

Published by: The Society of Operations Engineers

President: Chris Grime IEng MSOE  
MIRTE FCILT

Chief Executive: Nick Jones FCA

The Society of Operations Engineers is a licensed member of the Engineering Council

Registered in England:  
Company No. 3667147  
Registered Charity: No.1081753  
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Registered Office: 22 Greencoat Place,  
London SW1P 1PR  
Tel: 020 7630 1111  
Fax: 020 7630 6677  
Email: soe@soe.org.uk  
www.soe.org.uk

Editor: John Challen  
Email: jchallen@findlay.co.uk

Editorial Director: Brian Tingham BSc  
CEng MInstMC FSOE FIPlantE  
Email: btingham@findlay.co.uk

Contributing Editors: John Fife,  
Dan Gilkes, John Kendall, Keith Read

Art Editors: Martin Cherry, Neil Young

Illustrations: Phil Holmes

Advertisement Manager: Craig Molloy  
Email: cmolloy@findlay.co.uk  
Tel: 01322 221144

Publisher: Peter Knutton

Transport Engineer is the official journal of IRTE.  
Produced on behalf of IRTE and The Society of Operations Engineers by Findlay Media Ltd, Hawley Mill, Hawley Road, Dartford, Kent DA2 7TJ  
Tel: 01322 221144  
Fax: 01322 221188  
www.transportengineer.org.uk

Transport Engineer is distributed free of charge to SOE members, dependent on membership sector. For non-members, the annual subscription rate (12 issues) is £66 UK and EU, or £68 airmail outside EU. For other SOE members, the discounted rate is £26.

Printed by: Holbrooks Printers Ltd,  
Portsmouth ISSN: 0020-3122

Views expressed in Transport Engineer are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Society of Operations Engineers or of Findlay Media Ltd.  
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# So what is the price of compliance in 2010?

In these litigious times it pays operators to be very, very certain that they're not exposing themselves to claims that may cost them dearly in the courts. Hence the growing numbers of transport managers sending their technicians for Driver CPC training – for those instances when they need to drive the vehicles they maintain and repair.

Nobody wants to be on the receiving end of challenges in the dock when the prosecution reveals they don't possess the certification routinely required of professional drivers. Particularly since, under European Law, the employer is every bit as liable as the driver.

Precisely the same is true of those same technicians when it comes to proving engineering competence in their primary vehicle maintenance function. They and their employers – the operators, dealerships and independent workshops – could all benefit from the safety net of independent accreditation to an industry-recognised gold standard.

Which perhaps explains why the irtec licensing scheme is seeing renewed interest, according to the IRTE. That and the coincidence of operators' ongoing drives to improve first-time MOT pass rates. Given irtec's foundation in VOSA safety inspection, it makes perfect sense to embed that knowledge in our own technicians' training – especially those concerned with vans in the 3.0 to 3.5 tonne gw range, given the latest woeful failure statistics.

Ian Chisholm, head of membership and technical services at IRTE, cites enquiries from the bus and coach industry, as well as some of the large freight operators and truck manufacturers. They look set to join some big names already putting technicians through the scheme. Names such as Allied Bakeries, Biffa Waste Services, DHL, DAF, First Bus, Geo Post, MAN Truck & Bus, Pullman Fleet, Robert Wiseman Dairies, Royal Mail, and the Fire & Rescue authorities of Merseyside, Cheshire, West Midlands and Devon & Somerset.

But these are the enlightened few. For the vast majority, there remains the sticky issue of the cost and time inevitably involved in securing irtec licences for expensive technicians.

Pity then that the Van Best Practice programme, launched late last year with £2 million from the Department for Transport, is aimed solely at driver training, not technician training. Given that vans, trucks, buses and coaches, when properly maintained, should be at peak efficiency, minimising emissions, this is a lamentable omission.

Surely in 2010, there's a clear case for irtec licensing to become a mandatory, government-funded requirement for technicians and mechanics throughout the British Isles. That would put transport engineering professionalism beyond reproach and also underpin our green credentials.

A very happy New Year to all our readers from the new Transport Engineer publishing team at Findlay Media. We hope you find your new look engineering magazine and the website at [www.transportengineer.org.uk](http://www.transportengineer.org.uk) interesting and useful – and we look forward to your feedback.

**Brian Tingham BSc CEng MInstMC FSOE FIPlantE**

