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REGULATORY

4.25t gvw derogation

The law has changed to allow category B (passenger car) licence holders to drive alternatively-fuelled vehicles (AFVs) up to 4.25 tonnes, such as the heavy variant of the forthcoming full-electric Volkswagen eCrafter, of which right-hand-drive models are expected in 2020-2021 (pictured above). The 750kg derogation of EU Driving Licence Directive 2006/126/EC is intended for electric, natural gas, LPG, biogas or hydrogen drivetrains. It is applicable to drivers who are transporting goods, have completed at least five hours' training, are not towing a trailer and are not driving outside of Great Britain. Training must be provided by a company on the National Register of LGV instructors, or the National Vocational Driving Instructors' Register. EU drivers' hours rules, which include fitment of tachographs, do not apply to trucks under 7.5t gvw fuelled by electricity, LPG, natural gas or electricity, carrying goods within 62mi of the company base.

Have your say: PSV changes

The Department for Transport is consulting on changes to PSV licence applications and formal

tribunal rules. As regards the former, traffic commissioners can give HGV applicants temporary authority (called an interim licence) while they're waiting for the full licence to come up for approval. At the moment, this isn't available for PSV operators. The consultation looks at how this could be introduced. As regards the latter, tribunal rules are used to make sure cases get dealt with fairly and justly and to manage them. Tribunal rules also make the meetings more accessible, and will help those who are appearing before commissioners to comply with what they've been asked to do. The consultation looks at whether formal tribunal rules will be beneficial. The consultation, available via www.is.gd/zajumu, closes on 25 June.

Scotland welcomes new traffic commissioner

Claire Gilmore has become the newest team member to join the traffic commissioners after commencing her post at the beginning of March 2019. She replaces Joan Aitken (www.is.gd.ovagev). Gilmore is a solicitor and a qualified engineer. Prior to taking up the position Gilmore was the senior investigating officer at the Office of the Ethical Standards Commissioner in Scotland.

Seven ways to stay safe online

Although CV operators may understand the importance of security when it comes to vehicles and what is carried in them, online security is no less important, but perhaps less well understood. It is also arguably riskier: DVLA received more than 1,000 reports of online scams in the last part of 2018. DVLA has published the following e-safety tips:

- 1 Only use Gov.uk. Double check that you are using a Gov.uk webpage.
- 2 Ignore scam emails. The DVLA won't email you to confirm your personal details.
- 3 Beware of misleading websites. Some third party websites can mislead.
- 4 Don't ring premium rate numbers. DVLA numbers should begin with 0300 and cost the same as a local call.
- 5 Be mindful of sharing documents online. Never share images of one's driving licence and vehicle documents. This personal information could be valuable to those looking to steal the identity of a vehicle or its owner.
- 6 Delete texts. The DVLA never sends texts about vehicle tax refunds. Some scammers are texting operators with a link for credit card details; never click on these.
- 7 Report any suspected scams.

Concerns about any calls, texts, emails or suspicious online activity should be reported via Action Fraud (www.is.gd/unefeg).

Knowledge and attitude

Possession of the correct knowledge is a key element to a transport manager's role. However, having the correct attitude is important as well, according to deputy traffic commissioner Laura Thomas. A recent case that went to public inquiry found that a transport manager had acted as such "in name only". After DVSA visited the operator in September 2018, the CPC holder said he'd not been to the premises since the previous April. And, following the inspection, he did little to manage the operation. Apparently, he also thought that holding meetings about future compliance plans was sufficient to adequately discharge his duties as transport manager. But Thomas disagreed, arguing that by staying on as a transport manager in name only, he made a "clearly unravelling operator" seem legitimate. As a result, he was disqualified from working in the industry, not because of lack of knowledge, but because of his poor attitude to the job. He needed time away from performing that role to contemplate what had happened, she judged.