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The Society of Operations Engineers
President
Michael Sweetmore EngTech MSOE MIRTE LCGI
Chief Executive
Bruce McGill

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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
Will Dalrymple
Email: will.dalrymple@markallengroup.com

Contributing Editors
Steve Banner, John Challen,
Toby Clark, Laura Cork, Dan Gilkes,
Peter Shakespeare, Richard Simpson,
Chris Tindall, Lucy Radley, Brian Wall

Art Editor
Chris Charles

Production Manager
Nicki McKenna
Email: nicki.mckenna@markallengroup.com

Advertisement Manager
Craig Molloy
Email: craig.molloy@markallengroup.com
Tel: 01322 221144

Publisher
Jon Benson

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Back to basics

During this difficult time, we as a nation have relied on hundreds of logistics providers to keep supermarkets and pharmacies stocked with provisions. And DVSA has quite rightly smoothed the way by substantially reducing the regulatory load. In March, among other changes, drivers' hours limits were relaxed and annual vehicle tests cancelled.

It's natural that, in times of crisis, people's priorities have to shift. But that does not take away from the worth and the value of the rules established before. Decades of experience - that is, learning the hard way - has proven that if vehicles are not properly maintained they will break down. In the wrong place and the wrong time, such a breakdown could kill.

By the same token, people can only work so long without a rest, even in a dire emergency. Sooner or later they will start to make mistakes. Whether they are doctors or nurses, drivers or technicians, they must not be given too much responsibility.

So, at the moment, no less any other time in the past or future, vehicle fleet safety depends on qualified professionals carrying out good procedures in the proper manner, such as irtec technician accreditation standards. Such obligations apply whether or not DVSA is watching, and independent of the number of technicians that may have been furloughed. Unsafe vehicles should not go out on the roads; operating vehicles should be checked before use and maintained regularly.

Keeping calm and carrying on will help safeguard us all.

The Society is doing its bit by offering a three-month automatic extension of irtec licences, and providing professional review interviews via videoconferencing. Members need not wait for their competence to be recognised.



Bruce McGill
Chief Executive, SOE

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