



FORS Members' Conference report 17 October 2017

Compliance: what does it mean to you?



Introduction

The second annual FORS Members' Conference took place on Tuesday 17 October 2017 and attracted delegates from across the fleet industry and beyond. The venue for the event was the National Conference Centre, next door to the National Motorcycle Museum. The audience comprised 390 FORS accredited members who packed into the conference room to hear thoughts, advice and guidance about the FORS Standard itself, and how to comply with it. The agenda also included presentations on how the scheme has helped operators to implement best practice and was continuing to help improve standards and encourage compliance and more efficient operations.

During the breaks in conference proceedings, delegates had the opportunity to look around the adjoining exhibition and attend three industry surgeries that had been set up.

In his opening statement, chairman of proceedings Brian Weatherley welcomed guests to the conference, informing them about the establishment of FORS some 10 years ago as an industry-led accreditation scheme. The aim was then – as it remains today – centred on improving safety, efficiency and environmental performance of not only fleet operators, but also the businesses that use those operators. Originally launched in London, he told the audience, there are now accredited members across the UK and beyond – in 18 countries in total.



Brian Weatherley, FORS Conference Chairman

The importance of compliance

The first speaker of the day was Kevin Richardson, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), who delivered the keynote address. His presentation centred on what compliance really means and why people and businesses should look to go beyond legal compliance. He outlined the true definition of compliance as doing something that you have to, not something that you've chosen to. Richardson admitted he'd encountered many people who boast that they meet legal requirements as if doing the minimum was to be lauded.



Kevin Richardson, CILT

The chief executive urged the audience to strive to do the best they can, because it can deliver real benefits for businesses – and other people. “Compliance is one side of the coin; on the other is ethics,” he said. “These are the moral principles and code of conduct and behaviour – the rules of right and wrong. So, if compliance is being told what you have to do, then the rules of right and wrong – and how you decide how you want your business to be seen – is equally important, if not more so”. “If, as an operator, you are only going for the FORS Standard because you are required to do so, then you are merely being compliant,” he continued. “But FORS accreditation can be an ethical decision – for your employees, your shareholders and for society. It shows you go beyond compliance and differentiates you in a competitive industry and enhances your reputation as an operator.”

Richardson stressed that businesses need to balance moral, legal and ethical factors – the minimum requirement isn't sufficient. “At the CILT, we take compliance as a baseline and a given, but going beyond the minimum compliance for our members is part of our code of conduct. It is the reason that CILT is involved with FORS – it is about raising standards to the highest possible level for the good of all those involved.”

“Very enjoyable, informative day.”

Alan Whitehead, Eurotrail UK Ltd

The growth of GSAG



Steve Agg, GSAG Chairman

The Governance of Standards Advisory Group (or GSAG for short) is an industry-led group that aims to bring credibility, integrity and expertise to the FORS initiative. As Steve Agg, the group's chairman, pointed out, it brings benefits to operators, specifiers and the world at large. Agg set out the GSAG terms of reference for the audience, which included: monitoring operational compliance

against the FORS Standard, to be a credible and technically competent body able to input the development of the FORS Standard, and to recommend changes, improvements and additions that will help the development and growth of FORS.

Another part of FORS governance is the Executive Group. "The Group exists as part of the scheme's governance structure outside of GSAG to ensure that there can be no commercially driven conflict of interest within the GSAG group," explained Agg. "It is required to endorse and make recommendations with regard to FORS fees, namely for subscriptions and audits as well as for the scope of accreditation, as it impacts on the number of audits required to meet accreditation levels."

Agg reported to audience members that the first recommendations from the most recent Executive Group meeting were accepted by the FORS Community Partnership and GSAG. "Bronze membership currently requires a Bronze audit every year, Silver members must have a Bronze audit every two years and Gold members have a Bronze audit every three years," he explained. "But we reviewed this and agreed that three years is too long between Bronze audits, so from 1 January 2018, Gold members will have a Bronze audit every two years."

The Executive Group also concluded the removal of the Gold evidence fee for smaller operators (one to three vehicles) should apply from 1 January 2018.

