



WINTER 2022/23

STANDARD MAGAZINE

WINTER WARNING

Keeping vehicles and drivers safe when the weather turns nasty

BRONZE TO GOLD

How one transport company managed the leap in one go

DRINK/DRUG TESTS

How to carry them out without causing disruption for workers

PLUS: FORS HAS EXCITING PLANS AHEAD FOR 2023

LAST MILE MIRACLES

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HELLO & WELCOME

The FORS story so far is an impressive one indeed. But there are even more exciting developments ahead for 2023...



As an industry observer, I can't help but be impressed with the FORS story. From humble beginnings in 2008, the scheme has put safety, efficiency and business best practice at the core of its offering and with a nationwide community of over 4,700 accredited operators covering multiple sectors and fleet sizes, it's a far cry from the construction-focused, London-centric scheme of its origins.

I know many fleet operators who have reaped the benefits of embedding FORS in their businesses through reduced incidents and other safety measures, improvements in fuel efficiency and better driver retention.

2022 was a big year for FORS as it went through its second change to concessionaire since inception. It's been great to witness the smooth transition by the Sopra Steria team with a focus on business continuity and support for the industry.

Let's face it, 2022 has been a tough year for transport companies with spiralling fuel costs and wage inflation. While the future prospects don't seem to be any less challenging, it's important we have partners we can trust as we tiptoe through the challenges ahead.

From what I've been told, FORS will continue to evolve with the needs of the industry.

On page 8 you'll find there are some exciting developments about to happen in the way FORS is managed. Glen Davies, FORS' Technical Advisor, tells us that in 2023, there will be even more reasons to become FORS accredited.

The Bronze accreditation process is set for an overhaul and will be modified to align closer to industry regulation and enforcement – it has always seemed a bit strange that there should be a divergence, except where FORS is giving operators the opportunity to demonstrate they are going above

and beyond – while the whole accreditation process will be simplified to make it less time-consuming, which I applaud.

As Glen outlines, don't confuse this with a dumbing down of FORS – merely that the scheme has listened and is trying to make the process as streamlined as possible.

FORS is also set to focus on clear accreditation routes for driver agencies, fleet rental and leasing companies and is investigating new and alternative accreditation opportunities to cover.

Building on the recent affinity partnership with The Algorithm People (soon to be renamed Optimize) and the launch of FORS Transport Planner, a routing and scheduling service for fleet users, we expect to see more added value services being made available to FORS Accredited Operators, so watch this space.

As revealed at the annual conference in the summer, work has already started on the next version of the standard by the governance team at Steer and we'll expect to hear details of that during the course of the year.



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FORS – a quality experience for operators. Important new moves will make accreditation even more beneficial, says FORS Technical Advisor Glen Davies



Above: Glen Davies – important new moves for FORS in 2023

When we took over the FORS concession in January 2022, we conducted customer research to understand why the scheme’s accreditation numbers have not grown as might have been expected.

While the research highlighted areas where FORS has driven positive change in fleet operations, such as raising road-safety standards, increased driver professionalism and greater environmental awareness, the research revealed several areas for further improvement. Namely, more work is needed to ensure the core service of auditing, accreditation and certification is fit for purpose, improves the scheme’s reputation and supports the growth ambition for FORS.

We recognise that any scheme that proactively

promotes quality must have quality intrinsically running through everything it does. Therefore, the end-to-end FORS audit and certification process must be conducted in a way that provides a quality experience for operators and the FORS Standard is upheld to ensure accreditation is meaningful.

The Future of FORS Accreditation project looks at how we can achieve this and a series of short-term project goals have been identified. These are summarised thus:

Provide regulatory and enforcement agencies with more confidence in the FORS process

To move closer to recognition from regulatory and enforcement agencies, we’ll revise the Bronze audit process and supporting documentation. This won’t involve any changes to

the FORS Standard as that is overseen by the FORS Governance and Advisory Board (GSAG) but we will instead modify how we audit against the Standard. The Standard already covers all of the relevant legal compliance requirements but we need to ensure these requirements are audited in a way that FORS accreditation stands up to legal scrutiny and provides more confidence.

Demystify accreditation and keep things simple

In the past, FORS has been considered by some to be unfriendly and punitive. We want to shift to simpler, friendlier and easy to understand language, demonstrating FORS is a business enabler and trusted partner. We also want to ensure there is simplicity and transparency in our audit and quality assurance processes, which will enable the scheme to be more accessible and easily understood. This part of the project involves reviewing and revising several key documents, such as our terms and conditions, rules and procedures, and Quality Assurance Guide.

Align documentation to new audit booking process

We want to ensure audit provider partners are trustworthy, credible and influential in the fleet transport sector. Therefore, in 2023 we’ll be introducing a new approach for how audits are allocated to audit providers. We’ll

review and revise the documentation provided to audit providers and committed to providing influential trade and professional bodies the opportunity to support and help develop the scheme.

Establish clear accreditation routes for sectors and explore new opportunities

Though consistency is important, we recognise that one size doesn’t fit all fleet operator types. To ensure the scheme is applicable (and seen to be applicable) to vehicle types and operator types across all sectors in the UK and beyond, we’ll firstly focus on clear accreditation routes for driver agencies and fleet lease hire.

We’ll also look into new and alternative accreditation opportunities, such as temporary (individual) vehicle and driver accreditation, as well as simplifying the routes to Silver and Gold accreditation.

We have held the first stakeholder meeting, which was attended by FORS Operators, Specifiers, a Traffic Commissioner, DVSA and principal trade associations. We’ve learned a lot about the scheme’s strengths and weaknesses so far and we’re now running a series of working groups to take specific actions forward. If you have any thoughts or suggestions for improvement please don’t hesitate to contact us. •

Renault Trucks aims to beat the thieves with new Traffic model

With van thefts and break-ins reaching almost epidemic proportions at present in the UK, Renault Trucks has launched a reinforced Traffic that will help foil potential thieves.

The Traffic can now be specified with a Cat 1 alarm, fully lined interior and floor, internal security system and a fully sealed steel mesh internal door system with an internal five-point locking mechanism fitted to rear and side, with apertures finished off with an external high-impact clear Perspex covering.

Theft is reckoned to cost tradespeople around £264m per year and tool theft costs tradespeople £5,584 on average, each time their

vans are broken into. A van break-in also puts an average tradesperson out of work for 30 days, costing them £5,982 in missed jobs, on top of the cost of replacing tools and materials.

Available now on the new Renault Trucks Traffic L1H1, L2H1 and L2H2 Red Edition and Exclusive models, the on-board tool safe is flush-mounted into the vehicle, reducing internal space by only 30mm and weighs just 105kg.

Produced for Renault Trucks by PD Stevens & Sons of Market Drayton, it can be colour-coded to match vehicle paintwork. •

Below: New Renault Traffic model – loaded with security features



Geofence gives clear costings, thus boosting efficiency

Telematics specialist Abax is urging transport firms to use the latest technology to increase the efficiency of their businesses.

Abax geofence is a package that gives transport chiefs a whole new insight into how their operations run. The system answers questions that many will be asking, such as:

• How many miles did we drive on the contract?

- Was the job profitable on the bottom line?
- How can we simplify the invoicing basis for mileage?
- How can we get more satisfied customers?
- Are we inefficient and frequently visit suppliers or warehouses?

An Abax spokesman said: “Many businesses work on a project basis, ranging from days to months and years,

so it will often be difficult to include all the costs of the project.

“If you create a geofence area around an ongoing project, you will easily be able to run a report that shows how many trips and miles were driven to and from the project.

“If you then enter a mileage rate, you will get a clear cost picture of what the mileage cost actually was for the project.” •

Many benefits of FORS Gold for John Raymond Transport

Bridgend-based haulier John Raymond Transport is proving to be a shining example of a business that knows how to move with the times. First established in 1945, the firm now relies on FORS as a benchmark to ensure its operation remains safe, legal and compliant.

An early adopter of FORS, John Raymond Transport became accredited in 2010. The business lays claim to being the first operator in Wales to achieve FORS Silver and it was also among the first operators to ascend to FORS Gold in 2015 – a year before it became a part of the Nolan Group. The company has retained its FORS Gold status ever since, steadfastly looking to FORS as a benchmark for best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.

For Chief Operating Officer, Geraint Davies, it’s FORS’ training package that has been of particular benefit. “FORS has been the bedrock of driver training for us,” he explained. He said: “The SUD training, for example, translates into fewer collisions – particularly near-side and blind spot



Above: Now part of the Nolan Group, Raymond Transport has found many benefits from its FORS Gold status

incidents – because drivers are more aware of the risks.

“As the industry strives for carbon neutrality, it is essential that operators minimise the environmental impact of their fleets. Within our business, we have implemented a number of measures to this end. We are increasingly turning to sustainable fuelling solutions like HVO, using in-vehicle technology such as telemetry to improve fuel economy and ensuring that our drivers use the most fuel-efficient techniques. Together, these changes amount to a huge efficiency saving and courses like LoCITY are ideal for keeping staff members up to speed.” •



FORS Professional gets an overhaul with new features and a fresh look

FORS Professional is the umbrella brand for fleet management, driver training and eLearning modules.

For 2023, the FORS Professional fleet management training has been overhauled and new look FORS Practitioner modules and Fleet Management Essentials courses have been launched.

FORS Professional courses offer unique professional development in road transport operations and all courses are offered at a 50 per cent discounted rate for FORS Accredited Operators.

FORS uses expert trainers, varied training methods and a broad subject portfolio that all contribute to a quality training course.



ABOVE: Remote delivery encourages a varied class of participants that enhances the learning experience

Fleet management training is delivered via the FORS virtual classroom, ensuring

courses are accessible wherever transport managers are. Remote delivery also

encourages a varied class of participants that enhances the learning experience. Course participants can expect:

- A technical redesign that ensures the content reflects the latest regulations and industry best practice
- More interactive activity to engage participants and help embed knowledge and skills
- A creative redesign with an improved look and feel

All courses are available to both FORS and non-FORS participants but offered at a 50 per cent discounted rate for FORS operators on the booking website.

FORS Professional courses are Continuing Professional Development (CPD) approved by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT).

Fears over EV technician shortage as only 11 per cent are qualified

Transport firms that take on electric vehicles are being warned that in future years, there may be a huge shortage

of garage technicians to carry out servicing and repairs.

Last year, the Institute of the Motoring Industry

(IMI) revealed that only 11 per cent of technicians in the UK are qualified to work on EVs at present. The

IMI said it feared a 'ticking time bomb' of consumer confidence, as buyers struggle to find appropriately qualified technicians.

Now the Social Market Foundation (SMF), a government cross-party think-tank, has added its weight to the situation, saying the shortage would

push up SMR costs and risk some firms running vehicles unsafely if they could not find a place to get their vehicles repaired.

