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REGULATORY

Inclusive transport strategy

The needs of disabled travellers have been promoted in DfT's Inclusive Transport Strategy, published on 25 July 2018. In addition, DVSA has reminded coach operators of their responsibilities concerning passengers with disabilities. They should ensure that wheelchair users can use any available wheelchair spaces and not require passengers who use wheelchairs to book any further in advance than passengers who do not. The DVSA will not hesitate to take action against lawbreakers.

Which ATF?

A dangerous goods vehicle certification form (VTG15) functions as proof of compliance for drivers. The choice of authorised testing facility (ATF) for the truck is also important. A green ATF should be used if the vehicle is declared purged and safe for inspection. An amber ATF should be used if the vehicle has transported certain 'UN' products (some require certain control measures) and is not declared purged. Finally, those carrying any other dangerous substance not listed in amber rules must go to a red ATF.

EU exit preparations

On 19 July 2018, new legislation on cross-border haulage was given Royal Assent. This should help to provide the UK with the relevant powers to enable British hauliers to continue operating internationally post-Brexit. Although reciprocal access for road hauliers is the overall aim of the government, a permitting system may still actually be required. A legal framework would be necessary in order to introduce a new administrative structure. The Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act allows the government to have this flexibility and is intended to help provide a smooth exit from the EU for Britain. A permit administration scheme and a trailer registration scheme are currently in development by the DVSA and DVLA respectively, with intention to open for applications later this year. A trailer safety report that considers whether additional trailer categories should be included in compulsory registration and roadworthiness testing is being written for publication in July 2019.

New push for roadside breathalysers

The government is committing £350,000 for a competition run by PACTS (Parliamentary

Advisory Council for Transport Safety) for companies to submit proposed technologies which will rapidly calculate the amount of ethanol in exhaled breath for use at the roadside. It is hoping to create an incentive for companies to bring to market mobile 'breathalyser' tests, offering on-the-spot proof of drink driving and ensure those guilty face swifter justice.

Sorting out smart tachos

From 15 June 2019, smart tachographs are to be made mandatory for new vehicles. The new 'Annex 1C' compliant tacho aims to reduce administrative processes and digital tachograph tampering. These 'smart tachos' will use a GPS to record the start and end location of the drivers' work, and record every three hours of driving time. In order for operators to use the 1C tachographs, they will need to update their download tools and analysis software (see also article, pp19-20).

ULEZ coming in 2019

Despite reactions from trade associations such as the Confederation of Passenger Transport and the Road Haulage Association, mayor of London Sadiq Khan has decided to introduce the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to central London a year earlier than planned. And unlike the T-charge it replaces, the rules

apply at night and weekends.

From 8 April 2019, all buses and coaches over 5t gvw, and HGVs over 3.5t, must operate Euro VI-compliant drivetrains to enter the city without charge. If not, operators will be required to pay £100.

Leeds City Council proposes clean air zone

In January 2020, buses, HGVs, taxis and diesel private hire vehicles that fail to meet the Euro VI/6 emission standards will be charged £50 per day to enter the Leeds clean air zone, in an attempt to improve air quality as quickly as possible.

Operators whose vehicles fail to meet the emissions standards will have to decide whether to pay the charge, or pass it on to customers.

The Road Haulage Association recently issued a press release highlighting its concerns for operators. It advocated an 'intelligent, phased approach' to the clean air zone rules to give operators time to upgrade their vehicles.

Accident investigation trial

The government is aiming to improve road safety by deploying investigation teams that focus on analysing the cause of road collisions by the end of the year. Along with police forces, the RAC Foundation will lead this trial into accident causes. This new approach is supported by £480,000 of public funds.