A quest for recognition

There was a lot of interest in what David Wood from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) had to say, especially when it came to the subject of Earned Recognition. With overall responsibility for the project, Wood admitted that the directive had "created a bit of a stir in the industry", but added that he believed it was now moving in the right direction. "The industry we recognise is split into segments and we hope that the majority of people fall into the category of those who are doing things properly. We need to focus on the bad operators – those who are doing things wrong. The vision of compliance is to introduce more efficient and effective interventions without compromising standards or outcomes," he said.

Wood described Earned Recognition as DVSA's own accreditation scheme and said the goal was for a better relationship between operators and the agency, with more trust on both sides. He also spoke about the need to simplify audits – to make it easier for all parties.

"Within the scheme there is a third-party audit and we are working with FORS to get them approved to deliver the audits," he revealed. "There are so many different audits currently in the industry and we want to try and have just one; we want to try and reduce costs for operators."

The aim of Earned Recognition, said Wood, was to provide the industry with a reliable monitoring system that would help to ensure that standards don't drop. "It is essentially set up so that operators have their own Operator Compliance Risk Score (OCRS) built into their system, because once you're in Earned Recognition, you go out of OCRS," he explained.



David Wood, DVSA

"A very professional, well organised and informative conference."

Paul Needle, Smith & Sons Ltd

“Because there is a monitoring system built in, there is a process that flags up issues to us and we will look into them to see what has gone wrong. If something does go wrong, hopefully the operator will be putting things in place to put it right – we want to work with operators to ensure they are doing the right things and stay in Earned Recognition.”

The pilot scheme for Earned Recognition started in April 2017 and is still continuing. “There was a lot of interest and it has taken time to get the systems set up to record the KPIs and monitor operators as we want to,” explained Wood. “We planned to stop the pilot this autumn, but we’ve actually extended it into the spring. During this phase we will approve the audit providers, validate IT systems, test the KPI monitoring systems and get approval of the full business case.” He also invited interested parties to contact him: “There are a lot of FORS operators on the pilot but there is always room for more,” he said.

Here to help on compliance

With the theme of this year’s FORS Members’ Conference focusing squarely on compliance, all eyes and ears were on Graham Holder, FORS head of compliance, when he delivered his presentation.

Explaining how to ensure compliance and enforce the FORS Standard within the business, Holder reassured delegates that he and his team are here to support the community and assist on best practice measures. “All 4,700 FORS members are our eyes and ears on the ground. They are the people who enable us to carry out our compliance investigations to ensure that companies are compliant with the scheme,” he said.

Referring to the FORS Compliance and Enforcement Guidance manual he described how it is split into two sections. “The first is written information on why, what, when and how. The second section is broken into three appendices – one that gives fictitious scenarios setting out breaches of the FORS Standard with possible outcomes depending on the scenario; one appendix details the process charts and the third is the FORS compliance guidelines, broken down into two tables. These tables are used by the FORS compliance team to ensure a fair and consistent compliance process is in place and to make sure that a standard set of sanctions are issued to operators who breach the FORS Standard and Terms and Conditions. Our compliance process is published on the FORS website and is totally transparent.”

Table one covers the Traffic Commissioner’s Applications and Decisions (As and Ds) for public inquiries, while table two covers observed complaints from, for example; the general public, FORS auditors, other FORS members and enforcement agencies.

“FORS auditors know the Standard and the requirements on the companies. If you declare your company’s compliance to the Standard whilst on an audit, these people will see you driving around – so if you’re not as you say, they will let us know,” warned Holder. “To date, we average around 40 complaints a week. We currently hold daily detailed briefings and an ‘in detail’ consolidation meeting once a week where active cases are discussed and the appropriate course of action is decided and communicated to the company.



Graham Holder, FORS

“If we experience a complaint, you will receive a letter that will require a response within five working days. This length of time is adopted because of the requirement to maintain momentum in finding a timely outcome,” said Holder. “Twice in 12 months, may result in a formal warning letter, three times an enhanced audit without suspension and if it’s four times, then you will be suspended. We want to assist in highlighting a trend then allow the company to put a process in place to stop it from reoccurring and by doing so, improve their policies, processes and procedures for the transport operations.