The SMF predicts that by 2030, the UK could be short of 25,000 electric technicians and is calling for the Government to step up work to prepare the British workforce for Net Zero, supporting efforts to recruit and train more workers with the skills needed to maintain EVs.

"Formalised, professional and accredited training routes to prepare technicians for EV repair and maintenance are needed," an SMF spokesperson said. •



Above: Buyers may struggle in future to find qualified EV technicians

FORS reflects on transitional year and targets further progress in 2023

Reflecting on a year of progress and change, FORS has revealed there is much more to come in 2023.

January 2022 saw a fresh start for FORS. An experienced management team from Sopra Steria took over the concession and was quick to set out its mission to listen and learn from the FORS community. 2022 was earmarked as a year for transition and laying the foundations for future change and, looking back, FORS is proud of what has been achieved.

Future of Accreditation

This flagship project is helping to shape the future of accreditation and streamline processes. Many among the FORS community have already been involved in the project, providing ideas, testing concepts and helping to ensure the Standard is administered effectively. While the project has several objectives, including building regulatory and enforcement agency confidence in the FORS Standard and auditing process, simplifying accreditation and establishing clear accreditation routes for different sectors, at its heart is ensuring that FORS continues to be a 'business enabler' for the community.

Some of the more immediate changes have included making the process of booking a Bronze audit more straightforward, increasing the

capacity of every FORS Practitioner training course and making accessing Affinity Partner products and services easier.

Making FORS more customer centric

FORS' customer success team has seen significant investment this year. As a result, the team has made more outbound calls and has intensified its focus on delivering first-class customer service. In addition, FORS has considered new ways of running the scheme day-to-day, as well as trialling innovative ways of digitising content and launching a new training suite.

The 2022 Annual FORS Conference also proved successful in engaging and informing operators, with 85 per cent of post-event survey respondents stating they are likely to attend future events and 88 per cent saying their FORS knowledge had improved as a result of attendance. FORS also invested significant time and effort after the conference talking with those who wanted to raise issues and suggest improvements.

Commenting on the progress made in 2022, FORS Concession Director, Ian Henderson, said: "Since taking on the concession, our task has been to make FORS more accessible, more transparent and more customer-centric. Therefore, we haven't shied away from acting on the feedback of

the FORS community when looking at how we transform the scheme.

"Our vision for 2023 is to keep progressing FORS

"Our vision for 2023 is to keep progressing FORS towards being an even stronger 'business enabler'"

towards being an even stronger 'business enabler' to accredited operators. This means we're always putting the operators and specifiers first. We want to make things as easy as possible for our operators to drive safer, smarter and greener, and we want to be a trusted partner of their organisations. We want specifiers to be able

to see the force of FORS in industry and recognise the value this brings."

Operators can expect updates and continuing improvements to FORS Professional in the coming months, including a full technical and creative redesign of the FORS Practitioner programme. In 2023, Sopra Steria will continue to focus on growing the FORS community, looking at new ways of collaborating with the industry and FORS' partners and ensuring more tangible change. •

Below: Ian Henderson – "we want specifiers to be able to see the force of FORS in industry and recognise the value this brings"



Words: **Ian Jones** | **Backhouse Jones Solicitors**

FUEL CARD CLONING ON THE RISE

What firms can do to protect themselves

Does your company use fuel cards? If so, then you may be at risk of being the victim of fuel card fraud and suffering the costs involved.

Fuel cards are being cloned by fraudsters, resulting in operators becoming the victims of fraud and theft. Stolen data is used to create copied fuel cards, often designed to be used to fill up other vehicles, with the charges going to the original card holder. This fraudulent activity can cause significant costs which are difficult to recover.

What can you do?

Firstly, read the terms and conditions of your agreement with your fuel card provider. Particularly, read the wording of the liability clause. It is imperative that you understand who is liable for costs in instances of theft and third-party fraud. Most of the terms and conditions that my legal firm review exclude liability of the fuel card provider and maintain that the card holder is liable for costs in the event of theft and third-party fraud.

The wording of the terms and conditions can be strict on the card holder and the operator risks being faced with the cost of stolen fuel in which they obtained no benefit, with no way of recouping the money.

In any event, significant importance should be placed on ensuring that you have appropriate company-wide safety measures in place to limit your exposure to theft and fraudulent behaviour. Each fuel card company is different. Therefore, to incorporate the most appropriate procedures, contact should be made to your specific fuel card provider to determine what best safeguards their fuel card from cloning and theft.

One essential consideration is ensuring that all drivers are aware that they need to protect their PIN number every time it is entered, even when no one is around.



Fraudsters will use advanced technology to clone cards and will install small cameras to capture PIN numbers.

Furthermore, you should make regular checks to your fuel card transactions. Many fuel card companies provide an online account, on which you can keep track on real-time data on every purchase made with each of your fuel cards. If you notice any suspicious or irregular transactions, you should flag this up to your fuel card provider immediately.

If you find yourself in a situation where your fuel card has been cloned and used to buy fuel for another vehicle and you are liable for the costs, you should check the wording of your insurance policy to see if you are covered in circumstances of theft or third-party fraud.

If you are unsure on your fraudulent exposure under the terms of your fuel card agreement or insurance policy, or you have been the victim of fuel card fraud and would like some assistance, contact a member of Backhouse Jones's commercial litigation team on 01254 828300.

Above: Are your fuel cards at risk of being cloned?

FORS Fuel Card Services powered by Fuel Card Services

Supporting the FORS community in reducing fuel costs.

FORS Fuel Card Services has been created with one of the UK's leading providers to support the FORS community in reducing fuel costs. These fuel cards are completely free to purchase for FORS Accredited Operators, saving our community £12 annually per card.

All major fuel sites are accessible with these cards including BP, Shell, Esso and Texaco plus motorway services, supermarkets and independent retailers. What's more, it's cash-free – helping you to stay secure, restrict which products can be purchased and prevent fraud.

To find out more and help combat fuel card fraud visit: www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/fors-fuel-expert

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Words: **Richard Simpson**

2022: A YEAR OF UNEXPECTED CHANGES

Plenty of problems for transport operators to cope with

Awar in Europe, a spike in energy prices and interest rates, a Budget-induced economic crisis, a new monarch and two new prime ministers – 2022 was certainly a year of unexpected changes. On the road transport front, the Government continued to grind out new legislation, including changes to the Highway Code. Here are the highlights.

JANUARY

Changes to the Highway Code put truck drivers in a different hierarchy of road users, giving them greater responsibility towards all other road users, who were judged to be more at risk. Pedestrians were given priority over other road users already on the road while waiting to cross the road at zebra crossings and junctions or crossing in slow-moving traffic. Also, cyclists were given priority over vehicles at roundabouts.

FEBRUARY

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) gave itself power to issue an S-marked immediate or delayed prohibition with a £100 fixed penalty notice (FPN) where it believed a deliberate attempt had been made to use a fraudulent number plate. It now also has the power to report the offence to the courts or Traffic Commissioners and retain fraudulent plates.

A new system allowing operators local appeals against truck, trailer, bus and coach roadworthiness test failures within two working days of the test without making a statutory appeal was also launched.

MARCH

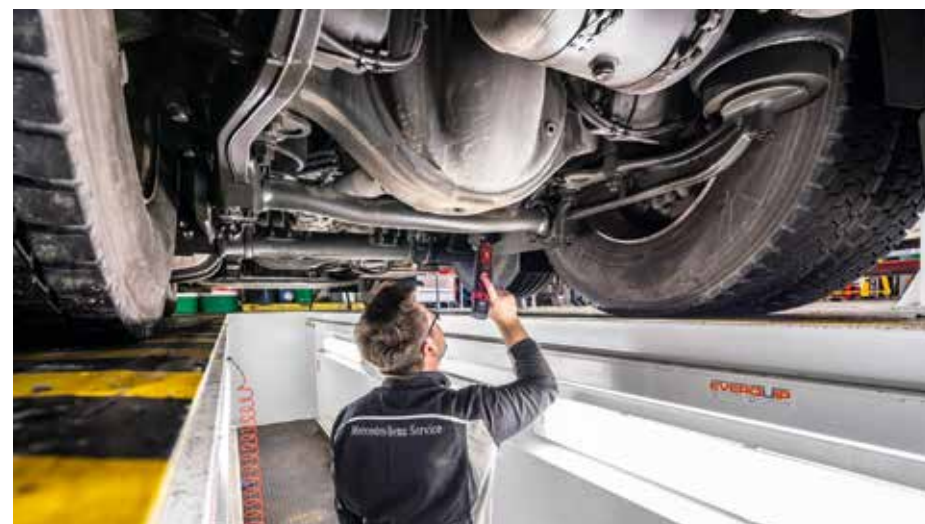
Oxford Council implemented charging for

all non-zero-emissions vehicles on eight streets in the city centre red zone.

Stricter rules were introduced that banned the use of hand-held mobile phones for any purpose when driving. Loopholes in previous legislation allowed drivers to use hand-held phones for non-communicative purposes.

APRIL

DVSA issued new guidance on what operators can expect to be checked if they are subject to a Maintenance Investigation Visit. Among other things, inspectors will check for clear evidence that vehicle walk-around inspections are not being carried out, vehicles with reported safety defects are being used and poor maintenance is causing safety-critical defects. They will look for deliberately modified vehicle emissions systems and removal of manufacturers' emissions standards plates, plus clear evidence of tyre date codes being removed. They will check that there is a genuine link between the named transport manager and the operation.



JUNE

The Health and Safety Executive issued fresh guidance on supporting vehicles while they are being recovered or worked on.

This includes only working under vehicles raised on appropriate axle stands and on firm level ground.

Plus, wheels remaining on the ground must be chocked. Tilted cabs and raised tipping bodies must be adequately propped. Air suspension movements must be prevented and the ride height should not be adjusted to allow recovery or repair.

JULY

A new section on self-driving vehicles was introduced to the Highway Code, allowing drivers to view 'non-driving content' on fixed screens in the vehicle while the self-driving vehicle is in control.

Below: The Health and Safety Executive issued fresh guidance on supporting vehicles while they are being worked on



Above: Liz Truss proved to be Britain's shortest ever serving Prime Minister

At time of writing, no such self-driving vehicle had been approved for use on British roads.

Penalties for causing death by dangerous driving or death by careless driving under the influence of drink or drugs were increased from a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment to life. The obligatory minimum disqualification period for both offences was increased from two to five years.

A new offence of causing serious injury by dangerous driving was created.

The maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine and an obligatory driving disqualification. Provincial English local authorities

were permitted to ask for extra powers covering moving traffic contraventions such as obstructing yellow boxes and making banned turns, bringing them into line with London local authorities. Previously, controlling these offences was the sole responsibility of the police.

