

Saints opts for MAN's driver feedback module

Saints Transport has equipped its entire fleet of 195 MAN trucks and LCVs – from 7.5 to 44 tonnes – with MAN's EcoStyle driver and vehicle management system.

The operator has also put the MAN tracking system onto all of its 120 trailers and vans – and all units include the new driver feedback module (DFM) – a first for the UK.

DFM is an in-cab speaker that automatically alerts drivers of any instances of over-revving, undue idling time, harsh braking and so on. The driver receives a warning as he starts to infringe.

If he or she exceeds a threshold, the module records an alert onto the web-enabled MAN EcoStyle management



system at Saints HQ, just outside Heathrow, so triggering an incident review.

"The objective ... is to help drivers

understand when they are driving in a manner that affects their own performance and that of the company," states Saints Transport vice-chairman Piers Carroll.

"There are no immediate penalties for triggering an alert through the DFM. We talk each driver through what is happening and help them correct the problem, with training where needed," he continues.

"Of course, there will be times when that isn't the case... On things like over-idling, it could be down to customer circumstances.

So we need to know what else might be impacting our operations in this respect," he adds.

Shepherd Neame raises a glass to Mercedes-Benz

Britain's oldest brewer is refreshing its distribution fleet and has used the opportunity to go for its first Mercedes-Benz 'urban artic'.

Shepherd Neame operates a fleet of 16 trucks, 10 of which are lightweight 4x2 tractor units, popular with drinks industry operators, but niche in the wider truck market. The brewer's new Atego 1329LS tractor unit, supplied by Sparshatts of Kent, has been



down-plated from the standard 28 tonnes to a gcw of 25 tonnes.

The truck has an air-conditioned day cab, fitted with Kuda air management kit, adapted by Sparshatts at its bodyshop. The dealer also undertook chassis modifications to suit this application.

Pulling one of Shepherd Neame's new aerodynamic and fuel-saving twin-axle Don-Bur Teardrop urban trailers, the Atego is now delivering real ales in casks, as well as keg and bottled lagers, and spirits, to pubs and outlets throughout Kent and Sussex – typically making a couple of dozen drops a day.

"We've previously sourced all our vehicles from another manufacturer, but on this occasion went out to the market to see what was available," explains Shepherd Neame transport manager Simon Fisher. "The Atego enjoys an excellent reputation for reliability, of course, but we were pleasantly surprised to find that it was also very competitively priced," he adds.

The brewer's urban artics typically cover upwards of 75,000km a year and are worked hard. Shepherd Neame's oldest truck dates back to 2004.

"Time will tell whether the Atego proves to be the workhorse we hope it will, and we'll be closely monitoring its fuel and maintenance costs over the months to come," comments Fisher.

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