Holder went on to explain that there are five actions that come out of the manual – the first one being a formal warning letter. “Dependent on the response to our initial notification letter and the issue in hand will depend on whether there is a hard copy letter sent by recorded delivery,” he added. “At this point you are at a heightened likelihood of compliance actions being taken against your company.

The second action is an enhanced audit. This is where a senior FORS auditor will visit your business and conduct an 'in depth' FORS audit to make sure you meet the criteria of the 34 demonstrations of the FORS Standard. They will also concentrate on the areas that resulted in you being brought to our attention.

"Next is the probation period – where you are at a heightened state of compliance monitoring. You must also undertake an agreed number of enhanced audits within that probation period. If you pass all of the enhanced audits and successfully complete the probation period, you will be permitted to carry on with your accreditation as normal. If you fail to complete the probation or fail one of the enhanced audits, you may remain on probation, alternatively you may be suspended or return to your suspension/termination sanction which was imposed with a probation period." Holder confirmed that a suspension can be anything up to a period of six months. During this time you are required to conduct and successfully pass an enhanced audit prior to the completion of the suspension period and a second during a mandatory six months' probation period.

"Finally, termination is for a minimum period of six months. On returning to the scheme, you are automatically placed on a probationary period of 12 months," he explained. "As with the suspension, you are required to conduct and successfully pass an enhanced audit prior to the completion of the termination period. However, there is an additional requirement to conduct three enhanced audits throughout the 12 month probation period. The same rules for successfully passing the enhanced audits apply. In the past six months, 110 formal warning letters have been issued, seven enhanced audits have been undertaken; four organisations have been suspended and three have been terminated."

To close, Holder assured delegates that he and his team should not be feared. "We do not hide behind closed doors. We are here to help but we are also here to make sure companies that fail to comply with the FORS Rules and Procedures are dealt with in the appropriate manner."

If you have any compliance issues, report them. We are here to support and follow up enquiries to ensure FORS best practice is maintained within the industry. We are here to help protect the FORS community and the reputation of FORS within the industry," concluded Holder.

Operator experience

Having heard from those at the front line of FORS and its development, the floor was then handed over to others who were keen to highlight how the scheme works for them. From the operator side, Graham Bellman, group fleet director at Travis Perkins, praised FORS and underlined the importance of it alongside the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) programme.



Graham Bellman, Travis Perkins

"As a business, we have 4,250 commercial vehicles – including 1,375 lorry-mounted cranes – but 46% of our fleet is at a one-vehicle branch," he explained. "We deal with a lot of regulatory authorities and we can have all the systems in the world, but we employ people and the more we can do to help and educate them, the better. "One of our cornerstones is keeping people safe, which fits in well with the FORS ethos. Another is making decent returns and it shouldn't be frowned upon," said Bellman, who added that £0.5bn worth of business wouldn't have happened without FORS, because it is what so many of its customers require.

Continuing on the safety theme, Bellman revealed that the construction industry had really embraced CLOCS and FORS and it had featured heavily in tenders that Travis Perkins signed up to. "These projects include the development of the A14, which we quoted for, and as part of the project we were asked to put in low entry, low cab vehicles. We have about 15 of these low-entry (Mercedes-Benz Econics).

"We put a lot of our people through the FORS Safe Urban Driving course and it is about return on investment," explained Bellman. "As things get tougher, it is about being able to show return on investment, which you certainly can get by being a member of FORS. We've seen a reduction in accidents after putting our drivers through the course and have more courses planned for our van fleet. We've been in the FORS family from day one and helped shaped it and have learned a lot from being a member. The audits are a good sense check for a business – especially a complex one such as ours – where we have a lot of locations."

Project management and the need for FORS

The audience heard from representatives of two of the biggest current projects in the country – namely Thames Tideway and High Speed 2 (HS2) – about contractual compliance and the importance of having compliant operators onboard major developments.

Gordon Sutherland, traffic and road logistics manager, Tideway, was up first and confirmed that his company embraced and actively supported FORS through its commitment as a FORS Champion, by incorporating the FORS Standard in its contractual requirements. Tideway involves upgrading London’s sewer system, which dates from the 1860s. Designed for four million people, the capital now holds more than double that number so a ‘super sewer’ was proposed and subsequently authorised by Development Consent Order in 2014.