AUGUST

Regulations stating the need for drivers covered by EU Hours Law to keep records of non-driving activity were relaxed to allow non-driving activity to be recorded in blocks where no 'in-scope' driving had taken place in a week.

The summary can now be recorded as one digital tachograph entry or on a single analogue card but must include start and finish time for all shifts worked in the period and identify all weekly rest periods taken.

As an alternative, the hours can be recorded on a single attestation document conforming to the relevant legislation.

SEPTEMBER

Bradford Council implemented its Class C+ Clean Air Zone, covering all non-compliant commercial vehicles.

NOVEMBER

Bristol implemented its Class D Clean Air Zone covering all vehicles with the exception of motorcycles, Euro 6/VI diesels, Euro 5 or better petrols and hydrogen and full-electric vehicles.

DECEMBER

VECTO fuel consumption standards are extended to cover medium and heavy trailers.

Businesses consigning ADR (dangerous) goods must appoint a Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser. ■



It isn't so much that hard times are coming. The change observed is mostly soft times going

Groucho Marx

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Words: **Richard Simpson**

LESS GROWTH AND MORE LAW

What does 2023 have in store? Let's take a look...

JANUARY

ADR regulations regarding the carriage of dangerous goods change. Operators can continue to run under the old rules until 1 July 2023.

Financial standing rules will remain unchanged. Standard goods O licence holders must have resources of at least £1,600 for one light vehicle of between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes, or £8,000 for a heavy vehicle of over 3.5 tonnes. A further £800 is required for each light vehicle and £4,500 for each heavy vehicle. Holders of restricted licences need £3,100 for the first heavy vehicle and £1,700 for each additional heavy vehicle.

MARCH

HMRC will close its Customs Handling Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) IT platform for export declarations. It will be replaced by the Customs Declaration Service, which is already up and running.

MAY

An existing concession that allows car licence (Category B) holders to drive alternative fuel vehicles of up to 4.25 tonnes is due for its five-year review. The Office for Zero-Emissions Vehicles has confirmed that there are no plans to end the concession but optimisation of the rules is being considered 'to support the emerging zero-emissions van market'.

JUNE

Enforcement of the Glasgow Low Emissions Zone starts. Unlike Clean Emissions Zones in England, LEZs in Scotland are compete bans and penalty charge notices will be sent to operators whose vehicles enter the zones. Penalty charges start at £60 and will rise to as much as £900 for trucks that are judged as repeat offenders.

JULY

The Vehicle Certification Agency will implement the Full GB Vehicle Type

Approval Scheme for cars, buses and coaches (Category M) and goods vehicles (Category N). Trailers (Category O) will follow 12 months later. It applies to new Type Approvals and expired provisional or existing Type Approvals.

The HGV Road User Levy, which was suspended during the Covid crisis, will be reintroduced. It applies to goods vehicles of 12 tonnes or more using UK roads, irrespective of country of registration. The charge is based upon weight, axle configuration, emissions standards and duration. UK-registered vehicles pay the levy in the same transaction as Vehicle Excise Duty.

AUGUST

Smart Tachograph 2.0 instruments will become compulsory in all new 'in scope' vehicles. Features include automatic

recordings of border crossings, recording of loading and unloading locations, recording whether the vehicle is used for the carriage of goods or passengers and independent internal 'motion detectors' to detect conflict with other motion indicators.

London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone will expand to cover the entire area of the current Low Emissions Zone.

SEPTEMBER

A 20mph speed limit will be introduced on all restricted (30 mph limit) roads in Wales to 'reduce collisions, encourage walking and cycling, improve the population's health and well-being and safeguard the environment'. A contravention will attract the usual three penalty points and £100 fine. ■

I am an optimist. It doesn't seem too much use being anything else

Winston Churchill

Below: Smart Tachograph 2.0 instruments will become compulsory in all new 'in scope' vehicles



THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

KPMG: "The picture for 2023 is one of stop-start growth, leading to a full year fall in GDP of 0.2 per cent compared to 2022."

Goldman Sachs: "Folding in weaker growth momentum, significantly tighter financial conditions and the higher corporation tax from next April, we downgrade our UK growth outlook further and now expect a more significant recession."

Teneo: "Negative growth is likely to persist throughout 2023 as the UK economy continues to grapple with energy pressures and high interest rates driving a slowdown of the economy, including a reduction in house prices. GDP growth is only likely to turn positive in 2024Q1/Q2."

IMF: "Increasing price pressures remain the most immediate threat to current and future prosperity by squeezing real incomes and undermining macro-economic stability."

An economist is an expert who will know tomorrow why the things he predicted yesterday didn't happen

Laurence J. Peter

Below: Wales is introducing a 20mph speed limit to encourage cyclists



TRANSPORT FIRMS GET A NEW FLEXIBLE FRIEND

Access to 24/7 legal advice for a fixed monthly fee

Transport operators can now take advantage of a new FORS legal subscription service provided as part of the Affinity Partner programme by law firm Backhouse Jones.

BACKup, as the subscription service is known, moves away from a traditional fee-based relationship and provides operators with access to 24/7 legal advice for a fixed monthly fee. Designed to address the pain points of a transport business (primarily employment and regulatory issues), the service provides advice and practical guidance to ensure companies are meeting all necessary legal requirements.

The BACKup programme is fully flexible to suit all sizes and types of fleet operation, with pricing determined by the number of authorised vehicles on a business's O licence. Operators can choose to opt for employment-only advice, regulatory-only advice, or both.

Additional cover for other areas, such as corporate, commercial or property, can also be included for those that need it.

As an example, a business operation between one and 10 vehicles could select regulatory only BACKup or employment only BACKup for just £75 per month per area, or to have full BACKup (regulatory and employment) the cost is just £100 per month.

In addition to the legal services, BACKup customers are entitled to 20per cent off all e-training on offer by Backhouse Jones, which includes areas such as HR, accident reporting and O-licence compliance, plus a host of free webinars run fortnightly on trends and topics in the transport sector.

Ian Jones, director at Backhouse Jones, commented: "We receive more than 10,000 calls a year from operators needing legal advice on any number of issues. This scheme was devised with the idea that we could provide guidance to

Much of the stress and worry can be taken out of day-to-day interactions both with staff and with regulatory agencies

Below: BACKup provides operators with the peace of mind knowing they are fulfilling their legal obligations



We receive more than 10,000 calls a year from operators needing legal advice on any number of issues

customers in a new way, that is before matters become serious enough to need traditional legal intervention. Our team of lawyers live and breathe the transport sector, so we're perfectly placed to provide operators with the peace of mind that comes with knowing you're fulfilling all your legal obligations correctly, and that you have us in your corner.

Ian Henderson, FORS Concession Director, added: "As part of ensuring FORS offers meaningful benefits to the FORS community we have selected Backhouse Jones as the service provider for FORS Legal. As transport operations management is a complex and heavily regulated world, the Backhouse Jones model means that much of the stress and worry can be taken out of day-to-day interactions both with staff and with regulatory agencies. Helping our FORS Accredited Operators achieve the high standards they aspire to is at the very heart of what we do, so we're delighted to team up with a law firm of such calibre as Backhouse Jones."

Backhouse Jones has been providing legal services to the transport sector since its very beginnings in 1930. As a uniquely industry-specific law firm, the Backhouse Jones team is regularly appointed to advise trade associations and works with many of the major bus and haulage operators in the UK.

By concentrating its expertise within the road transport industry, Backhouse Jones service is tailored to client's requirements and ensures its team is fluent in all the regulatory issues that affect logistics and transport companies across the UK. ■

Right: BACKup moves away from a traditional fee-based legal service





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Words: **Richard Simpson**

STAYING SAFE IN WINTER

Most UK roads are passable, most of the time. That does not mean they are safe though

Safe winter driving starts in the traffic office. Weather forecasts should be checked for high winds, flooding risks and snow, and journeys rescheduled if necessary. Travel warnings should be heeded: an urgent delivery will turn into a failed one if the truck carrying it ends up on its side in a ditch.

Drivers should be prepared for winter conditions with adequate protective clothing and footwear, supplies of food and drink and any needed medication. Even for day work, it's best to be equipped for an unexpected night out.

Low sun is a dangerous feature of winter days so good quality sunglasses are vital for comfort and safety.

Forecourt diesel is normally switched

to winter grade, with additives to prevent waxing, before the onset of cold weather. But bulk fuel stocks will need to be managed to ensure that the tanks are filled with the correct grade of diesel (available from mid-November) before the weather turns. It is normal to record an increase in fuel consumption when winter diesel is used. The increased bio content of modern diesel means it is more vulnerable to contamination at low temperatures, so watch out for black fungal deposits on fuel filters.

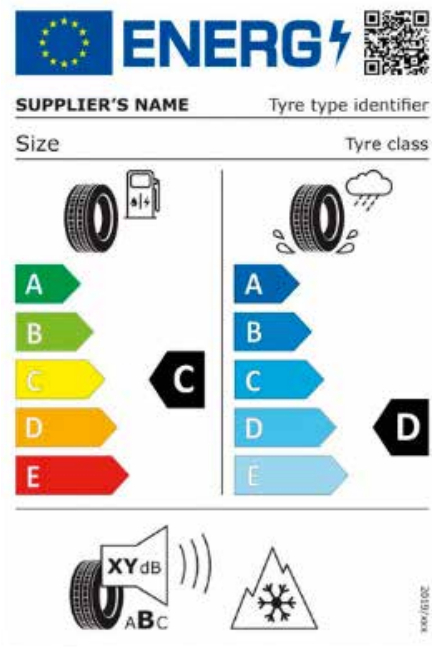
Preparation

Tyres are the key to winter mobility. Confusingly, there are now three labels that can be applied to tyres offering superior performance in winter

conditions and it's not always clear which are appropriate.

Some tyres have M + S or MST markings. These are used to indicate that the manufacturer considers their design suitable for use in muddy or snowy conditions, but no independent tests need to have been carried out. The tyres usually have an aggressive tread pattern, which will use more fuel, wear quicker than conventional tyres and be noisier in operation. In some conditions, they may offer less grip than more conventional tyres and their wet weather performance should be assessed prior to purchase by referring to the appropriate EU tyre label.

The Three Peaks Mountain Snowflake (3PMSF) label is a better guide to enhanced winter performance. It



Above: EU tyre label showing fuel, wet grip, and noise ratings with 3PMSF approval

Below: Tyre sidewall with M + S and 3PMSF markings



indicates that the tyre has exceeded the performance of a reference tyre in snowy conditions. An increasing number of premium truck tyres (and not just in drive axle patterns) now have 3PMSF ratings, and much of the performance can be attributed to the use of sharp silica to supplement carbon black in the tread compound. Grip is further enhanced by complex tread patterns, which incorporate rain clearance grooves, blocks that can find traction in mud and snow, and fine sipes that remove slippery melt water from icy surfaces. Such tyres are normally suitable for year-round use in all conditions.

