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REGULATORY

Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness

DVSA has updated and republished this essential fleet engineer's regulatory guide (<https://is.gd/yahodu>). Changes include a new design for the guide, updated walk-around check diagrams for HGV and PCVs and, finally, further information for monitoring tyre age (see p4).

Five low-emission zones in London

London mayor Sadiq Khan launched five new low emission bus zones (LEBZs) across London on 16 November to tackle the city's air pollution problem. The five zones are located between Camberwell and New Cross; Wandsworth and St John Hill; High Road Haringey to Green Lanes; Edgware Road to Maida Vale; and the A12 Eastern Avenue to Homerton Road. To be allowed to operate in these areas, buses must meet Euro VI emissions standards. More than 1,400 buses across 10 London boroughs have been replaced or retrofitted to guarantee the emissions standards are met. Khan says that 12 LEBZs will be implemented across London boroughs by 2019.

Financial standing

Every operator applying for a licence must provide evidence of their financial standing (<https://is.gd/gaxahi>). Among other things, this universal requirement promotes fair competition. If an applicant can only show the required amount at the time of its application, the licence will normally be approved with the proviso that further financial evidence be sent through at a set later date. However, if that deadline is not met, the traffic commissioner may propose to revoke the licence. In that circumstance, a number of options are open to the operator; Backhouse Jones recommends taking legal advice to obtain the best outcome.

ECMT permit lottery expectations

The DfT paper 'International Road Haulage Permits Guidance on Determining Permit Allocations' (<https://is.gd/jegoku>) has revealed that the number of European Conference Ministers of Transport (ECMT) permits, which will be necessary for hauliers to continue operating if a no-deal Brexit does occur, will be very restricted. Permits will be allocated based on criteria such as emissions



levels, the proportion of haulage that is international, the number of international journeys made and the product that is carried. However, this criteria alone is biased toward the largest businesses. As a result, DfT has said that the system for allocation will include "a weighted random element to the scoring of applications" as well as the above criteria, giving small and medium-sized businesses a fairer chance of securing a permit.

Fraud warning

A number of hauliers have been contacted by telephone by an individual claiming to be a certified High Court enforcement officer. The 'officer' gives a time for seizure of goods up to the value of a county court judgment (CCJ) entered against the company/individual, months or even years prior to receiving the call. Some time later, hauliers then receive a second call from that 'officer', explaining that if they settle for a smaller amount, the goods will not be seized. And that payment can be made immediately over the phone. This scenario is a scam. The person making these phone calls is said to be well-spoken and likely to seem credible to the uninformed individual. Of course, not

every call operators receive relating to a CCJ will be fraudulent.

If operators are not aware of court proceedings or judgments against them, then legal advice is recommended. Backhouse Jones also advises reporting the matter to Action Fraud, the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, on 0300 123 2040 or via <https://is.gd/unefeg>.

MOT reminders extended

Operators of both haulage vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles now have access to a passenger car service to help with the regulatory management of their fleet. The government's free MOT reminders system has been extended to cover these vehicle categories. It is important: the fine for driving a vehicle without a valid MOT can be up to £1,000. An operator who has registered their vehicles for this will receive a reminder by text or email (or both) two months in advance of the date when the vehicle is due for testing. If that same operator still hasn't booked the vehicle in to be tested a month before the MOT expires, then they will receive another reminder. Operators are required to unsubscribe from the scheme when they get rid of the vehicle. For more information, see <https://is.gd/xawada>.