Sutherland was keen to point out how people were at the heart of the project and said that best practice helps bring the best of the best to a scheme. “We do things safely, or not at all,” he commented. “If we did all of the removal of materials by road, we’d have 500,000 vehicle movements, so it made sense to do as much as possible along the river. Through a number of discussions with key stakeholders, especially the Port of London

Gordon Sutherland, Thames Tideway Authority and agreed through the Planning Inspectorate hearings, the team managed to reduce vehicle movements by 72%, but there remains a significant residual risk to manage.

Addressing the risks to vulnerable road users, Tideway insists on FORS accreditation for its contractors - Bronze at time of first site access and Silver within six months after that date. This includes owner-drivers. In addition, Sutherland stated that all LCVs and HGVs are checked by their contractors on every visit, covering every tier of the supply chain, including owner-drivers. Each check should be comprehensive and complete, and evidence-based.

“For regular construction drivers, making more than three trips in a 12-month period to any Tideway site there will be a Tideway “on-boarding” process,” explained Sutherland.

All regular HGV drivers will also be required to take the Safe Urban Driving course, while van drivers must complete Van Smart. Tideway has produced a handy pack to help drivers understand the project requirements and it can be downloaded from the Tideway website. Sutherland also announced that Tideway is developing its own Driver Safety Workshop.

Talking about HS2, Neil Cox, transport manager (compliance and environment), echoed what Sutherland said with regards to safety and the need to have compliant suppliers. Whilst HS2 is different in its size, there will be common threads running through both projects. HS2 principal contractors must set out in their Environmental Sustainability Safety Management Plans (ESSMPs) the extent that vehicles over 7.5t which regularly access worksites will be fitted with cameras with digital recording equipment.

Cox explained in detail about the different stages of the proposed high-speed rail link including Phase 1 (London to Birmingham) - the 216km-long route that includes 49.5km of tunnels and 128 tonnes of excavated material. “Although 95% of the material will be re-used, it is still a lot of soil to be moved off-site,” he admitted. “That means it will be one of the largest supply chains in the UK. Operators need to comply with HS2 standards to work on the project, hence we are interested in FORS.” Principal contractors must set out how they will achieve and adhere to FORS Bronze level and achieve and adhere to Silver level (where relevant to our vehicle and driver safety requirements) as soon as practicable and normally, in relation to Silver level, within six months of commencement of construction works for the HS2 Phase 1 project, unless otherwise agreed by HS2.

The bigger challenge is Phase 2 (Birmingham to Crewe (2a) and Leeds (2b) and Crewe to Manchester (2b)), which measures 555km with 73.5km of tunnels. Cox told the audience Phase 2 would require 18.3 million tonnes of concrete and will connect eight of the UK’s 10 largest cities.

“HS2 requires driver to have undertaken Safe Urban Driving within three months of first accessing any HS2 site, and our Rural Driver Training within six months. There is also a requirement to have undertaken SAFED or equivalent with six months of first accessing one of our sites.

HS2 have developed a bespoke rural driver training program, which ALL drivers of vehicles exceeding 3.5 tonnes will be required to undertake. HS2 is unique, because approximately 90% of the route of HS2 covers the rural environment, and we identified the need for bespoke training,” revealed Cox. “It is CPC-accredited, which is important because we know drivers are required to undertake recognised approved training.”

Principal contractors will be required to develop ESSMPs, setting out how they will comply with the project’s quality, safety, vehicle and environmental requirements. We also ask them to tell us how they could improve on these standards during the lifetime of the project.

“We intend to work with FORS and CLOCS in the future,” assured Cox. “HS2 is developing over two hundred local transport management plans along the route of HS2. Through the Parliamentary passage of the HS2 Phase 1 Act, the project has set out a number of commitments and promises – Undertakings and Assurances. These are given by the Secretary of State to Parliament. HS2, and its supply chain, must comply with these Undertakings and Assurances and we will employ a dedicated compliance team.”