Last come the true winter or Nordic pattern tyres. These are designed for use in the worst conditions. In the UK, they are unlikely to find application except on specialist vehicles such as snowploughs.

Many regions in mainland Europe have restrictions on the use of unmarked tyres in winter and some Alpine roads require snow chains to be carried.

Most modern truck braking systems have air dryers, so there should be no need to drain air tanks to stop freezing. However, it's still good practice to 'pull the chain' periodically on air tanks. If any liquid is expelled, it can indicate either

that the air dryer needs servicing or there is an issue with the compressor. In either case, a workshop inspection should be undertaken.

Lights, windscreen wipers and screen washers will all get more use in winter, so careful inspection of all these components is obviously important.

Driving

UK winters are generally less brutally cold than those in mainland Europe, but this doesn't mean that they are less disruptive. In fact, temperatures of between zero and minus seven degrees C can create the most slippery conditions: below this the tendency is for 'dry cold' and for surfaces to become less slippery, providing appropriate tyres are used.

Most modern trucks are equipped with a host of features to enable them to cope with winter conditions, but their correct use is not always adequately communicated to drivers.

Understanding how traction control systems work is vital. An illuminated ASR light is often the first indication that a truck is struggling for grip. Switching the ASR mode to 'off-road' (if the truck has this facility) will allow a little more wheel slip while still retaining directional

Drivers themselves should be prepared for winter conditions with adequate protective clothing and footwear

Below: Goodyear's 3PMSF tyres are available in axle-specific fitments



control and may be enough to allow the vehicle to claw its way along. On three-axle units, the driver should also consider using the load transfer or axle lift facility to throw more weight onto the drive axle. However, this is only enabled at speeds below 30 km/h.

Some trucks are also fitted with a differential lock. This should only be used at very low speeds when the truck is going in a straight line, as steering control will be compromised. It is ideal in circumstances where there is a big difference in grip in the road surfaces under each set of drive-axle wheels, but in normal conditions it's best to rely on the ASR system. If the truck will only move with the diff lock constantly engaged, then it's probably too slippery to drive safely anyway. In these circumstances, it's unwise to proceed any further than the next safe parking space.

Modern braking systems use ABS and EBS to control the braking effort through each wheel and in slippery conditions their effectiveness can be maximised by minimising the use of retarders and engine brakes that only impart braking effort through the drive axle.

The foundation brakes, rather than forced down-changes, should be used to shed speed and the truck should not be driven fast enough for brake fade to become an issue.

These systems cannot, however, work miracles: stopping distances are increased by their activation and situations where harsh braking might be needed should be avoided by employing defensive driving techniques.

It is most important to maintain 'safe space' in front of the vehicle, so difficult situations requiring harsh brake applications do not develop. ■

An illuminated ASR light is often the first indication that a truck is struggling for grip

Below: Melting and refrozen roads can offer less grip than virgin snow



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Above: Building sites can be dangerous places in which to work – but FORS Gold accreditation can help alleviate those dangers

Words: **Steve Banner**

BRONZE TO GOLD IN ONE LEAP

Alan Harvey tells how he helped his firm progress to Gold in a matter of months

Taking a firm from FORS Bronze straight to FORS Gold accreditation in a matter of a few months sounds like an impossible task. Yet it is one that Alan Harvey, group transport director at Leicestershire-based timber merchant Harlow Brothers, has played a vital role in achieving.

“If you put your mind to it, then you can get it done,” he smiles. “It’s possible to do a combined Silver and Gold audit and Gold means we’re at the top of our game when looking at efficiency, safety and environmental protection.”

In reaching this goal Harvey had to work with the firm’s 13 branches based primarily

in the East Midlands, but also including sites in Worcestershire, Northamptonshire and Essex. “A lot of preparation had to be done beforehand,” he told us.

Getting the operation to the stage where it could achieve FORS Bronze, then progress from there, involved everything from introducing a computerised FleetCheck fleet management system, to ensuring all the company’s 55 trucks were fitted with full camera systems. It operates 15 light commercials too, including pick-ups and 3.5-tonners.

The trucks are a mixture of DAFs, Ivecos, MANs and Scania, ranging from 7.5-, 12-, 18- and 26-tonne rigids to 44-tonne artics. As well as transporting

timber to builders’ merchants, they can be called on to deliver roof trusses to building sites.

Currently chair of the Builders Merchants Federation’s transport working group, Harvey’s background has stood him in good stead.

He spent 25 years in the army, latterly at the Defence School of Transport, and his subsequent civilian career has included a spell as head of auditing at Fleet Source. Its activities include delivering Safe Urban Driving, Van Smart and LoCITY training courses – all essential activities as far as FORS is concerned.

Harvey has worked for FORS and

for Travis Perkins, where he was also instrumental in helping the company achieve FORS Gold. He joined Harlow Brothers in November 2020 at a time when it had no FORS accreditation at all.

“During the first 30 days, I knew where I wanted the fleet to get to but I had to lay down the foundations,” he recalls.

“When I first arrived, the entire fleet management system was paper-based and I had to do a deep dive into the whole business. In effect we were still back in the 20th century and I realised that it all had to be computerised.

“These days, there is too much risk if you rely solely on paper and I wanted to be no more than three clicks away from the answers I was looking for.

“I wanted to know exactly what was going on with the fleet. I wanted to streamline it and I was able to use FORS as a mechanism to get it where it needed to go.”

Harvey opted for FleetCheck software because, in his view, it represents a one-stop-shop that can handle pretty much anything that is fleet related. “That includes managing driver training,” he observes.

“It allows me to see red, green and amber

ratings across all of my KPIs,” he adds.

The company runs its own workshop and makes use of FleetCheck Technician. Among other things, it makes it easier to plan, carry out and record statutory inspections.

“We’re achieving a 98.7 per cent first-time MOT pass rate increasing to 100 per cent on rigids,” he reports.

Computerisation has made it easier for drivers to submit reports on any faults they have found on their vehicles. “Any replacement parts needed as a consequence can be ordered and fitted, and the vehicle concerned can be back on the road the next day,” Harvey says.

“It also makes it easier for us to communicate with the drivers and inform them about new policies, procedures and practices.

“In addition, we have driver working groups that meet every three months to discuss any concerns they have and these discussions are recorded. Drivers are paid to attend.”

Priorities include the approach that should be taken to securing loads so they do not part company with the vehicle and end up in the middle of the highway. That is vitally important, says Harvey,

and can be a challenge to achieve.

“Remember that we’re talking about timber rather than standard pallets,” he says. “You have to look carefully at, for example, the number of lashing straps you need to use to achieve a 5.0-tonne force at a 45-degree angle.”

His load security training initiative has ensured that the company’s forklift drivers and its truck drivers are better able to communicate with one another. Harvey also follows a policy he describes as ‘constant positive reinforcement’ to help eliminate speeding and unnecessarily harsh braking and acceleration – a FORS goal.

Pursuing it improves safety and shrinks the company’s CO2 footprint because less fuel is used. “If you can reduce diesel consumption by 9,000 litres over a quarter then that equates to a saving of almost £16,000,” he points out.

Still on the topic of safety, Harvey has visited all the branches and talked to employees about drink, drugs, sleep apnoea and the risks associated with them when are driving. “We’re doing a lot of work with Loughborough University so far as sleep apnoea is



Above: Alan Harvey was instrumental in gaining FORS Gold accreditation for his company



Above: FORS Gold accreditation means Harlow Brothers can now pitch for more business

If you can reduce diesel consumption by 9,000 litres over a quarter, that equates to a saving of almost £16,000

concerned,” he says.

Building a strong relationship with the company’s drivers is a priority, says Harvey, and only one has left the firm over the past couple of years.

The company is pursuing a policy of continuous professional development so far as its drivers are concerned, with 10 per cent of them having progressed from a car licence to a C+E licence over the past two years.

Bonding exercises can be fun. “I took all the drivers go-karting in 2021 and got our insurers to sponsor it,” he says.

2022 saw this approach taken further. “We took all 555 of the company’s employees to Alton Towers in September.”

“There were 34 major companies that we were doing no business with at all, but potentially could have done, because we were not FORS accredited. As a consequence, we were not able to tender for their work.”

Now Harlow Brothers can – and that has to be counted as good news in these tough economic times.

Vulnerable road users

There is a case for saying that children are the most vulnerable road users of all – and it is not one Alan Harvey is prepared to neglect. That is why he took an art car down to a local primary school, hosted an assembly there, then got the 95 children to take turns standing in its blind spots and measuring safe stopping distances.

“I also persuaded the entire school to visit our business to see what we do,” he says. ■

When I first arrived, the entire fleet management system was paper based



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ID: A00340

Words: **Steve Banner**

LAST MILE MIRACLES

E-bikes are helping turn Britain's zero-emission dream into reality

Zero-emission two-, three, and four-wheel electrically assisted cargo bikes are becoming increasingly popular for last-mile delivery work in congested urban areas. Among businesses leading the charge is parcels giant UPS, which already employs them in a number of cities worldwide.

Some months ago, it announced it was trialling around 100 four-wheel eQuad e-cargo bikes designed and built by UK firm Fernhay in seven European markets, including Britain.

With a battery-aided top speed of around 15.5mph, three metres long and

just 84cm wide, eQuad can haul up to 210kg of cargo in a lockable container.

The battery lasts for almost 40 miles before it needs recharging. "Opportunities for zero-emission solutions like this are growing," said UPS Vice-President of Fleet Maintenance and Engineering, Luke Wake, while demonstrating an eQuad in London.

Amazon, too, is embracing e-cargo delivery bikes and has been working with the London Borough of Hackney in the creation of what it describes as a micro-mobility hub from which they can operate.

The e-commerce behemoth is rolling

out similar hubs elsewhere in the capital, in Wembley, Southwark and Manchester.

Cheaper to run than electric vans and with a smaller footprint, e-cargo bikes are helping to cut traffic congestion and can get to locations that would be inaccessible to conventional commercial vehicles. They are allowed to use cycle and bus lanes and shared-user paths.

"They can help our operations become more efficient," said Wake.

The Energy Saving Trust suggests that e-cargo bikes and conventional pedal cycles could handle up to 33 per cent of all urban deliveries, and local authorities countrywide are encouraging their adoption. Last spring saw Bath and North East Somerset Council offer retailers and voluntary organisations in Bath a free two-week trial of e-cargo bikes in conjunction with e-cargo bike operators Three Bags Full and WEGO Couriers. The authority secured £500,000 of government funding to launch the scheme.

Among those who sampled it was Ali Hashemian, owner of Pulteney and Bathampton Pharmacy.

