCS standards. “It’s also highly marketable, and allows us to work on CLOCS-only sites. Hauliers have a duty of care to ensure drivers are operating safely, and our service is better and safer as a result of joining.”

Last October, TfL strengthened CLOCS management by entering into a partnership led by the South East Centre for Built Environment (SECBE), the regional partner for Constructing Excellence, together with the Construction Clients Leadership Group, LHC, Build UK and the Considerate Constructors Scheme. The predominance of construction groups makes sense given the original focus for CLOCS – although it has since expanded to encompass distribution fleets.

CLOCS, as redefined, deletes the old reference to cyclists. Why? “It’s about all vulnerable road users, not just cyclists,” asserts SECBE chief executive Derek Rees. That’s a point well made considering that TfL’s 2015 road accident

report shows pedestrian casualties outnumbering those for cyclists.

Above all, however, the new partnership’s job is to spread CLOCS. “It’s now being positioned as a national standard,” confirms Rees. Every alternate CLOCS working group meeting is now held in a city outside London. Last December, Manchester played host; in May it will be Birmingham’s turn; and then Cardiff’s. Indeed, Rees says the team is targeting 33 UK cities as CLOCS zones.

Again the strategy makes sense. As the populations of these cities grows, they’re likely to see more construction. “And the more construction, the more HGV traffic,” says Rees. “So you’re going to have a perfect storm of more vulnerable road users and more construction traffic.”

Encouraged by London’s success in modal shift, cities such as Manchester are also looking to get more people out of cars and on to bikes or the pavement. “They’re talking about moving up from two to 10% of non-vehicular journeys,” reports Rees. “That’s a five-fold increase.”

However, Rees is adamant that being a CLOCS champion shouldn’t just be about spec’ing cycle- or pedestrian-friendly trucks. Or driver training. Or stepping-up road risk awareness. There must also be regular checks to ensure that operators stick to the CLOCS standard.

This will be checked. The Considerate Construction Scheme has already revised its code of practice. Its 140 monitors, who carry out 15,000 visits annually to the 5,000-plus CCS sites, now have CLOCS compliance on their checklists.

Meanwhile, along with targeting large metropolitan authorities, Rees wants CLOCS championed to more developers and contractors, not just truck fleets. “Collaboration is the core message,” he insists. “Action is needed both by the fleet side and the construction side. If only one side does their bit we’ll make slow progress, but if we do it together we’ll make great progress.”

There are currently 370 CLOCS champions and Rees wants more by the end of 2017. “We’ve had 130 join in the last eight months. I’d like to see us at 500. But, whatever the number, if all our champions are proactively living CLOCS every day, it makes good business sense.”

Summing up the next 12 months, Rees says: “CLOCS is about clients and contractors fulfilling their ethical and statutory duties to protect their workforces and local communities. It’s about national adoption by as many major cities as possible. And it’s getting the basic data to persuade cities who say, ‘We haven’t had that many people killed yet’, that the problem is coming. Don’t wait.” **TE**

Direct Vision standard

Last September TfL unveiled its Direct Vision Standard (DVS), based on a zero- to five-star rating for construction trucks and other HGVs working in London. The object was to categorise the degree of vision drivers have directly from a cab. Under the proposals, those with a ‘zero’ rating will be banned from London’s streets from January 2020, while only those with three stars or more (classified as a good/high rating) will be allowed on London’s roads by 2024.

DVS will go through a three-phase consultation process. TfL is currently discussing technical aspects with vehicle manufacturers so that workable ratings can be identified. An initial phase of consultation has already started, aiming to seek views and better understand potential impacts of the scheme. It ends on 18 April 2017. This will be followed by a full policy consultation later in the year with statutory consultation conducted thereafter.

No DVS legislation is expected before 2020. To participate in the DVS consultation, visit <http://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/direct-vision-standard-phase-1>.