Neil Cox, High Speed 2

“Very helpful with lots of industry professionals who were willing to share their knowledge.”
 Ian Gray, Doberdayz

Drugs under the spotlight



Gareth Salisbury, D.Tec International and Paul Mountford, Merseyside Police

While drink-driving has not been eliminated, a bigger issue for many forces is drug-driving. To explain the issues that exist, Gareth Salisbury, UK sales manager at D.Tec International and Paul Mountford, casualty reduction officer, Merseyside Police, took to the stage just before the lunch break to explain more.

Salisbury reminded the audience of an amendment, on the 2nd March 2015, to the Road Traffic Act 1988 with Section 5(a) being added. This amendment refers to, driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle with concentration of specified controlled drug above specified limit’. A key change is that police officers now have a visible deterrent with the availability of ‘type-approved’ roadside drug screeners.

“The number of drug-driving offenders rose by 140% in the first 12 months of roadside ‘drugalyser’ kits becoming available to test for a range of illegal drugs and excess levels of some prescription drugs,” explained Salisbury. “In 2015, a total of 2,090 motorists were charged with drug-driving, compared with just 870 in 2014 before the kits were available.

Giving details about Merseyside, Mountford revealed that on average in 2017 (to the end of August), 88 drivers are arrested for drink-driving each month compared with 91 drivers for drug-driving. He added there had been a big increase in drug-drive arrests and the number continues to increase.

The point that was being made is that it's not just about illegal drugs – these arrests could be those who used legal drugs for cold/flu symptoms, or hay fever cures. As such people working in all sorts of professions have been arrested for drug driving in 2017 including bus and taxi drivers, builders, company directors, plasterers, delivery drivers and truck drivers.

Mountford discussed risk, namely how drivers regard it - "I'm only going around the corner, no need for a seat belt" - and how managers view it - "None of my staff would be that stupid (would they?)" - and argued that many operators could probably do with reviewing how they think and act. "A workplace drug and alcohol policy should be set as 'high' priority," he proposed. "Education is key and should be first priority for employee buy-in and fundamental change. It is also advisable to screen employees first and use confirmation tests to discipline them."

"The FORS Members' Conference 2017 was both enjoyable and informative. The conference was extremely well organised and provided a well-rounded mix of information relating to FORS, DVSA enforcement, TfL, CLOCS, Thames Tideway & HS2. I will certainly be attending the 2018 conference."
 Kevin Buckler, Mobile Mini UK Ltd

The impact of bridge strikes

Giving the delegates something to think about after the networking lunch, Mark Wheel, a senior engineer at Network Rail, spoke about the issue of bridge strikes and the knock-on effects that they have on traffic (both on road and on train tracks). Giving some statistics about vehicle impacts on bridges, Wheel said he believed they need more attention by the industry than they are currently given, adding he was keen to explore the development of a sustainable approach to bridge strike prevention.

Totalling some 1,800 a year, bridge strikes represent a major safety issue, the audience was told, affecting underline and overline bridges and costing Network Rail nearly £13m a year in compensation. "Based on some recent calculations, adding in the cost of damage to vehicles, the road network and safety vehicles, bridge strikes cost around £23m a year to UK plc," Wheel admitted. So what can be done?

One proposed answer is to change the behaviours of coach, bus and freight logistics drivers and operators. Wheel's proposal covered the four Es: Education (of drivers and operators, MPs and decision makers and the insurance industry); Engineering (improved traffic signs, a national bridge strike initiative and the removal of driver distractions); Enablement (route planning tools, truckers' atlas and increased use and improvement of navigation and telematics systems); Enforcement (through the police and courts as well as the DVSA and traffic commissioners).



Mark Wheel, Network Rail

We need to talk about terror

Terror attacks – including those using vehicles – are becoming more common and Wayne Watling, working for the HGV counter terror focus desk at the Metropolitan Police, urged the audience to help him and his colleagues become extra eyes and ears while out on the road.

Watling detailed the counter terrorism strategy (known as CONTEST) – where the police force pursue, prevent, protect and prepare – with the aim to “reduce the risk to UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism so that people can go about their daily lives freely and with confidence.”

He reminded the audience that the terrorism threat level has been at ‘severe’, meaning an attack is highly likely, since 2014 and revealed that between the killing of Fusilier Lee Rigby in 2013 and the recent Westminster attack, 13 plots have been foiled by the Police and Security Services. “Since then there have been another six that have been foiled,” he added.