Customers impressed

He said: "The e-cargo deliveries have really impressed us and our customers. We're now eager to find a way to make them a sustainable part of our business."

"Reducing air pollution is important to us. Poor air quality is a big factor in everyone's health, contributing to chronic heart and lung conditions. Using e-bike couriers improves the health and lives of our patients, employees and Bath residents."

E-cargo bikes are helping to cut traffic congestion and can get to locations that would be inaccessible to conventional commercial vehicles

Right: Oxwash employs e-bikes to collect and deliver laundry at the behest of householders and businesses

The London Borough of Wandsworth has rolled out a scheme that enables residents and businesses to hire e-cargo bikes for up to two hours a day free of charge. Longer journeys are charged at a modest £3.00 an hour.

The scheme is operated in conjunction with a couple of local firms and bike operator Peddle My Wheels.

E-cargo bikes must comply with the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle regulations, says the Energy Saving Trust. To do so, the electric motor fitted must have an output of no more than 250 watts and cease providing assistance at 15.5mph, although the rider can keep pedalling beyond this speed.

Batteries can be removed for recharging using a domestic three-pin plug socket. They can be replenished in from three-and-a-half to five hours and offer a range of up to 50 miles.

The rider does not have to possess a driving licence or wear safety equipment. However, a helmet, appropriate clothing and training are all highly recommended.

Payloads can range from 100kg to 250kg and the bikes are able to tow electrically assisted trailers that can take a load of up to 300kg.

An e-cargo bike will set buyers back between £3000 to £12000 depending on how much load space and payload capacity they need. A government grant scheme aimed at offsetting some of the cost had closed at the time of writing. An e-cargo trailer is likely to cost from £2,000 to £5,000 upwards.

E-cargo bikes are now being used in a remarkably wide variety of applications.

Founded in Oxford, but now active

in Cambridge and London too, Oxwash employs them to collect and deliver laundry at the behest of householders and businesses. The transport it uses offers from 400 litres to 1,500 litres of space for shirts, underwear and so on and batteries are recharged using solar panels.

There is nothing to stop e-cargo bikes being deployed in conjunction with electric vans and drones, says Renault Trucks. Working in conjunction with Bournemouth-based body builder Horton Commercials, it has developed a somewhat unusual vehicle constructed on an electric Renault Master platform cab.

Clever loading

The E-Tech Master OptiModale's 4.1m low-loader Luton body carries an eBullitt e-cargo bike.

It is stowed in a nearside compartment from which it can be lowered using a small built-in crane.

Able to carry up to 100kg, the bike can be used to deliver parcels if OptiModale is stuck in traffic chaos, assuming the vehicle is crewed by two people. One of them can remain with the van while the other jumps onto the eBullitt and begins weaving through the congestion.

The eBullitt provides over 30 miles' worth of power-assistance, which means it could potentially make several return trips to OptiModale to collect more consignments. Once it is put back in its compartment its battery can be removed and recharged to 50 per cent of its capacity in an hour, to 80 per cent in two hours and to 100 per cent in four hours.

OptiModale also carries a UAVTEK drone mounted in its roof on a retractable heli-drone pad. It can





Left: UPS is trialling 100 four-wheel eQuad e-cargo bikes designed and built by UK firm Fernhay

E-cargo bikes are now being used in a remarkably wide variety of applications

only lift 2kg but could be used to, for example, dispatch urgently needed medical supplies to difficult-to-access locations.

A postal authority has already expressed interest in the vehicle as has one of the emergency services.

Not to be outdone, truck industry newcomer Volta is taking a slightly different approach. It plans to trial the

use of lightweight electric motorcycles in conjunction with its electric Zero 16-tonner in France in the coming months.

Working on behalf of fashion retailer H&M Group, the truck will function as a mobile micro distribution hub. The motorcycles will be loaded onboard at the start of the working day and used for last-mile deliveries of goods across Paris. ■

Below: Volta is employing a different method to use e-bikes



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Words: **Steve Banner**

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHAMPIONS

More and more firms are insisting their sub-contractors are FORS accredited, to ensure that companies they use are committed to the highest safety and environmental standards

There is no denying FORS accreditation means a business meets high safety standards and is working hard to minimise its impact on the environment. It indicates the vehicles it runs are properly maintained and its drivers trained to use them safely.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a fast-growing number of companies – particularly in the construction industry – are insisting that firms that send vehicles onto their premises to deliver goods or services must be FORS accredited. Doing so gives them the reassurance that the operations concerned far exceed the legal basics because they are adhering to a unique mix of driver and management training, robust auditing and statistics-based efficiencies. This is backed up by a range of online support tools and guidance from FORS.

Companies that specify FORS in their supply chain are known as FORS Champions. Among them is construction company BAM. Part of the Netherlands-based Royal BAM Group, it operates sites all over the UK and is clearly committed to cutting emissions whenever and wherever it can. Detailed design development and



moved to form other features, for example road embankments needed in the overall design.

By keeping all earthwork movements within the site boundary, BAM has significantly reduced the volume of construction traffic using the local road network.

BAM Compliance Specialist, Gary Todd said: “As it happens we were accredited

to FORS Silver ourselves when we ran our own trucks, so I know how hard the standard is to achieve.

It’s a standard we recognise and what it tells you is that the supplier concerned is committed to safety and training its employees, and looks after them properly too. It also means that it is prepared to invest in the latest equipment.”

BAM audits its transport suppliers, and FORS accreditation makes the task far easier than it would otherwise be, Todd continues.

“If you’re dealing with a firm that is not FORS accredited, then you have to do a lot of digging into its background,” he points out. That takes time, so it makes a lot more sense to deal with a business that already shows that it complies with a recognised standard. “It gives you reassurance,” he observes.

“Remember too that if you’re working in the construction industry in London, then you really have to be a FORS-

accredited company.”

Built around continuous improvement, FORS sits well with BAM’s corporate culture.

Its UK businesses intend to become net zero in their direct operations by 2026 and have ruled out counting electricity from green energy tariffs as a contributor to this demanding target. Last July, it launched BAM Charging Solutions, which designs and installs electric vehicle charging systems on single and multiple sites across the UK including retail outlets, hotels and sporting venues.

It is worth noting too that FORS Silver can be used to demonstrate compliance with CLOCS (Construction Logistics and Community Safety) requirements.

Representing three FORS Champions – Pyramid Builders along with its sister companies Wembley Innovation and Haughley Block Plant – Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Compliance Manager, Teodora Todorova, wants all of their suppliers to be FORS accredited.

Both Pyramid and Wembley have achieved FORS Gold themselves, while Haughley holds FORS Silver status.

“FORS accreditation is a requirement of the main customers we work for and we have suppliers delivering to them on our behalf,” she explains.

“The need for accreditation means that the cowboys have gone,” says Todorova, who has worked in the construction industry for the past 15 years. “They’ve been eliminated and operations are safer as a result.

“From our viewpoint being FORS accredited gives us access to some useful toolkits among other things,” she says. “It helps us a lot.”

Pyramid specialises in masonry and is the only company of its type in Britain with a dedicated research and development department. Projects it has been engaged with include Wembley Stadium and Battersea Power Station, along with Tube stations all across London.

Its core area of work is within the M25, but it is busy around the Home Counties too.

Its sister companies have 45 UK patents between them, including a means of replacing heavy concrete lintels and an innovative approach to replacing wind posts.

Wind posts are usually made of mild steel and are used to enhance the stability of masonry walls. Pyramid had replaced over 15,000 of them at the time of writing along with over 24,000 lintels – remarkable achievements. ■

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Champions can make use of the FORS logo and FORS displays their company profile on its website, on a dedicated Champions listing page.

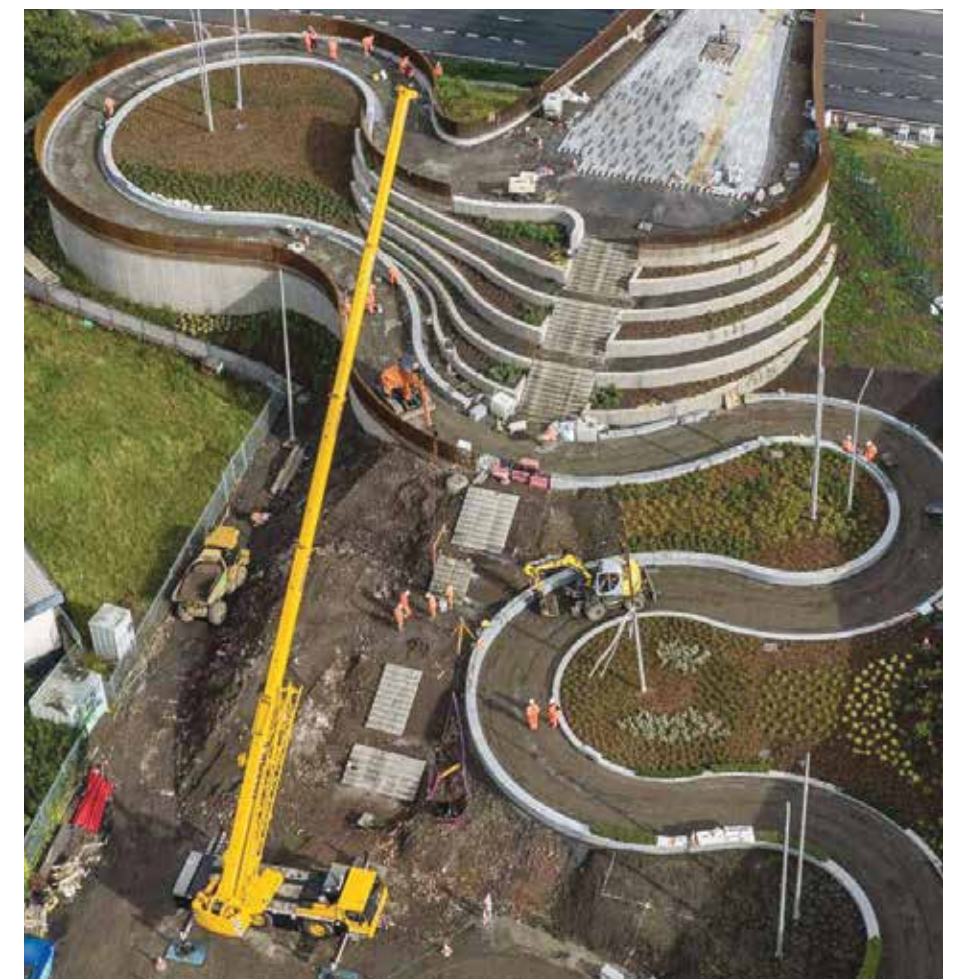
They get access to FORS eNews, enjoy discounts on any


advertisements they place on the supplier and supporters website and in eNews, and discounts on stand space at FORS events. They can take advantage of ticketing and sponsorship benefits too. ■

FORS is a standard we recognise and what it tells you is that the supplier concerned is committed to safety and training its employees, and looks after them properly too.

Gary Todd: BAM Compliance Specialist

Below: BAM’s construction methods have helped it to reduce carbon output from the Cross Tay Link Road project by over 35,000 tonnes






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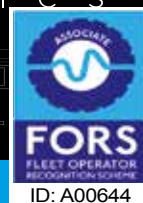
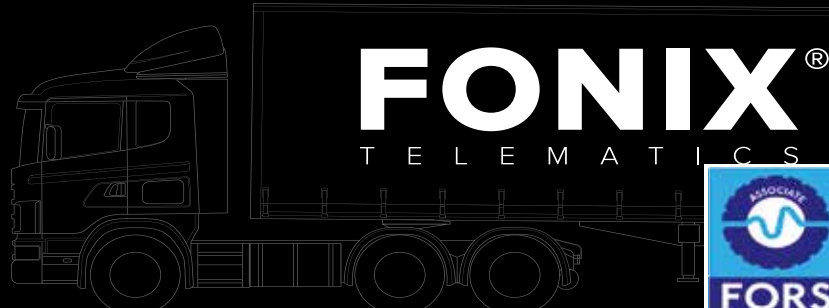


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Visit tfl.gov.uk for more info.

When?

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IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES

Above: Scania's new truck is built for these fast-changing times

Scania's new BEV Urban is the ideal truck for those emission-free delivery jobs

Urban transport is undergoing the biggest revolution it has experienced since the days of the horse and cart, and the steam wagon. Transport companies are having to completely rethink their approach to distributing goods as a consequence.

Cities are not just implementing Low Emission and Ultra Low Emission Zones. Oxford has recently introduced a Zero-Emission Zone (ZEZ), which covers a number of streets at the heart of the city of dreaming spires.

The ZEZ is certain to expand and will undoubtedly be emulated by other local authorities countrywide.

The introduction of these zones is being accompanied by a growing determination to protect vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians from being struck and seriously injured or even killed by heavy commercial vehicles. London's Direct Vision Standard is designed to make it easier for the drivers of such vehicles to see or be made aware of the presence of those who are vulnerable; and take appropriate action.

Scania is, of course, conscious of these far-reaching developments and has designed a truck that is completely in

tune with these fast-changing times. At the heart of a steady swing towards the use of electric transport, the BEV (Battery Electric Vehicle) Urban is one of the cleanest and safest rigid trucks available.

Produced as a 4x2, a 6x2 and a 6x4, and with a wide choice of axle distances, BEV Urban is ideal for applications such as multi-drop distribution and refuse collection.

Power comes courtesy of a P160 permanent magnet synchronous electric motor married to a two-speed gearbox.



Below: The Scania BEV Urban is one of the cleanest and safest rigid trucks available



Above: The Scania BEV Urban is produced as a 4x2, a 6x2 and a 6x4, and with a wide choice of axle distances

The package can deliver a continuous 230kW (308hp) peaking at a highly creditable 290kW (388hp), along with 2,200Nm of torque. The electric power take-off (ePTO) is good for a useful 60kW (80hp).

The truck's range depends on the number of batteries that are specified. Opt for five at a total of 165kWh and users should be able to drive 80 miles before they need to recharge. That should be more than sufficient if a vehicle spends its working day constantly stopping and starting in city centre traffic jams as it goes from one delivery point to the next.

If loads need to be sent a little further, it is worth noting that the batteries can be recharged from 0 per cent to 100 per cent in 55 minutes. Choose nine batteries instead at a total 297kWh and the range will leap to 155 miles. Charging time from 0 per cent to 100 per cent is a still-liveable-with 100 minutes.

Maximum charging power is 130kW (200A) no matter which multiple of batteries are selected and BEV Urban solely uses DC charging. High-powered DC charging employs the two large bottom pins of a CCS2 connector, so a Type 2 AC connector cannot be used to charge the vehicle.

Bear in mind that electric trucks are far quieter than their diesel rivals. As a consequence, they can be deployed late at night and early in the morning without any need to worry that the slumbers of householders will be disturbed – or that a tidal wave of complaints will follow as a consequence.

Below: Power comes courtesy of a P160 permanent magnet synchronous electric motor married to a two-speed gearbox



Two cabs on offer

Built with a low, standard or a high roof, the L-Series L20 cab is a city truck driver's dream. One of its big advantages is the ability of the driver to move across the cab without encountering any obstacles along the way and step safely on to the pavement on the passenger side.

The cab is easy to enter and exit. Because it is low slung, wayward bike riders and pedestrians stepping off the pavement are easy to spot.

Sitting behind the wheel in an L-Series cab, the driver is on the same level as other vehicles travelling along traffic-clogged city streets.

On my test drive, I enjoyed an optimal view forwards and to the sides, thanks to the low dashboard and low window sills. The compact mirror housings and the wide gap between the A-pillars and the exterior mirrors maximise the field of vision.

An optional city safe window low down on the passenger door improves the chances of spotting people – children and wheelchair users, for example – who may be at risk.

That is certainly not to imply that vision from the driver's seat of the more-conventional and familiar P-Series cab is poor – far from it. It is listed in P14, P17 and P20 guises, with low, standard and high-roof options all present and correct.

Scania is well-known for using the same parts on different vehicles in order to contain costs, but without compromising the styling or the capabilities of the trucks concerned.



Left: The Urban BEV is built on the same frame as the manufacturer's internal combustion vehicles

The Urban BEV is built on the same frame as the manufacturer's internal combustion vehicles. The frame has more than sufficient strength for the tasks the truck will be asked to undertake.

There is no denying that the unladen weight of an electric truck is likely to be higher than that of its equivalent conventionally powered stable-mates, thanks to the burden imposed by its batteries.

A five-battery Urban BEV is 660kg heavier than a Scania powered by a 9.0-litre diesel with a 150-litre fuel tank and a 47-litre AdBlue reservoir. Opt for nine batteries and the extra weight rises to a hefty 1,600kg.

Much of this burden is offset, however, by the government's decision to grant an additional 1,000kg gross weight allowance to zero-emission vehicles.

This means that what would under normal circumstances be an 18-tonner can run at 19 tonnes if it happens to be electric. An electric 26-tonner can operate at 27 tonnes.

That said, axle loading requirements still have to be adhered to. So, buyers need to think carefully about the body that will be fitted and the cargo it will carry before making an acquisition decision.

Conclusion

The electric Urban BEV is a truck at one with the times we live in. Few, if any, models are better suited for zero-emission city centre distribution work – and the protection the L-Series cab in particular offers to vulnerable highway users can only be applauded. ■

Electric trucks can be deployed late at night and early in the morning without any need to worry that the slumbers of householders will be disturbed

Below: Much of the extra weight burden is offset by the government decision to allow an extra 1,000kg gross weight allowance for zero-emission vehicles

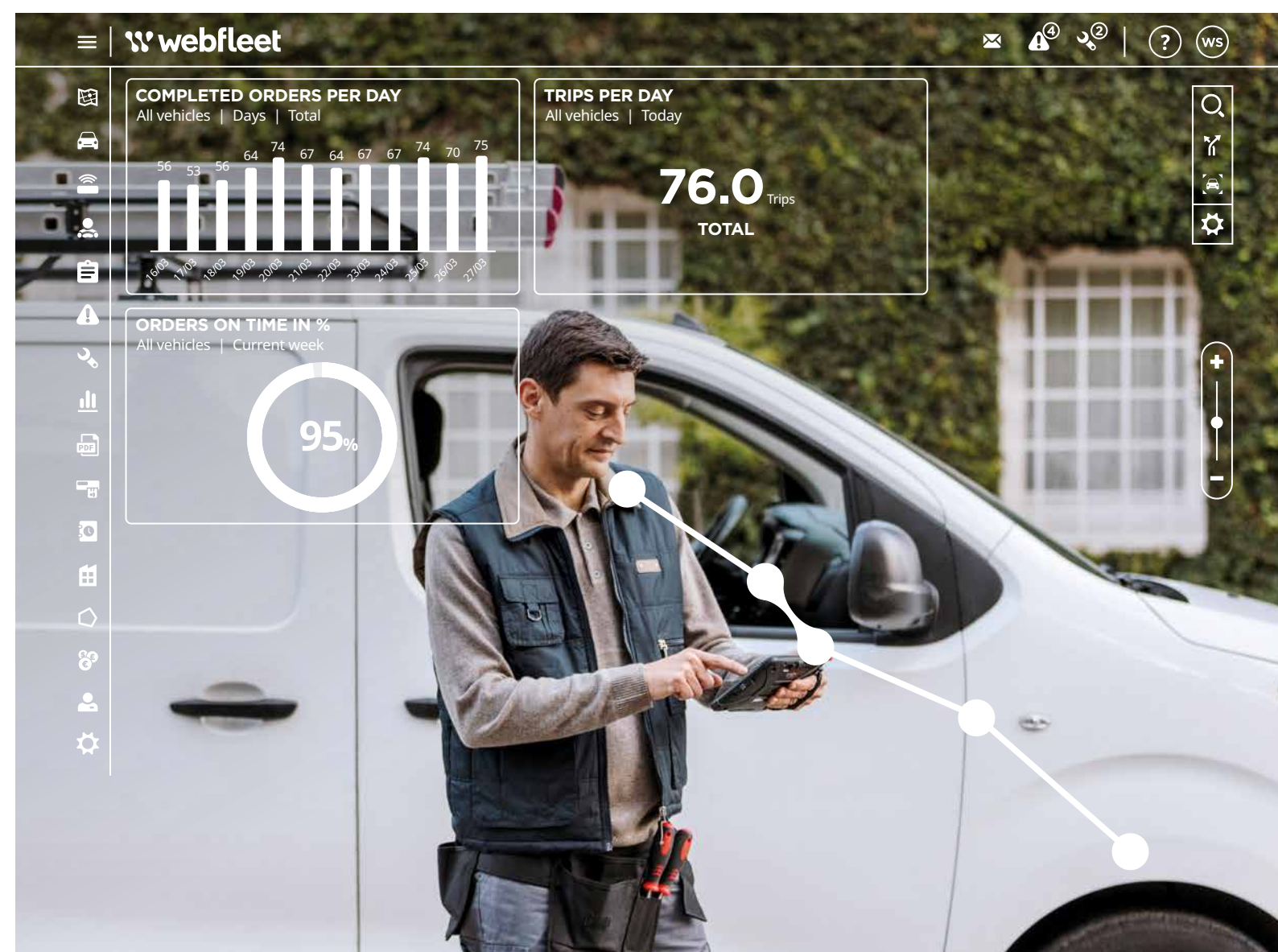


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SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES IN THE WORKPLACE

Drink and drug testing – the who, what, when, where, why and how

In previous issues we have looked into setting up a drink and drug testing programme, how other industries have approached and regulated the risks and key elements and how we support our colleagues, with our aim throughout being to approach workplace substance management programmes from the perspective of positive intent.

As a reminder, positive intent means that we approach workplace psychoactive substance programmes from the position that in the main, employees do not want to come to work under the influence of a substance, nor remain under the emotional control of needing a substance to function in their daily life.

Now we begin to look at testing and the who, what, when, where, why and how of it...

Why

There are several reasons an organisation may want to test its staff for the presence of psychoactive substances. There may be legislative reasons that testing has to take place. Industries such as oil and gas, rail, maritime and aviation all have regulations stipulating not only the need but also often defining an approach to the management of substances, education of a workforce and the testing required.

Unregulated organisations may bring in testing to support the safety of an operation, or even as part of a staff wellbeing package which can be highly effective if it includes sufficient support and is implemented in the correct way.

We spoke about addiction as a

deceitful disease in the autumn issue. Those employees who are suffering are unlikely to ask for help, exposing the organisation, friends, family and themselves to ever increased risk. If we test, we can find the problem early and attempt to support both the employee and employer.

How

An organisation, testing company or manager should only do what is detailed within the company policy. The company policy is the clear mark of intent for the organisation’s employees, its suppliers and customers – and if regulatory compliance is deemed necessary by a regulating body, the policy will define and communicate how compliance is met. All procedures should be documented, flow charted and available for employees to have access and understand what is expected of them.

Who

This again should be covered and defined in a good policy. Some organisations may roll out a ‘one size fits all’ policy, ensuring all employees are treated equally. Others may identify key roles that are considered safety sensitive.

When

Testing can take place in a variety of settings. However, the three main triggers during an employee’s time with a company that could cause testing are – new employee testing, ‘for cause’ testing and random unannounced testing.

New employee testing is one of the most

simple to deploy. It is done by stating that before a contract is issued with an offer of employment, the candidate has to pass a drugs and alcohol test.

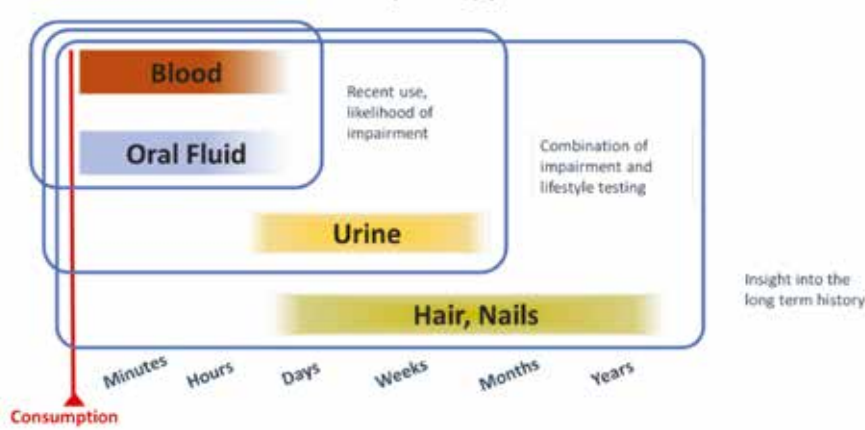
In contrast, ‘for cause’ testing can be the most difficult to manage properly. There are three main reasons to perform a for cause test – post incident or on suspicion.

In the case of post incident, the need to test is difficult to argue with. Most rational actors would agree that part of the investigative process of an incident is the elimination of possible causes and this is a very quick and simple way to rule out an impaired operator. However, we must bear in mind that we may not always be dealing with rational actors.

Of the three types of ‘for cause’ testing, the most difficult to manage is the on-suspicion test. By its very nature, you are calling an individual’s integrity into question and singling them out for specific treatment. The requesting manager is exposed to accusations of bullying and the relationship between the organisation and the employee will be permanently changed. If the employee is well known, well liked and influential within the workforce, the ‘for cause’ test can sew discontent within the workforce once the inevitable WhatsApp messages start to be passed around. Armed with this knowledge, the procedure and criteria for calling a ‘for cause’ test must be clearly defined and managed.

Random, unannounced testing, although often perceived as one of the more contentious forms of testing can, if communicated clearly to the workforce

Detection windows of sample types



Above: The window of detection for an oral fluid test is from two minutes post consumption up to a maximum of 48 hours

in an understanding and transparent manner, be well received. The workforce and their families, after all, have to live in a world where they are exposed to the risk of others operating under the influence. In my experience, provided the policy is well written and the workforce well trained, the general view is that testing is a positive thing.

Where

Where the test takes place is one of the most overlooked questions when selecting a means of testing. It should be possible to perform anywhere, whether in a crew room prior to an aircraft departing or the motorway service car park. Selecting a testing medium that can facilitate testing regardless of location is key, while also understanding the operational constraints of the operation.

Diversionary cost must also be considered – when we are testing staff we are always conscious that our clients staff are not working. Therefore, selecting the correct equipment and deploying testing in the most effective and efficient way is a key success factor.

What

This is one of the most confusing questions for our customers. What should we use to test our employees? To answer that question, we need to first ask another question – what do you want to see as a result of testing?

At OdiliaClark we break our testing into two main types of test – an impairment test or a lifestyle test.

In an impairment test, we select a testing method that looks specifically for any substance/s that could be acting on the donor at the point that testing is performed. For an impairment test, we only use breath for alcohol and oral fluid for drugs. We use Dräger impairment testing equipment, as used by over 80 police forces globally. Oral fluid is as close to a blood test that can be achieved without the invasiveness of taking blood.

It can be witnessed so the opportunity for tampering or adulteration is limited and with the simple operation of the equipment, the testing associate does not have to touch the equipment during operation, with the equipment only touched by the donor. The window of detection for an Oral fluid test is from two minutes post consumption up to a maximum of 48 hours (see chart). In reality, the chances of finding something start to diminish after about 12 hours, depending on a range of variables. An additional benefit of using oral fluid and its short windows of detection is that you are not encroaching into the donor’s private life. How they spent their non-working time is, within reason, not the concern of the organisation.

There are, however, times when the impairment test is not relevant and for this OdiliaClark would use a lifestyle test. In this test we are looking for longer windows of sustained, high-risk behaviour only. We are looking for a three- to six-month window of behaviour and whether there are any warning signs within this timeframe. In this test we are not looking for an

employee who drank too much over Christmas, or even spent a week abroad.

We are looking for a high correlation of risky behaviour. Typically, we only use this test for two main reasons – new employee testing and in the event of an employee self-referral.

For the new starter, testing gets a basic overview of any associated risk that may be coming with that employee. These are typically only used for safety-sensitive employees so the organisation can make an informed decision prior to employing an individual.

In the event of a self-referral, we know we are likely to be finding something.

Therefore, the testing is more targeted for the declared substance/s, but also includes the full suite of drugs because, as we know addiction is a deceitful disease.

The beauty of the lifestyle test over a standard impairment test is that it cannot be prepared for. In fact, we cannot even see the past 10 days’ worth of a donor’s history.

We can book the donor when appropriate and in a low-pressure environment take a sample.

Testing is just a small but important part of an effective drug and alcohol management programme, and in the next issue we will cover what happens once something has been found in an initial point-of-care test and the chain of custody procedures that have to be used to ensure the integrity of the process. ■

ONE YEAR ON

In conversation with FORS Concession Director Ian Henderson

It's been 12 months since Sopra Steria undertook the concession to administer FORS, continuing the quest to help operators and specifiers become increasingly safe, efficient and environmentally protective. To date, the team has smoothly transitioned over from the previous concessionaire, prepared for the transformation that's to come and is now looking forward to delivering changes 'on the ground' in 2023.

Satisfied with the accomplishments over the previous 12 months, FORS Concession Director Ian Henderson is confident about the opportunities that lie ahead for FORS, particularly with respect to 'equivalent' schemes now available to operators. One thing we already know from Henderson is that he certainly doesn't view other schemes as comparable to FORS. The Standard magazine caught up with the main man to reflect on 2022 and to see what's in store for FORS in 2023.

Q: Ian, what a year! What's your general take on 2022?

A: Well, firstly, I can't believe it's been a full 12 months since we took over the concession. There's been a colossal amount of work going on behind the scenes and it feels like our feet haven't touched the ground. The transition from the previous management company was lengthy but very smooth, with the team now settled in and busy transforming the scheme to ensure it's more accessible, transparent and customer centric. Some of this important work has not been immediately apparent to our accredited operators but it's been crucial ahead of implementing significant improvements to how operators interact with the scheme and how we administer the FORS Standard.



Above: Ian Henderson – operators will really start to see the fruits of our labours soon

We've also spent a lot of invaluable time listening and learning to the FORS community. FORS cannot stand still and it's only through engagement with accredited operators and the wider industry that our 'Future of Accreditation' project will enable authentic, progressive change.

So, my general feeling is satisfaction with completing a great deal of preparatory work, with our full focus now on delivering change on the ground in 2023.

Q: Do you have a particular highlight from last year?

A: Yes, that's easy, the FORS Annual Conference in July in Manchester. It was the first conference for operators in three years and it was clear they were excited to be back face to face. We were treated to presentations from an impressive panel of industry stakeholders representing the length and breadth of the industry. We were especially pleased to have ex-MP Steve Norris as a guest speaker. He proved enormously popular and thought provoking and I still receive messages about his talk from operators and

thought leaders.

We were hugely encouraged by the really positive feedback in the days following the conference, showing a real impetus to explore improvements for the industry. In our post conference survey, 85per cent of respondents said they'll return for future events, 85per cent said they found the content 'extremely' or 'somewhat' useful, while 88per cent said their FORS knowledge had improved as a result of the event.

I said that I felt emboldened and invigorated shortly after the conference, and I still do.

Q: It looks like FORS has been reaching out to the industry too?

A: Yes, that's been a very conscious effort. One of the first things we took on board was the need for collaboration with other industry stakeholders. FORS has grown to become the industry's principal accreditation scheme and certainly the most well established. It seemed obvious to me that there's so much opportunity for cross-organisational cooperation.

So, rather than working in isolation, we're now in meaningful talks with industry bodies like the RHA and Traffic Commissioners to see where mutual opportunities exist. Logistics UK, I'm delighted to say, attended the FORS Annual Conference, and, like the RHA, is an established and valuable member of our Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG) – the group responsible for setting the standards.

GSAG comprises around 25 organisations representing the full spectrum of the transport industry, including fleet operators, local authorities and transport specifiers. Although GSAG does not involve itself with the day-to-day running of FORS,

it's very much representative of the scheme's collaborative nature going forward.

We want this effort to benefit both operators and specifiers and in the early part of this year we will be reaching out to specifiers particularly, to make sure the day-to-day operation of FORS continues to meet their needs too.

Q: We've seen the recent emergence of new schemes equivalent to FORS. Do you expect your growth to take a hit?

A: Let me first say that the word 'equivalent' here is a misnomer. The term arises from TfL's recognition of 'Mission Zero' and the DVSA's 'Earned Recognition' scheme as alternatives to FORS Silver in its Work Related Road Risk contract clauses. However, even just a cursory glance at the relative size, scope and service offering provided by these schemes when compared to FORS will reveal that they are not 'equal'.

I want to point out that any move to raise standards of safety and efficiency on our roads is a very good thing; the more that fleet operators seek to improve safety and performance, the better. Therefore, we support TfL's commitment in this regard.

However, I would ask operators to look at the benefits of each scheme before signing up. FORS offers a substantially greater benefits package as it presents a unique proposition. Firstly, having 15 years of growth behind us, FORS has rock-solid foundations from which the improvements and changes I mentioned will flow. With longevity comes credibility. The intervening time has

allowed us to develop a comprehensive suite of services, reflecting the modern transport landscape, while adapting to new legislation and technological developments. So, to answer your question, with respect to our substantial service offering and our forthcoming changes, I see the FORS community only growing this year and beyond.

Q: So, what does FORS offer operators that other schemes cannot?

A: FORS is about encouraging operators to adopt a best-practice mindset. There are various ways we go about this. Chief among them is our comprehensive FORS Professional training portfolio. No other accreditation scheme provides such a complete offering and certainly not on a free, funded or discounted basis. We boast a full range of training courses and training modules with dedicated pathways for both drivers and fleet managers. Arguably, the jewel in the crown is our FORS Practitioner course, a programme of 10 training modules from which individuals 'graduate' with

a complete understanding of how to manage a modern fleet operation.

We have a comprehensive array of online materials too, including Toolkits, Toolbox Talks and Guides. Our dedicated Customer Success team, which comprises five fully trained experts, has proved immensely popular in assisting operators with their accreditation, audits and general support.

And, unlike some other schemes, FORS has a nationwide remit. FORS accredited operators and specifiers are found over the length and breadth of the UK and overseas. In fact, 75per cent of our c.4,700 accredited operators are based outside of the M25. I think this shows that, regardless of where operators are based, and regardless of their fleet size and make-up, FORS delivers on the fundamentals of safety, efficiency and environmental protection.

Q: Let's look ahead now. You mentioned 'delivering change' in 2023?

A: I certainly did, and I know accredited operators will really start to see the

FORS exists for everyone. FORS is inclusive and open to any specifier or operator regardless of the size and nature of their business

Below: The FORS Annual Conference in July in Manchester was the highlight of 2022



fruits of our labours soon. Our flagship project this year is named 'Future of Accreditation'. FORS accredited operators will see a streamlining of processes, the further nurturing of relationships with regulatory and enforcement agencies; accreditation will be simplified too, while clear accreditation pathways will be in place for different sectors. We will ensure these changes continue to meet the high standards required of FORS and ensure we address the needs of specifiers

The FORS Professional manager training portfolio is also in the latter stages of a full redesign. It is now bang up-to-date and in line with the latest industry legislation, and it also contains a number of courses and modules with a distinct focus on sustainability. Our FORS Practitioner programme has received a full makeover and the addition of new courses will see the programme become more flexible and accessible.

Q: Finally, where do you see FORS 12 months from now?

A: I see FORS as having consolidated its position as the go-to accreditation scheme for UK transport operators and specifiers.

I'm also confident that, through our

new collaborative approach and the changes rolling out over coming weeks and months, the scheme will have increased its appeal still further.

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international scheme – we're present in 14 countries and growing. Importantly, we have the scale and resources in place to deliver real benefits. ■

Below: FORS is about encouraging operators to adopt a best-practice mindset





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DOWN-PLATING – A GREAT IDEA OR NOT?

Richard Drinkwater of SvTech warns of the dangers of trying to skirt round the law

As you may know, SvTech is the UK’s leading rerating company, providing customers with uprates and down-plates to suit their needs.

Recently, we have seen several cases where people have bought larger 5,000kg plus vans (and even some 7,500kg trucks) and have attempted to down-plate them to 3,500kg so drivers with normal car licences can use them.

What they do not know is that the DVLA will only down-plate these goods

vehicles if they weigh less than 2,500kg empty (but with a driver and full fuel), as they require all 3,500kg goods vehicles to have an available payload of 1,000kg.

This is a tall order and many will be unable to meet these requirements. Even if they have managed to get to 3,500kg gross vehicle weight (GVW), the chances of overloading these vans are high, as 1,000kg isn’t very much – a full pallet could weigh this much. This would leave lots of space around it to illegally fill with other goods.

Enforcement officers take a dim view of vehicles being down-plated to 3,500kg and then immediately overloaded, as this is not only a payload offence but a driving licence offence too and is akin to joyriding in its severity.

“If you can’t drive over 3,500kg, don’t overload the van,” is the mantra. Overloads can be as high as 1,000kg and the fines are increasing in size and number. With weigh-in-motion sensors now on every smart motorway, the chances of being caught are high.



Enforcement officers take a dim view of vehicles being down-plated to 3,500kg and then immediately overloaded

Bear in mind that if it looks overloaded to an enforcement officer, it probably is overloaded! Is it worth losing your licence and career for a few hundred kilos of contents? The fines are hefty – up to £5,000 per offence, so it’s critical that drivers know their vans aren’t overloaded.

Take the van to a weighbridge and get three weights – the overall GVW and the front and rear axle weights separately. At least you will know your starting point and can then endeavour to stay within your limits. ■

Left: Is it worth losing your licence and career for a few hundred kilos of contents? (Library image)

Electric vehicle prices may rise by 10 per cent

Transport chiefs are being warned that the price of many electric vehicles (EVs), which are sold or made in the UK and Europe, could increase by 10 per cent or more from 2024 when tariff exemptions, agreed as part of the Brexit deal, end.

The UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) temporarily exempted EVs from rules that said products must be substantially made in Britain or the bloc to qualify for the EU's zero tariff, zero quota regime, because EV batteries are predominantly imported from Asia.

Both the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) and the Society of Motor Manufacturers (SMMT) are asking for the rules of origin exemption to be extended from December 31 2023, when it is now due to end, because they say that there are not enough batteries being made in Europe.

If the exemption cannot be extended, many EVs moving between the EU and UK would pay a 10% tariff, increasing prices for fleets.

Mike Hawes, chief executive at UK automotive trade body the SMMT, said: "Rules of origin agreed in the UK-EU TCA must work for all parties and the UK and EU face challenges in ensuring there is adequate domestic battery production to meet the terms agreed."

"Given the unprecedented turmoil since the TCA was signed, the EU and UK should look at battery manufacturing capabilities across Europe and assess the risk of crippling tariffs being applied, affecting both sides, in little over a year."



DVSA reveals that 88.5% of almost 11,000 LCVs stopped at the roadside annually are overloaded

With plans to pull over more LCVs on the roadside and potentially to enforce HGV-like legislation on the LCV market, it's about time you checked your van's laden weights, especially the individual axle weights, as SvTech has discovered many more vans have overloaded rear axles than previously thought. Any overload could invalidate your insurance, and if severe enough, could affect your braking and handling.

SvTech is seeing an increasing amount of van uprates at the moment, especially under 3500kg, where we are uprating from 2800kg to 3000/3200kg and from 3200kg up to 3500kg. This additional 300kg of payload is proving vital for many van owners, as it is very easily to overload these vehicles.

Whilst we uprate 3500kg vans by up to 500kg, there are some issues to take into consideration when going above 3500kg. A van over 3500kg needs a speed limiter fitted and, if carrying goods commercially, the van will need a tachograph to be fitted.

In addition, it means that the van can only be driven by someone who either passed their test before 1997 or by someone with a C1 entitlement on their driving licence.

These factors often make the uprate over 3500kg unviable or impractical for some fleet operators, however if the van is being regularly overloaded, SvTech would recommend uprating. We offer fleet discounts and can advise on the next steps. Please contact us to discuss your fleet needs.

"SvTech can help with uprating your LCV to give you more payload, keeping you safe and legal. Most makes and models are catered for."

Caution

It's important to remember that if a driver doesn't possess the C1 entitlement, and they overload a 3500kg van, in the event of being stopped, it would also be considered as a licence offence, which can hold strict penalties. It's worth weighing the van in an unladen and fully laden state to ascertain your limits.

Fleet discounts are available for uprates on 5 or more vehicles.

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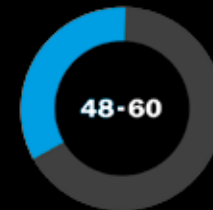
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FORS SILVER STANDARD

FORS accreditation drives growth for customers of compliance firm

Lincolnshire-based transport compliance expert Total Compliance has seen exponential growth over the last 18 months as an increasing number of transport companies have turned to the consultancy to help them achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold accreditation.

With the FORS Standard becoming an essential prerequisite of many supply chain contracts, the demand for experienced compliance consultants like Total Compliance has risen sharply.

While compliance and operational efficiencies have played a big part in this growth, Michelle Scott, director of Total Compliance, explains that many of its customers have seen a huge commercial benefit from being accredited and it is this growing awareness of the business development potential that is driving demand.

She said: "Where our customers have seen most benefit to their FORS accreditation is actually in attracting new business. FORS provides companies with the means to adhere to the specifications set out by many larger organisations,

giving smaller operators the opportunity to pitch for large contracts which previously they may not have been considered for.

"One of our customers recently achieved FORS Gold and celebrated this online. Almost immediately, the phone started ringing to bring sales enquiries into them rather than them relying

Many companies come to us to help with FORS accreditation and end up getting so much more

on traditional sales outreach. FORS accreditation completely changed their business."

The benefit of outsourcing transport compliance does not stop at business development though, as Michelle explains.

"Many companies come to us to get help with FORS accreditation and end up getting so much more. We help them

with general operator licence compliance and offer tips and advice to improve their operations. The operators also feel that the training we provide for FORS, along with group e-learning sessions, really changes the drivers and their approach to training. It is much more engaging."

Another area of growth for which Total Compliance is preparing is an increase in ADR training and DGSA guidance. With the law having changed at the end of the year, Michelle and the team expect to see a significant increase in demand for external DGSA's, as companies without a current adviser look for a solution.

"Companies don't realise how serious these regulations are," said Michelle. "Even when your company is only picking, packing, loading or transporting some dangerous goods, it is likely that they will still require a DGSA."

Working throughout the UK, the Total Compliance team provides hands-on support to fleet operators, helping them to implement policies and internal systems which improve their day-to-day operations and meet FORS requirements. ■

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