“The level of threat is complex and ranges from lone actors intent on carrying out crude but effective attacks, to sophisticated networks pursuing ambitious and coordinated plots,” continued Watling. “The Police and Security Services are currently carrying out hundreds of investigations and making arrests on a near daily basis. Around 550 cases are being handled at any one time.” He stressed the point that communities defeat terrorism. “Counter Terrorism Policing would not have had the success it has without the support of all our communities. One third of arrests, around 200 people, in the past year have come from information in the communities.”



Wayne Watling, Metropolitan Police

Watling said that he and his team are keen to increase business engagement – taking part in exhibitions and talking to operators. He also urged people to follow the latest government guidelines of ‘Run, hide and tell’. “Be vigilant, our behaviours can reduce threats to the organisation – be “security savvy,” he concluded.

FORS members were told by Chair Brian Weatherley to look out for a FORS eLearning module coming out soon which will tackle some of the security issues raised.

FORS: not just a badge

To end proceedings on the day, Jonathon Backhouse, Director, Backhouse Jones, brought everyone back to where it started – the need to recognise the importance and responsibilities of FORS.



“People have said ‘we need to get FORS to get the work’, but it needs to be seen as more than just getting the badge,” he reasoned.

Jonathon Backhouse, Backhouse Jones

“Why did you become part of FORS why ARE you a part of it? If the answer is ‘Because otherwise I can’t work for the big people on big projects’, while it is a good motivation because it is revenue-based, it is not the right reason. The reason you should want to be involved in FORS is because you want to have a system that provides a much more compliant operation – and that is what FORS is designed to deliver.”

He urged the audience to stop thinking about FORS as merely being a badge to obtain work, because it is only really that if the operators are culturally embedded and wedded to it being that.

Backhouse used the examples of defined walkways to make the point of a culture of compliance through health and safety. “If a company has them, is there any enforcement of a system of ensuring your staff follow them?” he asked. “Do the hierarchy (directors and managers) follow them as well? If they do, your culture is one of compliance. If they don’t, you’re effectively undermining the system that you yourself as an organisation have implemented – you’re saying you don’t need to follow the rules.”

“Extremely helpful and highly informative day.”

Kevin Morris, Alphatrans Humber Ltd

Closing remarks

Chairman Weatherley brought an end to proceedings by commenting that he had witnessed a “sense of commitment to FORS from everyone in the room”, adding that the most important message of the day was that FORS governs and ensures that its members attain and retain the Standard.

“FORS is always looking at ways to assist members, be it through FORS Professional training, toolkits or other ways,” he confirmed. “In fact, two new workshops have been developed. The Going for Silver and Gold workshop to help you progress through FORS and an additional workshop to help manage noise in logistics – and issue that is moving up the agenda with the growth in urban deliveries.” He confirmed that these workshops will be available from January 2018.

BP Target Neutral

This year, FORS worked with BP Target Neutral to offset all the carbon emissions associated with the delegates’ travel to the conference. BP Target Neutral has collected basic travel data and can now offset the emissions from the journeys using carbon credits from investors in CO₂ offsetting projects around the world.

The project has helped to support the forest protection programme in Zambia, which is helping to look after 748,000 acres of forest from deforestation by encouraging new farming techniques accreting new economic opportunities. For the record, for delegates’ travel to and from the conference, BP Target Neutral offset 20 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent using credit from around the world.



BP Target Neutral in Zambia

Questions from the floor

After each session, the speakers were brought back up on stage and quizzed by the audience. There were some challenging questions at the time – and plenty of follow-up conversations in the networking breaks – with detailed responses given by the panellists.

During the first panel session, DVSA’s David Wood was a man in demand. First up, Bradley Etheridge from Brett Aggregates had a question about the list of IT systems that the agency was working with, before Ian Rowe, from Mick George Transport, asked Wood for clarification about roadside enforcement. Finally, Balfour Beatty’s Adrian Wanford quizzed Wood about the ability of authorised [Panel session](#) testing facilities to accept 30,000 extra vehicles that were coming into the MOT scheme.



Just before lunch, it was the turn of Stefanie Greenwood, from Adam Jones Transport, to address the panel. She wanted to know how changes to the Safe Urban Driving course would fit in with HS2 supplier requirements. Then, Richard Burnham from J Murphy & Sons asked Graham Holder about manufacturers retrofitting glass on low-entry cabs and the impact it had on Whole Vehicle Type Approval. Sharon Hunter-Fennell from CoMech Metrology then raised the scenario of the need to review big infrastructure projects and the issues that arise from different authorities being involved in one section of the project.

“I just wanted to say I did genuinely find all speakers interesting. I gained some knowledge or inspiration from everyone who spoke at the event and I would definitely attend another one.”

Jonathan Scott, David Stanley Transport

Awards

To close the morning session, chairman Weatherley announced that Steve Steele was presented with a special achievement award for the inception of FORS.



Steve Steele, John Hix and Anne Johnson - FORS

“Many major initiatives often come about because of the determination and action of one individual. And the FORS story is no different. While many people have been key to the success of FORS, it was actually the brainchild of one person, Steve Steele.” Steele was thanked for his contribution to improving road safety, fleet efficiency and reducing the environmental impact of commercial vehicle operations.

“Steve established Transport for London’s first freight team and was instrumental in writing the London Freight Plan over 10 years ago, and he was the originator of FORS,” added Weatherley.

“I found the member conference very useful and a good chance to meet up with others who are committed to embed best practice into their day to day services.”

Steve Williams, Fermac Traffic Services Ltd

Exhibition and surgeries

Headline sponsor ProVision was busy spreading the word about its technologies and products that are designed to help prevent collisions before they even happen. The camera systems supplier has compliance at the heart of everything it does and Franco De Bonis, chief Marketing Officer, was keen to get the message across. “If you save on the cost of a system, you cannot guarantee the quality of the product. We offer a system that alerts users if there is a problem with the technology,” he said. “It might be a faulty SD card, or a broken or missing camera – the hardware status alert allows drivers and operators to remain compliant while on the move.” Offering products available for all sizes of fleets, ProVision is a FORS Associate and is committed to embracing the latest technologies and communication methods to ensure safety on the road.

Elsewhere at the exhibition – which featured 24 FORS Associate companies – there were plenty of product solutions on show.

The FORS Driver Licence Checking Service was also exhibiting at the conference. The service is designed to minimise the hassle and risk associated with checking whether drivers are safe and legally compliant to operate vehicles. FORS members were able to talk to experts about the service and find out more about the FORS discount.



Exhibition

FORS members were also given a sneak preview of the new FORS Fleet Management System (FORS FMS). FORS announced it will shortly be offering a fleet management system tailored specifically to support operators gain and maintain their FORS accreditation. FORS members were able to speak with experts and view a demonstration of the FORS FMS functionality.



Surgery success

Three surgeries – hosted by representatives from FORS, DVSA and TfL - were all very well attended with more than 30 appointments made in advance as well as a number of additional visitors dropping by to ask questions or get clarification or advice on a range of issues. Topics raised by delegates ranged from the FORS website, to auditing information and guidelines, to the process of applying for FORS membership. Additional topics raised on the day included eLearning and whether it was mandatory, Practitioner noise workshop and the best way to get FORS Silver accredited.

Following the presentation by DVSA's David Wood, there were a lot of questions regarding Earned Recognition and what role the agency would be playing in enforcing FORS compliance among members and associates.

Fellow speaker Graham Holder, and his colleagues, were also in demand during the breaks in presentations with delegates keen to talk auditing, compliance and how to not fall foul of the FORS Terms and Conditions.



Surgeries

“FORS members should take advantage of the opportunities the annual FORS conference provides. It is about networking, company / individual improvement and networking to improve on the fleet industry we are all involved in.”

Monica Coe, New Image Stone

“As this was my first FORS conference I have attended, I didn't really know what to expect, but I found the whole day to be very well organised, informative and came away with new contacts to pursue when our business is ready to progress those areas of the business.”

Stephen Greenhalgh, W Howard Ltd



Safety Efficiency Environment

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 Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme

