



AUTUMN 2023

STANDARD MAGAZINE

TESTING TIMES

We put new electric trucks and vans through their paces

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Geraint Davies, FORS' new concession director

ARTIFICIAL AID

AI points the way towards improved road safety

PLUS: STAR NAME SPEAKERS REVEALED FOR FORS CONFERENCE 2023

THE BIG CLEAN-UP

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About us

Management Publisher: Matthew Eisenegger **Editorial Editor:** Trevor Gehlcken **Telephone:** 07747 787403.
Email: gehlcken@hotmail.com **Art Editor:** Leo Gehlcken **Telephone:** 01257 231521 **Email:** design@cvdriver.com **Contributors** Steve Banner, Richard Simpson, John Challen **Editorial Address** Commercial Vehicle Media & Publishing Ltd, 4th Floor 19 Capesthorpe Drive, Eaves Green, Chorley, Lancashire. PR7 3QQ **Telephone:** 01257 231521 **Email:** matthew@cvdriver.com
Advertising Sales: David Johns **Telephone:** 01388 517906 **Mobile:** 07590 547343 **Email:** sales@thestandardmagazine.co.uk

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Contact FORS: **Web:** www.fors-online.org.uk **Tel:** 08448 09 09 44
Email: enquiries@fors-online.org.uk @FORS_online (Twitter and LinkedIn)



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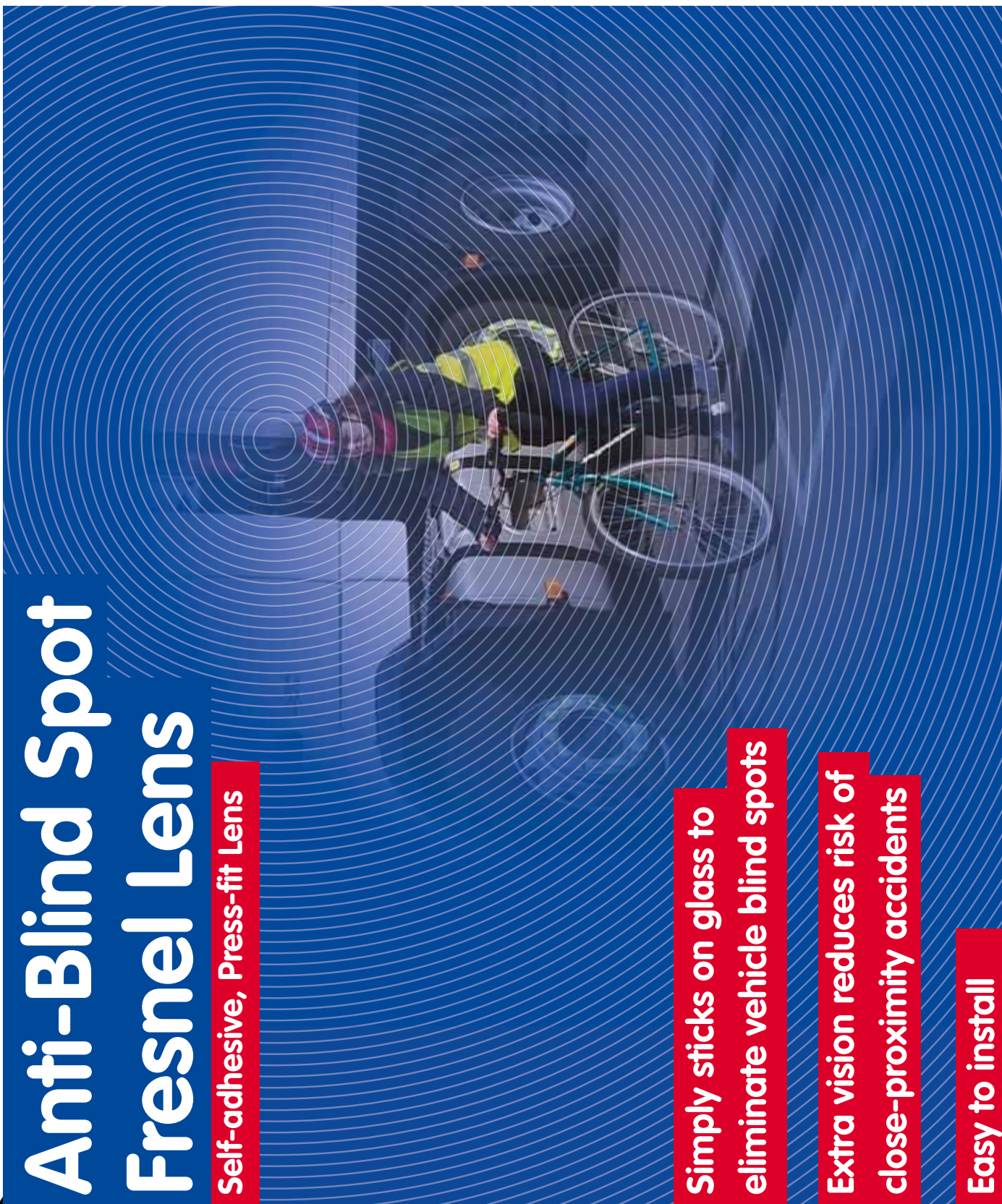


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HELLO & WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of The Standard

A number of important issues are arising as I write, and as they develop we will be keeping a close eye on how they are likely to impact FORS Accredited Operators. First, it's good to report we finally have some clarity on the direction of travel for the introduction of zero emission vans with the Government's publication of its Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate, which will come into force in January 2024.

Under the new rules, the Government is setting targets for the number of zero emission vans that will be sold each year. From 2024, 10% of all new vans sales will have to be zero emission at the tailpipe, by 2030 the target will rise to 70%, and by 2035 the target will be 100%. The van manufacturers will be fined if they don't meet those targets, so this will impact the vehicles available for you to buy.

Elsewhere, the decision to abandon the northern section of the HS2 high-speed rail line will have come as a blow to many involved in the construction sector.

The London to Birmingham section of HS2 is well advanced and the project has been a showcase for operational best practice, embracing FORS and its values. We are assured the investment in HS2 will be re-assigned to other infrastructure projects in the north of England and we will be pushing hard to ensure FORS is included as the accreditation standard for these new initiatives.

We will be looking at both topics in more detail in the next issue.

As far as FORS is concerned, the big news is the upcoming annual conference at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on 2 November. It gives the FORS community the chance to hear from some of the top names in the industry speaking – but that's only one part of the day. There will be plenty of time for networking and also some of the FORS Associates demonstrating exciting new products.

I'll be there too, so if you spot me, come and have a chat. I'd be interested to know what readers think of our magazine and if there is anything they would like covering which we don't do at present. I'm always open to new ideas.

Once again, this issue is packed with useful information and features which are all aimed at helping FORS operators

run their transport fleets in a safer, greener and more cost-effective way.

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) looks set to transform the safety arena in a major way and we devote three pages in this issue to explaining how it's going to be a real game-changer in the coming years.

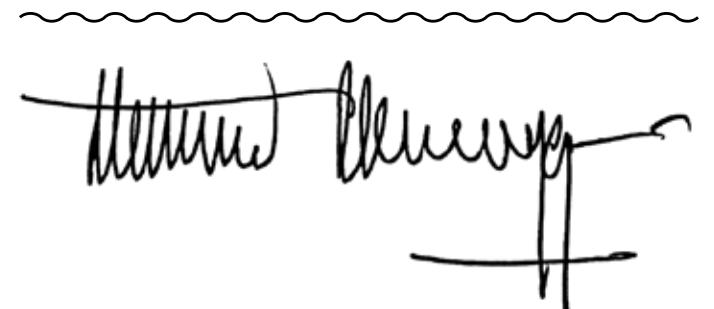
There's a first in-depth interview with the new FORS Concession Director Geraint Davies. I met him recently for a chat and he's a really experienced transport man. He tells us about his fascinating life so far in the industry and how he plans to make FORS accreditation not just beneficial but essential.

We also bring news that Transport for London is set to raise the bar even higher over truck safety, so operators need to get a heads-up on what will be required well before the October 2024 date when the new rules are due to come into force. You'll find full details inside.

We also put some of the new electric van models that are now appearing through their paces and compare them to their diesel counterparts.

On the legal front, Ian Jones, of Backhouse Jones Solicitors, highlights some important new changes in the law that readers might have missed, while David Whiffin, of OdiliaClark, continues his fascinating series about the steps needed to create a working environment that is drink and drug free.

Read on and enjoy...





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Left: Safer streets

Transport for London plans to raise the bar for city trucks next year

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A host of industry experts line up to speak at the FORS Annual Conference in Birmingham on 2 November



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We interview new FORS Concession Director Geraint Davies, already a well-known industry name



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Right: Automatic game-changer

How the development of artificial intelligence is helping to improve road safety



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We put the Iveco eDaily through its paces both on and off the road



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Scania's huge EV order is a 'pivotal moment for the transport industry'



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Right: Help at hand

How colleagues can nurture wellbeing to create a substance free culture at work

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Better training

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Jaama growth

Software firm plans expansion after recent takeover **p8**

Women at the wheel

Women outperform men on LGV first time driving test pass rate **p8**

Diving in

New training scheme offers a 360 degree immersive experience **p9**

Safety first

ELB eyes the options list when ordering its range of new trucks **p9**

Training programme updated with new Advanced Practitioner qualification

Fleet managers seeking advanced professional development can now improve their credentials after FORS revealed its new ‘Advanced Practitioner’ training qualification.

The new certification builds on the popular FORS Practitioner training programme, which already boasts over 3,400 graduates and saw the addition of five new modules earlier this year. To achieve Advanced Practitioner status, fleet managers must complete all 15 training modules offered by FORS – five more than is required to become a base-level FORS Practitioner.

A range of topics are covered within the portfolio, including advanced risk management, sustainable fleet operations and advanced driver training.

Below: Fleet managers must complete all 15 training modules offered by FORS to achieve the new qualification



All modules have been specifically developed for transport professionals looking to advance their professional development and demonstrate their commitment to road safety, efficiency and environmental protection.

Existing FORS Practitioners are only required to complete their remaining five courses to achieve Advanced Practitioner status, but this must be achieved prior to the expiry date of their current qualification.

FORS Concession Director, Geraint Davies, said: “We are once again raising the bar for road safety, efficiency and environmental protection. We’ve invested heavily in our training programme over the past year and the enthusiastic response we’ve had from ambitious fleet managers since we launched is encouraging.”

For more information and to book an upcoming course, visit www.fors-training.org.uk/ •

Jaama celebrates anniversary with new bosses and growth plans

FORS Associate Jaama has announced a new chapter on its 19th anniversary following the acquisition of the business by a group of entrepreneurial investors led by Andrew Holgate.

Holgate takes over as chief executive. CEO Jason Francis, who originally set

Jaama is a great business underpinned by a phenomenal team which provides industry-leading software

up Jaama in 2004, will leave the business and will remain an investor in the company. Holgate is joined by industry veteran Paul Waterhouse, who now enters as CFO.

Martin Evans will remain as MD and said: “The focus is very much on ‘business as usual’ but with the benefit of gaining a wealth of experience on growing businesses that will really help drive Jaama’s continued growth plan in the fleet software sector over the coming years.”

Holgate added: “Jaama is a great business underpinned by a phenomenal team which provides industry-leading software, backed up by excellent customer service. We have a long-term strategy and I look forward to working closely with customers, further developing our products and growing the Jaama business.” •

More women are taking trucking jobs

More women are undertaking heavy goods vehicle (HGV) training and moving into the professional driver industry.

According to the latest data from the Department for Transport (DfT), a total of 8,732 women took a practical LGV test in 2021/22 – a 188% increase on a decade ago (2011/12) when 3,024 women took the same test.

A test pass enables a person to drive LGVs in the C1 and C1E (3.5–7.5 tonnes/plus trailer) or C and CE (3.7–32 tonnes/plus trailer) categories.

Of those taking the test, more are passing in greater numbers – the pass rate for the test has increased from 53 per cent in 2011/12 to 62.4 per cent in 2021/22 – the latter figure exceeding

their male counterparts who recorded a 58.7 per cent pass rate.

Below: There has been a large increase in the number of women truck drivers



Pothole pay

Local councils fork out less money for damage to vehicles **p9**

Super scanner

New device helps out when truck tyre checks are due **p10**

Fuel saver

Transmission system comes good for refuse collection vehicles **p10**

No charge

New survey reveals a lack of public charging points for electric vehicles **p10**

New programme offers immersive virtual reality training

Transport, logistics and construction consultancy and training provider, Total Compliance, has launched an immersive 360-degree virtual reality training solution.

The pioneering approach uses modern technology to immerse drivers in realistic, true-to-life driving scenarios, enabling them to experience the consequences of their actions within a controlled environment.

The training equips drivers with an in-depth comprehension of the intricacies of road safety. The seven-hour course serves a dual purpose by augmenting drivers’ abilities while contributing to their professional qualifications.

Michelle Scott, Director of Total Compliance, said: “By combining advanced technology with a comprehensive training programme, we are introducing a new era for driver education. This innovative training approach empowers drivers to internalise crucial safety lessons, enabling them to make informed decisions on the road and ultimately promoting a culture of safer driving.”

The programme’s immersive nature places drivers in situations they may encounter during their routes, such as adverse weather conditions, congested urban streets and motorway driving. •

Councils pay less over pothole claims

Local councils have forked out more than £11 million over the past four years to drivers who successfully claimed their vehicles had been damaged by potholes.

Data provided by 172 councils that responded under a Freedom of Information request shows £2.41m was paid to drivers in 2021/22, £2.71m in 2019/20 and £3.61m in 2018/19 – meaning the collective compensation paid by these councils fell by a third.

The amount councils spent on routine maintenance per year rose by 17 per cent between 2018/19 (£237m) and 2021/22 (£277m), though the effect of inflation on material and labour costs may well mean this increase

has not drastically improved road quality.

Meanwhile, the amount spent on planned resurfacing went up by nine per cent between 2018/19 (£851m) and 2021/22 (£928m). •

Below: Pothole damage compensation is falling



ELB puts safety at the heart of its new truck acquisitions



Above: ELB’s new trucks are equipped with the latest AI cameras and telematics technology from VisionTrack

FORS Gold Operator ELB Partners, based in Croydon, has increased its fleet to more than 70 after purchasing eight new rigid trucks, two new articulated units and three new trailers.

The 53-year-old firm has invested heavily in the installation of additional safety equipment in the new vehicles, including the latest AI cameras and telematics technology from VisionTrack.

The use of AI video telematics will enable ELB Partners and its drivers to reduce risks such as fatigue, tailgating and vulnerable road users through data analysis and incident detection.

The new vehicles also feature Euro6 engines and are all Low Emission Zone (LEZ), Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and Direct Vision Standard (DVS) compliant.

The family-run logistics specialist is committed

to vehicle safety and environmental best practice and claims to be the only independent London-based haulier to have achieved the FORS Gold standard for nine consecutive years.

In addition, two of its new trailers benefit from double decks to improve efficiency and consolidate goods transported on behalf of the Pallet-Track and HazChem networks, of which it is a long-term member.

Managing Director Peter Eason said: “This is part of a huge investment we are making in the business to ensure our fleet is equipped for every new challenge our drivers face on the road.

“The use of AI camera technology is hugely beneficial. Due to our Greater London location, our drivers tackle some of the most difficult and high-risk urban environments, so investing in the most sophisticated safety equipment is paramount. •

Hand-held scanner launched to give tyre management boost

AES UK has introduced a hand-held tyre scanner that allows commercial vehicle operators, workshops and tyre retailers to quickly and accurately measure tyre tread depth.

TreadReader HD is a compact, easy-to-use device that provides full-width tread depth analysis and creates a detailed scan of each tyre to within 0.2mm.

Used in combination with the cloud-based management platform app, TreadManager, the scanner calculates tyre tread depths with 3D colour-coded graphics showing tyre conditions, tread warnings and safety alerts, such as under-inflation or wheel alignment recommended. TreadManager can also be integrated with workshop management.

“This unique tool is set to revolutionise tyre management for all HGV, PSV and LCV operators,” said AES UK Director, Tom Coad. “Using the dedicated commercial vehicle IOS or Android app, each tyre can

be measured in around 20 seconds, with all tyre scan data saved to the cloud for printing out, potential DVSA checks and maintenance reports.”

Coad said TreadReader HD speeds up routine vehicle maintenance and helps to guard against tyre failure. Moreover, the accuracy and simplicity of the system

Uneven tyre wear is often connected with a wheel alignment problem

helps with wheel alignment inspections and provides workshops with an affordable solution to help sell alignment as a service.

He added: “Uneven tyre wear is often connected with a wheel alignment problem. So, not only will the device immediately point to safety issues and potential tyre replacement, but it also provides early warning regarding misaligned wheels and axles. Workshops can therefore take immediate corrective action and then refer to the captured tyre data for ongoing wheel alignment checks.” •

Below: The new hand-held tyre scanner from AES



New transmission system cuts fuel use in refuse collection vehicles

Trials on a pair of refuse collection vehicles using Allison's xFE (for extra fuel economy) fully automatic transmission has showed diesel consumption reduced by almost five per cent.

Introduced to the medium-duty truck market in June 2021, the 3000 xFE and 3200 xFE transmissions differ from their standard counterparts, allowing early lock-up in first gear versus second gear. The double overdrive ratios in the fifth and sixth gears are also optimised, resulting in an improved ratio spread of 11 per cent.

These new features target improvements in fuel economy and exhaust particulates. Earlier lock-up reduces transmission power losses from the torque converter, reducing heat from the powerpack and allowing

the truck's engine to operate at lower rpm for a given road speed. The optimised

The xFE series is designed to lower fuel consumption

overdrive gears reduce the engine's cruise rpm for further fuel consumption and exhaust emissions improvements.

Many refuse trucks operate in low speed urban areas where air quality is at its most critical. The xFE series is designed to help address these ongoing concerns and improve operators' return on investment. Further fuel savings come from Allison's FuelSense 2.0 software and electronic control system, which is installed as standard on the xFE transmissions. •

Data reveals a paucity of public charging points across Great Britain



The Northwest and East Midlands have the lowest level of public electric vehicle charging points, new data from the Department for Transport (DfT) reveals.

The North-West has just 39 charging points and the

East Midlands 43 points per 100,000 head of population.

London, with the highest level of provision, has almost four times more than the Northwest, with 152 charge points per 100,000 population.

Scotland, the next highest, has 73 devices per 100,000, while the average provision in the UK is 66 per 100,000.

In terms of charge points with faster charging speeds (25kW and above), Scotland has the highest rate of provision, with 19.2 devices per 100,000, while the average provision in the UK is 12.6 per 100,000. •

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Words: **Steve Banner**

TfL SET TO TIGHTEN UP ON TRUCK SAFETY

New rules from October next year increase safety for vulnerable road users

Transport for London's HGV Safety Permit is continuing to evolve with the introduction of the Direct Vision Standard (DVS) Progressive Safe System (PSS).

An upgrade to the existing DVS Safe System, the new regulations come into force on 28 October 2024 and will apply to trucks grossing at over 12 tonnes with a zero-, one-, or two-star rating. Vehicles with a rating of between three and five stars will not be affected.

Operators with trucks that fall into the PSS net will have to apply for a new permit and can do so from June 2024 through the Transport for London (TfL) website (<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/deliveries-in-london/delivering-safely/direct-vision-in-heavy-goods-vehicles>). They can start having the equipment needed installed before the application process opens. There is a comprehensive and informative guidance document on the TfL website.

The kit needed includes Class V and VI

mirrors, which should be mounted on the front and nearside of the vehicle, says TfL. They can be completely replaced by a suitable camera monitoring system, with a combination of cameras and mirrors deemed to be acceptable. Whatever is installed must meet UNECE Regulation 46.

Below: A combination of cameras and mirrors is acceptable under the new regulations



Above: An audible device must be present to warn when a vehicle is turning left

A camera monitoring system must in any event be fitted to the truck's nearside with the aim of eliminating the remaining blind spot. It should make it easier for drivers to see vulnerable road users coming up on their inside and thus prevent collisions.

The nearside must also be fully covered by BSIS (Blind Spot Information System) sensors, again with the aim of detecting vulnerable road users such as cyclists.

The sensors must not be triggered by the presence of street furniture such as lamp posts, pillar boxes and road signs.

There is always the danger that the beeping they generate will prompt the driver to ignore the system, with potentially disastrous consequences if a collision occurs as a result.

If the truck concerned is an artic, then sensors should be fitted to the tractor unit, and are recommended for the trailer where possible.

Another PSS requirement is the installation of an MOIS – a Moving-Off Information System. It consists of sensors intended to prevent collisions when a vehicle moves off from rest.

Front blind spot

A truck may have a blind spot at the front, which means the driver may not always see a pedestrian walking close to it while the vehicle is stationary – at a zebra crossing, for example. The MOIS sensors should hopefully prevent individuals from being run over.

They do so by warning the driver of the presence of a person at the front of the truck. The warning escalates to an audible collision alert if the driver still prepares to move away.

A truck approved under UNECE

device must be present to warn pedestrians, bike riders and others at potential risk that a vehicle is turning left.

The volume of the warning measured at one metre from the sounder should be between 65 and 88 decibels, says TfL.

“Operators should consider fitting an audible warning system that combines spoken warnings and white noise,” it advises. “It should have a manual on/off switch for use between the hours of 11:30pm and 7:00am.”

Under-run protection must be

Operators should consider fitting an audible warning system that combines spoken warnings and white noise

Regulation 159 will comply with the MOIS stipulation. BSIS and MOIS specifications can be found on the TfL website.

The PSS obligations also include an audible vehicle manoeuvring warning

installed on both the nearside and offside of the vehicle unless this is clearly impractical. The protection must comply with UNECE Regulation 75 governing lateral protection devices.

Under-run protection must be installed on both the nearside and offside of the vehicle



External pictorial stickers and markings must be applied to warn the public of the hazards a truck can present and should be at least A3 size. The stickers can give warnings, eg: 'blind spot, take care' but must not give instructions such as: 'cyclists, stay back'. They should appear on the rear of a rigid and on the back of a trailer. "The text point size must be legible to a cyclist or pedestrian at a reasonable distance from the vehicle," says TfL.

Having had all this kit installed, how can firms prove to TfL that their trucks really are PSS compliant? Two photographs must be submitted with an application.

One must show the front and nearside, while the other must show the rear and nearside. Both shots should include the registration plate, which must be clearly readable.

Examples of acceptable photographic evidence can be seen on TfL's DVS website.

A statement also must be provided from either the fitter or the manufacturer of the devices concerned that certifies that the blind spot and moving off information systems are fully functional, effective, and have been fitted in accordance with PSS specifications.

Competent fitters

TfL points out that the Association of Vehicle Installers (www.theavi.org.uk) has a list of competent and qualified fitters on its website capable of installing a PSS.

Transport operators may

understandably be concerned that a shortage of equipment and suitably qualified fitters may make impossible for them to meet the October 2024 deadline. Aware that this may be the case, TfL is granting a three-month grace period to operators who can prove they have begun taking steps to have the necessary equipment installed.

The DVS Safe System already fitted to a truck may be compliant with the new DVS PSS rules. If in doubt, then operators should contact whoever installed it.

TfL warns that the obligations imposed by the HGV Safety Permit scheme must not be ignored.

It says: "It is unlawful to operate an HGV of more than 12 tonnes gross weight in Greater London without an HGV Safety Permit, or to breach the conditions of a

safety permit. If you do not follow these requirements, then you may be liable for a penalty charge notice of up to £550, reduced by 50 per cent if paid within 14 working days.

"This includes not adequately fitting or maintaining the Safe System or PSS equipment on your vehicle where required to do so. We carry out regular monitoring and roadside checks on vehicles to ensure that HGVs operating in London comply with the scheme." ■

Below: Drivers may not always see pedestrians walking in front while the vehicle is stationary



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TOP TRANSPORT EXPERTS LINE UP FOR FORS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Crucial range of topics make this a truly unmissable event

FORS has lined up a dazzling array of industry experts to speak at this year's Annual Conference, which returns on Thursday 2 November to the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Birmingham.

With the conference theme for 2023 'Building a resilient FORS Community for the road ahead', FORS has revealed some of the keynote speakers secured for the event. Chaired by well-known industry commentator, Andy Salter, presenters will include:

- **Marian Kitson** – Director of Enforcement, DVSA
- **Richard Turfitt** – Senior Traffic Commissioner
- **Paul Fox** – Fox Brothers (FORS Gold Accredited Operator)
- **Shireen Ali-Khan** – Women in Transport
- **Mark Cartwright** – National Highways
- **Rebecca Jenkins** – RJEN (business development and growth consultancy)

Keynote presentations will also be delivered by new FORS Concession Director, Geraint Davies, and FORS Technical Adviser, Glen Davies. Steve Agg will be representing the FORS Governance & Standards Advisory Group (GSAG) and will head up a panel comprising industry stakeholders and FORS Accredited Operators. The conference also provides a platform for FORS Affinity Partners and FORS Associates to showcase their products and services in a dedicated exhibition

zone, while presenting an unmissable opportunity to network with senior road transport professionals.

Presentations from FORS and the guest speakers will cover subject matters from across the transport sector, including:

- Taking responsibility (a keynote talk from Senior Traffic Commissioner)
- Attract, retain, develop and grow. Building a workplace community for the road ahead
- Enhancing operational resilience through road safety initiatives
- Redefining resilience: Create a thriving future for your business in an unpredictable world

Looking forward to his first FORS Annual Conference as concession director, Geraint Davies, said: "The conference is a principal date in the FORS calendar and I'm very much looking forward to meeting and greeting FORS operators, industry colleagues and friends. I've also attended most of the previous FORS conferences.

"I've always been impressed with how all corners of the industry come together under one roof. There's huge diversity in the transport sector and the FORS Annual Conference provides a platform for everyone."

He continued: "We know that operators face significant challenges, so we have worked hard to ensure this year's conference agenda is packed with great speakers, and with content that will help operators navigate and, indeed, thrive in a tough operating environment.

I'll be describing what we've been up to over the last 12 months as we continue to deliver tangible change for operators and to improve the FORS Operator experience.

"I'll also be sharing the future vision for FORS," he said, "including an update on transforming the scheme and the technology that supports it." ■



The FORS Annual Conference 2023 is free to attend for all FORS Accredited Operators. Further details about the event as well as the opportunity to confirm attendance can be found at: forsannualconference.com/fors2023/en/page/home

There's huge diversity in the transport sector and the FORS Annual Conference provides a platform for everyone



Marian Kitson,
Director of Enforcement, DVSA



Richard Turfitt,
Senior Traffic Commissioner



Paul Fox, Fox Brothers (FORS Gold Accredited Operator)



Shireen Ali-Khan,
Women in Transport



Mark Cartwright,
National Highways



Rebecca Jenkins, RJEN (business development and growth consultancy)

Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

NEW INSURANCE SCHEME A BOOST FOR OPERATORS

FORS links up with SJL Insurance Services for bespoke product

FORS Accredited Operators are being offered a new, bespoke insurance product to help them save time and money.

The package, with FORS insurance partner, SJL Insurance Services, includes a range of exclusive benefits for operators, who can now take advantage of SJL's 20-plus years' experience in the fleet market, full market access courtesy of its Lloyds of London Insurance Broker status, award-winning claims support, discounted premiums and other benefits to enhance their operations.

Offering flexible and comprehensive coverage, SJL's bespoke product allows for enhanced cover across a range of sectors, such as hazardous goods, hazardous locations and third-party working risks. Operators also stand to benefit from reduced excesses against the standard market rate, exclusive flexible driver age allowances, monetary contributions to continue risk management improvements and the ability to align with wider insurance programmes.

FORS Concession Director, Geraint Davies, said: "When creating this product with SJL, we surveyed our operators to ask what they valued the most in their insurance packages. Discounted premiums, claims support and reduced excesses came out on top, so we listened and ensured these elements

were included. I'm really proud that the package with SJL delivers what's important to our community, as well as many other benefits.

Imperative to get it right

"As a previous operator, I know how imperative it is to have the right insurance package in place. SJL is a business that truly understands the needs of a modern fleet operation, and we're delighted to have such a trusted specialist as our Insurance Affinity Partner."

CEO and owner at SJL, Simon Lancaster, added: "Working in close collaboration with FORS, we are excited to offer our insurance expertise to the benefit of the scheme's valued operators."

"Our joint initiative is geared towards rewarding FORS fleet and haulage operators, by creating a product that caters to their needs. Through a dedicated alignment of our offerings with the valuable insights garnered from operator surveys, we've created a product that is available exclusively for FORS operators, delivering a tailored solution that amplifies the overall achievement and enduring dedication of FORS operators." ■

For more information on the new insurance offering, email: fors@sjlins.co.uk

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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**



TRUCKS AND TRANSPORT IN THE BLOOD

New FORS Concession Director Geraint Davies has the drive to move FORS forward

Now four months into his new role as FORS Concession Director, Geraint Davies took time out from his hectic schedule to provide Standard readers with a snapshot of his career to date and outline what FORS operators can expect going forward.

A proud Welshman, Geraint has trucks and transport in his blood, having spent the last 22 years with one of Wales' and road transport's high-profile operators, John Raymond Transport. In fact, his relationship with trucks (and buses and coaches) goes right back to his school days and today, he has a licence to drive just about anything on the road.

Q: You've been on board for a few months now. What are your initial impressions?

A: I'm really pleased with the team I've inherited. I've been in the process of getting my feet under the table, getting to know everyone, learning all the systems and procedures and deep diving into the operation. The thing that immediately struck me was the excellent foundation laid down by my predecessor,

Ian Henderson, clearly placing the operator experience at the centre of the business model.

Q: Before we get into your personal experiences as a FORS Accredited Operator in your previous role, I think I'm right in saying you've spent most of your career in the industry. Can you give us a brief history of your journey since leaving school?

A: I used to go to school on a bus and my interest in buses, coaches and subsequently anything with wheels started then. After spending my childhood days at South Wales Transport depot in Swansea looking at the coaches, I started as an apprentice fitter after school with United Wales Coaches in Gorseinon, Swansea.

My parents pushed me to pursue higher education, so I did my A levels, including Welsh language, Welsh literature, design and technology. After that, I went on to study Welsh at Swansea, which led me to become a Welsh lecturer at Swansea College. During the summer break, and because I didn't receive holiday pay, I worked at a crisp packing factory! Later, a friend



Geraint has a licence to drive just about anything on the road

suggested I work at a distribution centre due to my interest in transport and that's where my career kick started.

Q: So, vehicles are in the blood?

A: Most definitely. I have licences to drive a car, a motorcycle, trucks of all types and a PSV licence too. I think I must be the first FORS concession director with that particular claim to fame.

Q: Back to your career path. Tell us more of that...

A: I began behind the wheel of a little Merc 814 7.5-tonner delivering car parts on timed deliveries into Calsonic Llanelli Radiators. Eventually I got my Class 2 and Class 1 licences and studied for my International Transport Manager CPC qualifications in both road freight and passenger transport. I worked at Owens Road Services in Llanelli and I spent some time in the traffic office there, but mostly I enjoyed driving a Volvo FH12, registration R692 NCY, delivering into Europe. I distinctly remember my first trip to Europe to the Ford factory in Genk in that truck.

I saw a picture of it on Facebook recently and it made me quite nostalgic. After that, I worked for NTL briefly, but I couldn't stay away from trucks and I went back to driving for Owens at weekends. Then, I applied for a job at John Raymond Transport. That was 22

years ago and I'd been with the company all that time before FORS. I still taught part time during this period as an evening Welsh lecturer at Afan College and I also worked as a transport manager CPC lecturer, the OCR qualification at the same institution.

I became involved with the Wales Freight Council and FTA (which later became Logistics UK) during this time. I went on to become Chair of the Welsh Freight Council and latterly the UK Road Freight Council at Westminster. Following that, I joined the RHA, starting

as the Chair of the Welsh Forum and ultimately ending up on the Board of Directors. I've since stepped down from that role to take up my position with FORS.

Below: Geraint believes FORS has scope to encompass various sectors such as cargo bikes and young drivers





Q: Interesting. Your association with FORS goes back many years too?

A: Yes. My journey with FORS began in the early days, around 2008–2009. We were one of the first operators in Wales and I was part of the first cohort of FORS Practitioners – I hold Practitioner certificate number five. John Raymond Transport was certainly the first FORS Gold Operator in Wales. In 2015, I started doing some training for FORS, mostly on Saturdays and I eventually became a FORS-trained auditor. I did that for about three years on weekends alongside my day job. I also took some leave and wrote transport manager CPC qualification papers for City & Guilds.

Q: You mentioned that you were part of the RHA and involved with the FTA. Are you looking to foster these relationships going forward?

A: I want to deepen relationships with those trade associations and others. I have many industry friends and colleagues who still work at Logistics UK and the RHA. Collaboration with these industry bodies and other stakeholders across the industry is crucial and not just in goods transport, but in other modes of transportation as well. The possibilities are wide open. I believe FORS has scope to encompass various sectors such as bus and coach operations, taxis, single-van users, cargo bikes and even young drivers.

Q: Okay, so tell me how FORS was embedded in your fleet management duties at John Raymond Transport.

A: FORS was beginning to get established

with operators at that time and its training content reflected what was happening in the wider industry. It certainly helped shape our road risk policy and specifically our approach to Work Related Road Risk. Particularly pertinent was the introduction of Safe Urban Driving courses. It wasn't perfect initially, but it adapted and improved. Today, it's still evolving with the introduction of electric vehicles. As an operator, I remember we noticed a reduction in sideswipe incidents because drivers became much more aware of their surroundings. They began diligently

Our goal is for operators to see that being a part of FORS is not just beneficial but essential

checking their mirrors and blind spots, which led to fewer accidents. This resulted in a better claims experience and a lower loss ratio, ultimately leading to lower insurance premiums.

Q: You mentioned the FORS Practitioner programme. I understand there's now an Advanced Practitioner course. Can you briefly describe that?

A: The FORS Advanced Practitioner

course is designed for those who want to go above and beyond. It's like earning a master's degree in FORS – it delves deeper into specialised aspects of the industry and offers an even higher level of expertise. A FORS Practitioner is required to complete 10 of 15 modules and a FORS Advanced Practitioner must complete all 15.

Q: What developments are in play for the FORS scheme right now, especially in the short term, and what benefits can accredited operators expect to see over the next 12 months?

A: The plan is to address the challenges that operators face – I am acutely aware of that – particularly in terms of resource management and especially with the growing need for skilled technicians. We're working on providing even more value-added services that can help operators save money.

Our goal is for operators to see that being a part of FORS is not just beneficial but essential. We aim to understand and fulfil operators' wants and needs to help them grow their businesses, while making the roads safer through driver training, work-related risk strategies and sustainable practices.

Q: What's your future vision for FORS and where do you want the scheme to be in 10 years?

A: In 10 years, I see FORS not only thriving but also expanding. I don't think it's unreasonable to expect it to be twice its current size or even larger. We want to take the scheme into new sectors because the challenges operators face are, in many respects, universal in all sectors. This could include the bus and coach sector, taxis, or even other types of vehicles. Our goal is to make a difference, not only for operators but for the wider community.

Q: What can FORS Accredited Operators expect from Geraint Davies personally?

A: I'm a very hands-on, pragmatic person who likes to see things through. I'm passionate about the transport industry and I understand how a transport operation works and the challenges faced by operators. I also recognise the community-minded spirit that exists within the transport community, so I'm extremely keen to ensure that FORS delivers a positive impact. Whether it's buses, coaches, vans or any other mode of transportation, my goal is to improve safety, reduce risk and promote sustainability. ■

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Words: **Steve Banner**

AI POINTS THE WAY TO INCREASED ROAD SAFETY

FORS believes no death or serious injury is acceptable on Britain's roads

Onboard technology is playing a major role in helping transport operators advance towards Vision Zero, an approach to safety management based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on Britain's roads. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is making this goal easier to achieve, although the journey is not without its challenges.

So says the first edition of 'FORS Focus on Transport Trends', which examines how technology is shaping the fleet safety landscape.

Technological progress has exploded over the past two years, says the report, especially in the field of AI.

"AI-powered safety systems can analyse vast amounts of real-time data from various sources such as sensors, cameras and vehicle-to-vehicle communication to identify potential hazards and take proactive measures," it observes. "They can improve driver assistance technologies, including collision avoidance, lane-keeping assistance and adaptive cruise control, making vehicles safer and more reliable."

Below: AI is proving a real game changer in the battle for better road safety



Above: Speedy Group is among the early adopters of an AI-enhanced safety system

As well as eliminating blind spots and improving visibility, AI cameras can differentiate between vulnerable highway users such as cyclists and street furniture and warn the driver accordingly. They can also measure driver fatigue by employing computer vision techniques and machine learning algorithms.

Especially useful in areas such as loading docks and construction sites, ultrasonics can detect pedestrians as well as obstacles in a vehicle's path and alert the driver to their presence. AI makes the systems more reliable and ensures data

received from the sensors is processed effectively.

Radar-based collision avoidance calculates how far away a vulnerable individual is on the highway, calculates the point of impact and warns drivers of the potential risk so they can take appropriate action.

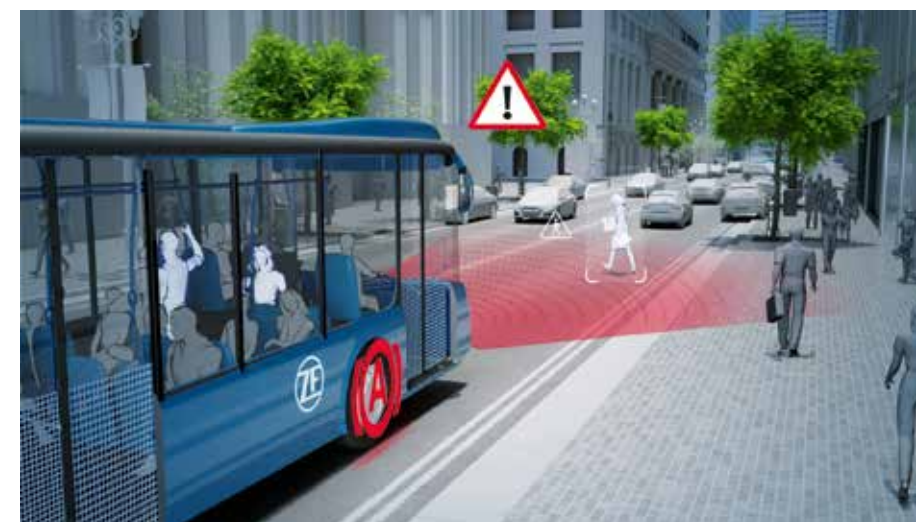
A prime example of a radar and AI-based safety package is Radar Predict from Brigade Electronics, a FORS Associate. It can detect vulnerable road users up to five metres from the vehicle's side, seven metres from its front and up to 30 metres from the rear of its cab.

A key benefit of AI, says the report, is its ability to drive down the number of false alerts. "They were common before the development of AI as systems could not differentiate between moving and stationary objects," it observes.

So what is the next step?

"Industry experts are predicting that vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure information exchange will begin to become the norm," the report observes. "This means that vehicles will be able to provide warnings to other vehicles and sensor systems will detect danger and forewarn operators."

In the meantime, FORS Gold Operator Speedy Services is making extensive use of AI-based cameras and has equipped all



its trucks with an intelligent projection system called FHOSS CAST. “It works by casting an illuminated visual alert on the road,” said Speedy Group Fleet Compliance Manager, Gareth Jones.

“We use it in two areas – on the nearside when our vehicles are turning left and to the rear to indicate when the ramp or tail lift is going down.

“On the nearside, FHOSS projects a large yellow line on the road one metre from the vehicle, showing a clear exclusion zone. At the rear, we have customised a visual warning that says ‘Speedy – caution’ to clearly show where the ramp or lift will come down.”

Extensive use of cameras and other collision avoidance measures is helping the company improve fleet safety, but there are still some limiting factors, he admits. “There’s the serious question of driver overload and at what point all this technology becomes a distraction,” Jones observed.

Overburdening danger

“We recognise the importance of not overburdening our drivers and a big part of this is training,” he continued. “Before developing a new system, we ensure that every driver has had the requisite training and we run extensive trial periods before adopting a technology at full scale.”

FORS, of course, offers a wide variety of training packages, including 3D simulations to replicate real-life situations, helping to improve driver safety with less risk.

One way of informing drivers about new technology is by using the FORS Driver Handbook smartphone app. Together with TDHConnect, a web-based content management system, it enables fleet managers to distribute information and engage with drivers, no matter when or where.

Introducing the latest technology can be expensive, the report points out, and operators need to balance the cost against the likely benefits before they commit themselves. Any additional maintenance requirements must be considered, it adds, as must the challenge of integrating new equipment with existing systems.

“Telematics and other monitoring technologies can raise concerns around privacy,” it admits. “Fleet operators must ensure that they are transparent about the data collected and how it will be used.”

The importance of data protection is a theme taken up in the document by James Backhouse, a director of transport

law firm Backhouse Jones.

“Operators should be taking this into account when considering a new product or system that processes data,” he comments. “How well designed is it in respect of data protection? Where and how will the data be stored?”

“The fines for getting these things wrong can be enormous. It’s reasonable to assume, however, that the vehicle manufacturers and product developers are engaged closely with this, as the stakes are so high.”

Backhouse Jones is well-known for its BACKup scheme, which provides 24/7 advice and representation on road regulatory and employment matters for a fixed monthly fee. FORS Accredited Operators can, of course, join.

Brigade Electronics cautions that,

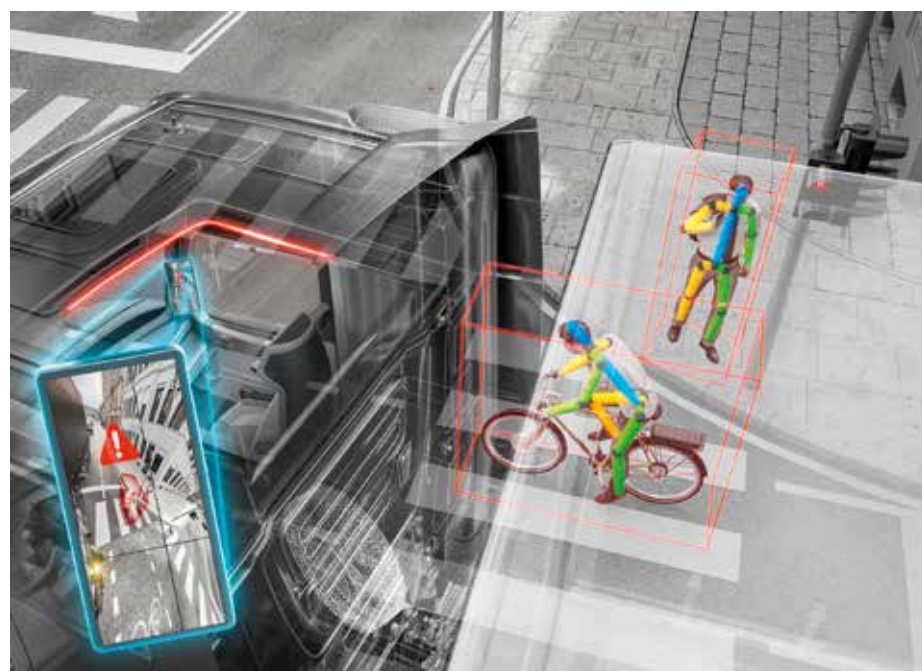
despite the growing capabilities of AI, active and passive safety systems are not replacements for driver best practice. Removing the human element requires technology to be failsafe and while new safety technologies are saving lives, there are still limitations.

Ongoing driver training and a commitment to safety best practice will remain a priority for a while to come.

Yet while there is still progress to be made, the integration of AI holds great promise when it comes to enhancing safety in the transport industry. Brigade expects that safety technology and detection systems will be able to predict collisions with even higher levels of accuracy over the next five to 10 years, ultimately supporting vehicles becoming truly autonomous. ■

Vehicles will be able to provide warnings to other vehicles and sensor systems will detect danger and forewarn operators

Below: AI-powered safety systems can analyse vast amounts of real-time data



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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

MTS GETS CLEANER AND GREENER

FORS Gold Accreditation paves the way for a safer, more productive operation

MTS Cleansing Services specialises in dealing with waste. But when it joined FORS in 2019, undertaking an initial Bronze audit for 42 trucks and vans at its principal location in Rochester, Kent, the firm soon realised that this move was hugely beneficial.

The organisation rapidly progressed through the different levels of the scheme, achieving FORS Gold Accreditation in March this year. Having fully embraced the scheme, the MTS Cleansing Services team recalls that even though FORS Silver status was mandated in order to meet HS2 contract requirements, the progression to Silver then Gold has subsequently opened revenue streams elsewhere for the company.

The company's Head of Fleet & Compliance, Richard Fletcher, is a qualified FORS Practitioner after completing the certification requirement of 10 fleet management training modules. MTS Cleansing Services also employs Academy Manager Charlotte Taylor, who is responsible for training and was instrumental in introducing FORS into the business model. Today, MTS drivers are regularly provided with FORS Toolbox Talks, toolkits and other guidance, which has led to them fully embracing best practice.

Fletcher said: "After becoming FORS Bronze accredited, we realised FORS was able to provide a consistent and reliable audit service. This ensured all our vehicles running out of Rochester, and our fleet operations generally, were legally compliant, safe and efficient. This provided the impetus to go on the FORS journey to achieve even higher

levels of best practice. Then our HS2 work presented us with a contractual requirement to attain FORS Silver and this has led to new business wins elsewhere.

"Very soon after – and though there was no specific business requirement – we set our sights on FORS Gold to hit the highest quality levels of fleet management and this is where FORS training has become fundamental to fleet efficiency, especially helping drivers become even safer and even more productive.

"We've been FORS Gold for a few months now and we are well motivated to maintain our high performance levels

going forward. Furthermore, the DVSA, when performing spot checks on our vehicles, appear to be very satisfied with our FORS Gold accreditation and we've experienced no issues as a result."

With coaching and guidance at the heart of the company's transport operations, MTS Cleansing Services was shortlisted in the Training category at this year's high-profile Motor Transport Awards. ■

Below: DVSA have been very satisfied when performing spot checks on the company's vehicles



We've been FORS Gold for a few months now and we are well motivated to maintain our high-performance levels going forward



GD+HVO IS AN EMISSIONS GAME-CHANGER

An ideal stop-gap solution along the way to a net zero world

HVO fuels are net zero game-changers for industries saddled with hard-to-abate emissions. The construction, off-road, freight and maritime sectors are all still heavily reliant on diesel-burning assets and would struggle to reduce their carbon and air pollution emissions without the immediate drop-in solution that is HVO fuel.

Without replacing any hardware or modifying any machinery, GBF's own GD+HVO slashes carbon emissions by up to 90 per cent (greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 2.82kg of carbon dioxide equivalent for every litre of fossil-derived diesel fuel replaced by GD+HVO). In addition, tailpipe emissions are also reduced. Particulates are cut by up to 85 per cent and NOx by up to 30 per cent when compared with fossil diesel. GD+HVO is the least carbon-emitting diesel-replacement fuel available in the UK.

GD+HVO is manufactured using only waste and residue-derived raw materials. Every stage of the production process is inspected, verified and certified by the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification scheme (ISCC), which provides complete transparency throughout the supply chain.

A spokesman said: "We consider this to be a transitional technology. Where economic barriers exist, uptake is often slow. Transitional technologies offer more immediate and less costly low-carbon solutions to the net zero challenge, helping to bridge the gap between taking little to no action at all and achieving decarbonisation at scale. Furthermore, unlike other HVO products on the UK market, GD+HVO is made from 100 per cent renewable feedstocks as opposed to being blended or 'co-processed' with fossil fuels – effectively reducing the GHG emissions savings."

"EVs, hydrogen fuel cells and other zero-carbon technologies will eventually come good – the impetus behind them cannot be denied – but the stark reality, exposed in part by the bracing economic headwinds of 2023, is that there are very few workable alternatives to clean-burning, advanced biogenic-derived fuels such as HVO today for a host of vital industries if they are to make progress in meaningfully cutting emissions."

"We see businesses of all sizes across the UK and Ireland take their emissions responsibilities seriously by making the switch to GD+HVO. Over the past two years, we have supplied more than 200 million litres of it."

"Looking ahead, we are particularly committed to working together with the maritime transportation industry. With few alternatives to the heavy diesel oil used to power ships, maritime transportation accounts for about three per cent of global emissions. ■

There are very few workable alternatives to clean-burning, advanced biogenic-derived fuels such as HVO today



Below: GD+HVO is manufactured using only waste and residue-derived raw materials



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Words: **Ian Jones, Backhouse Jones Solicitors**

TRANSPORT LEGAL UPDATES TO WATCH OUT FOR

UK laws are always changing, so transport operators need to be constantly on their toes

Just when most transport operators think they have got to grips with the country's latest rules and regulations, chances are new ones will come along when they are least expected. It's a constantly changing playing field, so managers need to be aware of all the latest updates or risk falling foul of the law and ending up on the wrong side of it.

Here we reveal some of the latest changes.

20mph speed limit changes in Wales

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has sent out a circular about the speed limit in Wales and has asked for this to be shared.

On September 17, the Welsh Government has introduced a default 20mph speed limit on 'restricted roads' across Wales from 17 September. Readers can find out more about this change, including what types of roads will be affected, by visiting: www.gov.wales/20mph-speed-limits.

While this change will have the most impact on people who live and drive within Wales, all drivers of commercial and passenger vehicles need be aware of it.

Longer semi-trailers – new guidance

Operators of longer semi-trailers need to familiarise themselves with some new guidelines. There are specific obligations to be met relating to (amongst other things) route planning, risk assessments, diversions, maintenance, driver training and driver management.

Longer semi-trailers are now being

used on Great Britain's roads. Vehicle operators can now tow them measuring up to 2.05 metres longer than a standard semi-trailer (up to 15.56 metres long). The guidance can be found by visiting: www.gov.uk/government/publications/longer-semi-trailer-1st-implementation-guide-for-operators/longer-semi-trailers-full-implementation-guide-for-operators.

It's a constantly changing playing field, so managers need to be aware of all the latest updates

Safe waiting areas

People who visit worksites as part of their jobs must be provided with safe and easy access to welfare places, such as toilets and handwashing facilities, on site as required by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. This includes drivers carrying out deliveries to and collections from a worksite. Refusing access, or not providing suitable facilities, is not allowed and is also against the law.

Where possible, drivers should be provided with a dedicated waiting or rest area, from where they can access toilets and handwashing facilities. If there is no suitable waiting room or area, it is advisable that drivers should wait in their cabs while their vehicles are being loaded or unloaded.

Regarding drivers in their cabs, managers must ensure they also have safe and easy access to welfare facilities on site. Any walkways should be clearly marked and signposted and protected from vehicle incursion.

Operators must also consider the risk of driveway incidents (where the driver accidentally sets off before loading/unloading is finished) and take steps to control it that are equivalent in safety to removing the driver from the cab.

Find out more at: www.hse.gov.uk

Property update – changes to MEES and EPC

Renters, investors, developers and landlords must keep an eye out for forthcoming modifications to the regulations governing Energy Performance Certificates and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. There could be substantial penalties as a result of failing to take the essential action to meet the deadlines.

Right now, only tenants who are listed on the PRS Exemptions Register are eligible to receive leases for premises with an EPC rating of F or G. However, from 1 April 2023, it has been against the law to rent out a home without at least an E rating. Depending on the rateable value of the home and the length of the tenancy, the fine for breaking this rule could range from £5,000 to £150,000. The specifics of the infraction can also be made public.

It's important to keep in mind that the regulations are anticipated to tighten up shortly, with a suggestion that commercial properties have a minimum EPC rating of C or better by 1 April 2027 and B or higher by 2030. ■





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Words: Trevor Gehlcken

ELECTRIC VAN BUYERS FEEL MISLED OVER RANGE

Weather, cargo and racking have a drastic effect on how far battery electric vans can travel before charging

Transport companies considering buying electric vans (EVs) to green up their operations are being warned to be wary about official figures on how far vehicles can travel before needing to be recharged.

Fleets already operating EVs say the difference between official and real-world figures are a cause for concern. Some users feel they have been misled.

The warning comes from the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), whose members running BEVs were seeing vast degrees of variation in operation across different conditions – including a drop in range of almost 50% during the coldest winter days on occasions when there was no opportunity to precondition the battery.

Paul Hollick, chair at the industry body, said: “We now have a number of fleets who have operated electric vans for a reasonable period of time and crucially, through the last winter. The differences in range that are being reported on some models are, we believe, a cause for concern.”

The impact of colder weather is the biggest factor and is far from “the relatively minor variations in range that might be reasonably expected”.

But Hollick said other issues were emerging, too.

“Payload was already known to have a negative impact – although its extent has proven to be a surprise to some operators – but the effect of commonly used fittings such as roof racks and ladder loaders are proving noticeable.”

It’s meant that some fleets are unsure in winter conditions whether their eLCVs can complete the routes on which they were normally used.

“We definitely have members who feel as though they have been misled over the potential range of some electric vans they have bought and have generally lost confidence in them. There is a feeling that the Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP) figures being produced are often almost useless as an indicator of actual range and something much closer to real-world figures is required.”

Hollick said member feedback showed that electric van range is a much more complex subject than cars.

“The weights that company cars carry vary but not by too much in the vast majority of cases, so shifts in the distance that can be covered are much less dramatic. This is not the situation for vans and ideally, we’d be looking for different official tests for warm and cold weather conditions, with different payloads, towing and more.”

“How the situation could be improved in the short term is unclear. WLTP is an agreement created under a United Nations initiative, so not easily changed. We are probably looking for the government or a widely recognised official body to hopefully step into the breach. It’s a question of providing data that allows fleet operators to make an informed choice.”

The AFP emphasised that it remained a strong advocate of electric vans but there were a number of difficult issues

that members were experiencing as they underwent the process of adoption.

“The electrification of the van sector is turning out to be more demanding than has so far been the case for cars, with range, charging and payload very much proving stumbling blocks for many. However, our members are working through these problems by sharing information, advice and best practice.” ■

Below: Users are finding a massive difference between official and real-world range figures for electric vans



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Words: **Steve Banner**

RANGE OF PROBLEMS FACE TRANSPORT CHIEFS

Traffic Commissioners' report suggests how they can be solved

Below: Traffic Commissioners have identified a worrying shortage of truck technicians



A lack of drivers is not the only labour shortfall bedevilling the transport industry at present. A paucity of truck workshop technicians is having a worrying impact too, says the 2022-23 annual report of the Traffic Commissioners (TCs).

"The availability of timely and good maintenance is in short supply," the report observes. "Many maintenance providers are struggling to find qualified mechanics."

Those that can recruit them successfully may find they are hit by another challenge, the report adds. Sourcing replacement parts for a wide variety of vehicles is proving to be problematic.

Poor roadside facilities are hampering the ability of transport fleets to recruit and retain drivers, although attempts are at least being made to address the problem. "The match funding scheme launched by the Department for Transport (DfT) to help improve truck stop facilities is a welcome development," the report comments.

However, more work needs to be done to convince prospective employees that working in haulage and logistics is a viable option for them. "Transport

needs to be viewed as a career available to all and Generation Logistics and its ambassadors have started that work," it states.

The TCs applaud the way in which examinations for the transport manager's Certificate of Professional Competence have changed, with greater focus on the real-world responsibilities managers face. The changes need to go further however, they contend.

"We have often commented, and we do so again, that there is a difference between obtaining a paper qualification and the ability to actually exercise effective and continuous management of a transport operation, which is the statutory requirement of a transport manager," they state. "We would suggest, therefore, that more emphasis should be placed on actual compliance and safety."

Other individuals within a company should be prepared to shoulder their share of the blame if things go wrong.

Management failures

"Most regulatory proceedings stem from a failure to manage effectively, often where directors, senior managers, those at the top of a business, lose sight of the

need to monitor and manage compliance in line with O licence requirements," the report comments. Such failures can put the firm's licence in jeopardy.

As a consequence, those in charge need to develop management systems – including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – to manage that risk. This should help ensure that any failures are addressed before they become major issues.

"The method for operators to access their Operator Compliance Risk Score will soon change so that it can be accessed via the Vehicle and Operator Licensing System," says the document.

There is no doubt that regulating the road transport industry is a demanding task, with over 69,000 goods vehicle O licences in place covering more than 379,000 vehicles according to the 2022-23 report. The commissioners are also involved in regulating the bus and coach sector.

During 2022-23 upwards of 1,300 public inquiries were determined and

Below: Sourcing replacement parts for vehicles is proving to be problematic



over 14,000 O licence applications and variations processed. Some 280 goods vehicle licences were revoked, 108 were suspended and curtailment or conditions imposed in 216 cases.

The speed with which goods vehicle applications are determined is recovering post-pandemic says the document and is now taking an average 41.4 working days. That compares with 36.4 working days prior to the coronavirus outbreak, but falls to 34.4 working days if grants of interim licences are included.

The pandemic resulted in greater use being made of information technology, with virtual hearings used to determine some cases. That trend is continuing and can result in quicker determinations being made.

"New generation surface hubs through which virtual hearings are made possible have been rolled out across the tribunal locations," the report states. "In 2022-23 a total of 1,213 – 10 per cent – of driver hearings were heard virtually."

The TCs stress, however, that they are determined to ensure the interests of individuals are not prejudiced because of pressures to speed up decision-making.

TCs and the service they provide cost money, and the TCs argue that the fees charged need a thorough review.

"The current structure takes no account of the large number of services that are provided at no charge to users while consuming a significant amount of resources, nor the impact on services that cuts in income will cause as a result of fees not increasing in a meaningful way since 2010," they comment.

The need for an overhaul was recognised in the review of TCs' functions carried out by the Ministry of Justice, they add. "It describes the current fee structure as flawed and points to the flat-rate fee structure resulting in a disproportionate burden on smaller and medium-sized businesses," they point out.

Proportionate fees

They want to ensure that a structure is in place where the fee burden is proportionate to the size of the business concerned and the level of service received.

Looking ahead to 2024, the TCs intend among other things to: determine goods and standard public service vehicle licence applications within an average of 35 working days; set a target for all public inquiry cases to be listed for hearing within 12 weeks; support the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency in



Below: Individuals within a company should be prepared to shoulder their share of the blame if things go wrong

restructuring the Office of the Traffic Commissioner to deliver a better service to stakeholders; identify opportunities for the improved use of IT to streamline quality and processes and to work with the DVSA in support of a modern tribunal function.

The TCs believe that the requirement imposed on O licence applicants to place

Contemplating broader developments, such as technology changes, the TCs "will work with government for instance on regulations for longer semi-trailers, heavier vehicles, electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles to ensure that regulatory burdens are not disproportionate and do not act as barriers to innovation".

There is a difference between obtaining a paper qualification and the ability to exercise effective and continuous management of a transport operation

an advertisement in a local newspaper inviting owners and occupiers of land in the vicinity to oppose the use of a location as an operating centre, is now outdated. The decision whether to allow or oppose it should be made by the local planning authority, they suggest.

"Local authorities are already charged with considering planning applications and have developed the expertise to consider their impact on the relevant local community," they observe.

While the TCs are regulators who can impose tough sanctions on errant O licence holders, at the same time they want to provide backing wherever they can to a sector that continues to be under severe pressure.

They state: "We will support those we regulate to comply and grow; making engagement accessible so that operators and drivers are provided with the information they require to manage their licences and meet safety standards." ■

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Above: Commercial laundry firm Oxwash London is using cargo bikes to help clean up the capital's air

Words: **Steve Banner**

LONDON: WHERE TWO WHEELS CAN BEAT FOUR

Cargo bikes are helping to clean up the capital's polluted air

Always eager to improve air quality in the capital, Transport for London (TfL) is busy promoting and enabling the use of cargo bikes for last-mile delivery work.

With payload capacities from around 100kg to 250kg, and typically electrically-assisted, the two- three- or four-wheel bikes generate zero emissions and run quietly. They can use cycle and bus lanes and can be faster across London than a van, TfL contends.

It recently matched a cargo bike against a van on an experimental run between north Greenwich and the centre of London. The former arrived 15 minutes ahead of the latter.

TfL estimates that cargo bikes could replace up to 17% of van miles in central London by 2030, and up to 4% across Greater London. The City of London could see as much as 30% of van miles being replaced by cargo bikes, it suggests. Their use could save the capital up to 30,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year by 2030, it predicts.

Cheaper to run than electric vans and with a smaller footprint, cargo bikes have the further advantage that they present a lower risk to people walking and cycling than vans and heavy trucks, TfL points out. It aims to work with the London boroughs along with businesses, including the freight industry, to ensure they are deployed wherever possible.

Several businesses are already operating them, says TfL, and an example of a prominent user is the Royal Mail. TfL's cargo bike action plan was rolled



Above: CitySprint is greening up its business by using e-cargo bikes

E-cargo bikes are no longer a niche concept and can be real game-changers

out at the National Cargo Bike Summit earlier this year.

Safety standards

Key proposed measures include the development of a London safety standard for cargo bike operators, as well as the creation of micro-hubs and parking spaces to make it easier for the bikes to be used on final-mile delivery runs. A 200sq metre hub could support several cargo bikes, the plan points out, while on-street spaces in the right places cause

less conflict with pedestrians and are preferable to seeing bikes parked on the pavement.

TfL will be supporting the use of bikes when programmes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and local vehicle emission reduction initiatives are being introduced by the London boroughs, and aims to ensure that their requirements are considered when it designs cycling schemes.

Cargo bikes take up 10cm to 20cm more width in a cycle lane than normal

cycles and are about 1.3 times the length of a regular bicycle.

TfL's procurement policies will be used to prompt the uptake of the bikes and businesses will be provided with the tools and information they need to switch to them. TfL also plans to monitor where London's key cargo bike routes are with the aim of identifying usage patterns and projecting future growth.

TfL Director of Strategy and Policy, Christina Calderato, said: "We're determined to provide a green, healthy



Above: The K-ryole can operate for up to eight hours before it has to be recharged

and sustainable future for all Londoners and cargo bikes can play a vital role in cutting carbon emissions, air pollution and road danger. We will continue to work closely with our industry partners, businesses and boroughs across the capital to make our vision for cleaner and safer freight a reality."

Will Norman, London Walking and Cycling Commissioner, added: "Cargo bikes are no longer a niche concept and can be real game-changers when it comes to delivering freight and providing various services. I'm delighted that TfL is launching this action plan to explore how we can grow the use of e-cargo bikes on our roads, to help the environment and the health of Londoners and build a better, safer, greener London for everyone."

Some London boroughs are already embracing their use.

Bike share

In 2021 Hackney launched an e-cargo bike share scheme aimed at both commercial and non-commercial users. It has four docking stations, each with two bikes.

It costs £1.50 to unlock a bike and 10p a minute thereafter. The initiative is backed by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund.

TfL has funded the 'Parcels not Pollution' programme in Hammersmith, where a micro-mobility consolidation

centre supports e-cargo bike deliveries. It has also funded the Streatham BID e-cargo bike scheme for local deliveries.

Elsewhere, the 'Team London Bridge Bikes for Business' programme works with business people in Southwark by matching bike operators and businesses and encouraging a switch to e-cargo bike deliveries.

The Energy Saving Trust points out that e-cargo bikes must comply with the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle regulations. This means that the electric motor must have an output of no more than 250W and stop providing assistance at 15.5mph.

Riders can, however, keep pedalling beyond this speed. They do not have to

possess a driving licence or wear safety equipment, but a helmet, appropriate clothing and training are all highly recommended.

The batteries typically offer a range of up to 50 miles and can be recharged in three-and-a-half to five hours from an ordinary three-pin plug socket. E-cargo bike prices go up to £12,000 or so, depending on how much carrying capacity is required.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's transport strategy includes cutting the number of trucks and vans entering central London during the morning peak by 10% by 2026. Growing the number of trips made by e-cargo bikes instead of vans will go some way towards achieving this goal.

Versatile K-ryole goes on display

The versatility of cargo bikes was highlighted by refrigerated contract hire and rental vehicle specialist Petit Forestier at this year's ITT Hub show, held as usual at the Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre in Hampshire. Petit Forestier displayed a self-propelled electric fridge trailer called K-ryole coupled to a bicycle for directional guidance and extra power.

With a 0.9cu metre cargo bay and tipping the scales at 425kg, the refrigerated K-ryole can handle loads weighing up to 130kg. Capable of transporting goods at temperatures of 0 to 12 degrees C, it can operate for up to eight hours before it has to be recharged, says Petit Forestier. Over 1,000 of these trailers are in service in Continental countries such as France, Belgium and Portugal, including 400 in Paris. The majority of K-ryoles are used to transport dry freight – but the refrigerated variant is becoming increasingly popular. ■



Above: The Pro Cargo bike from Raleigh

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Words: **Steve Banner**

eDAILY HELPS ALLAY THE EV FEARS

This latest large electric van comes with support packages that will ease the concerns of transport firms wishing to go for zero emissions

Iveco is hoping that offering customers the choice of one, two or three battery packs plus a high 3.5-tonne maximum towing weight will help win them over to the new battery-electric eDaily.

Now available on this side of the Channel, the eDaily line-up of vans, chassis-cabs and crew-cabs grosses at 3.5 to 7.2 tonnes and neatly mirrors the diesel line-up. As with the diesel, load volumes go up to a cavernous 19.6 cu metres.

The newcomer is additionally produced as a factory-built minibus and as a chassis-cowl for use by minibus converters.

A single battery pack gives 37kWh, two get 74kWh while three deliver a healthy 111kWh.

Claimed ranges extend from 68 to 186 miles depending on the model and the number of batteries specified, according to the WLTP (Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure) combined cycle. Iveco adds that an eDaily 42S with three batteries can achieve up to 248 miles on the urban cycle fully laden.

The 42S is a 4.25-tonner which can be driven on an ordinary car driver's licence as a special zero-emission concession. Ordinarily, anybody who passed their car driver's test after 1 January 1997 cannot drive anything heavier than a 3.5-tonner without taking a separate test.

Bear in mind, though, that drivers who are allocated a 4.25-tonne eDaily may have to take up to five hours of special training before they are allowed out on the highway. Plus the vehicle will have to undergo an MoT test every 12 months from the date of first registration in line with the rules governing the testing of heavy trucks.

Opting for a 42S could make sound sense if a fleet's business is weight-sensitive.

Specify a two-battery model and buyers will be able to handle a healthy 1705kg gross payload. Go for two batteries on a 3.5-tonne van instead and the maximum gross payload will be a far more modest 1,100kg.

Batteries can be added during a vehicle's life if the user's needs change. The exercise takes around two hours.

Power is delivered by a 140kW motor producing 400Nm of torque whichever eDaily variant is chosen. Depending on the charging facilities used, drivers should be able to boost the range by 62 miles in 30 minutes, says Iveco.

The chassis-cab has a flat frame with the same mounting points as the diesel model, which should make it easy enough to fit bodies, including dropsides, tippers and curtainsiders. Iveco has accredited over 20 bodybuilders to work on the vehicle, including familiar names such as Alloy Bodies and Paneltex.



Above: The Iveco eDaily comes in a variety of guises that should satisfy most fleet needs

Right: Three different battery packs are available, offering differing mileage ranges for the trucks



Electric vans give of their best in an urban environment and eDaily offers a tight turning radius

Three modes

Three regenerative modes are available and three drive modes – Eco, Natural and Power – can be called upon. Worth noting, too, are the three different ePTOs (electric Power Take Offs) that are listed with an output of up to 15kW.

A variety of standard and optional connectivity-enabled services are provided with eDaily through the Iveco On portal, with software updated over the air and predictive diagnostics hopefully preventing faults that would lead to unscheduled stoppages.

There is no denying that electric light

commercials are considerably more expensive to acquire than their diesel counterparts. However, maintenance costs are up to 25 per cent lower than they are for equivalent diesels, Iveco contends.

Furthermore, eDaily is protected by a three-year/100,000-mile warranty, with the battery covered for eight years/100,000 miles if buyers opt for one, or eight years/155,000 miles if they opt for two or three.

We put the eDaily through its paces at the Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire – and came away impressed.



Above: A test drive in the new Iveco eDaily left us impressed with what is on offer

Admittedly, having to turn a traditional ignition key once, then once again before we could get moving (rather than using a key fob and pushing a button) seems a tad old-fashioned.

Once we were underway, however, there is no doubt that the eDaily is a proficient performer.

Electric vans give of their best in an urban environment and eDaily offers a tight turning radius of as little as 5.5 metres kerb to kerb. Hitting the standard City Steering button gives a welcome additional power assistance for drivers trying to wriggle into tight parking spaces, as we learned when we took the van around a mock layout of town centre streets.

When fighting up a steep hill while fully laden and perhaps towing a heavy trailer, then being able to call on the vehicle's Hi-Power function will give a hefty power boost. That is something we discovered when we tackled one of Millbrook's steeper inclines, along with the vehicle's ability to stop and then pull away on a 30-degree slope.

Going back down said incline enabled us to sample the standard Hill Descent function, which allows the vehicle to descend a slope in a controlled manner without riding the brake pedal.

No brake worries

Nor is there any need to worry about the brakes – unless there is an emergency

– by going for maximum regeneration whenever appropriate. As well as pumping power into the battery, it acts as a retarder, which means all the driver needs to do is use the accelerator pedal – so-called one pedal driving.

Firms that commit to an electric van really need to install their own charging facilities and Iveco has appointed Pod Point as its preferred charging point supplier. As well as supplying and installing the hardware, the firm can sort out any groundwork required and arrange for the charging units to be maintained.

Iveco Capital can help fund the cost of putting in the charging infrastructure – government grants can also be called on – and contract hire and low-rate HP deals have been assembled to help customers acquire the vehicles.

Appreciating that some clients will have no option but to rely on public charging points at least some of the time, Iveco has come up with a charge card that can be used at over 9,000 of them.

Our verdict

Iveco's eDaily is an impressive package, not just because of the vehicle itself, but because of the support that goes with it. Any light commercial operator thinking of going zero-emission needs to be certain that the manufacturer they are dealing with can deliver the backing they will require as they enter a completely new world. ■

When fighting up a steep hill while fully laden and perhaps towing a heavy trailer, then being able to call on the vehicle's Hi-Power function will give a hefty power boost

Firms that commit to an electric van really need to install their own charging facilities



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Words: **Trevor Gehlcken**

SCANIA CHARGES UP GROUP WITH 100 NEW ELECTRIC TRUCKS

Huge order 'a pivotal moment for transport industry'

Scania UK has completed a deal with Consortium Purchasing group to deliver 100 battery-electric trucks over the next 12 months.

In a pivotal moment for the industry, the BEV 4x2 tractor units will be split across Consortium's members: Culina Group, WS Group, A.W. Jenkinson Group and its subsidiaries, becoming among the first Scania EV tractors to enter service in the UK.

In what has been coined as a one of Scania's largest BEV orders to be fulfilled in one calendar year, Christian Levin, Chief Executive Officer for Scania AB, said: "This deal is a significant milestone in the two organisations' history and shows the intent to move towards more sustainable transport solutions. Scania has had a close and successful relationship with Culina Group, WS Group and A.W. Jenkinson Group for many years."

The 100 battery electric trucks are Scania's regional-haul 4x2 tractor unit, which was officially launched in June 2022, with customers originally expected to start taking first deliveries in quarter one 2024. They are powered by a triple electric machine powertrain, producing around 560hp and are equipped with an electric power take-off system to support temperature-controlled or bulk transportation.

They are also the first Scania trucks to come fitted with the Northvolt battery cells giving 468kWh of usable capacity, which yields a range of up to 350km.

Levin added: "This vehicle represents a major milestone for us and for our partners. We've increased our range and are offering new opportunities to cater for a wider selection of customers and

the whole transport ecosystem. These trucks are part of the solution that the transport industry is asking for."

Alongside these trucks, Consortium Purchasing is buying another 2,400 vehicles, including 2,250 diesel trucks powered by Scania's latest generation 13-litre powertrain. The other 150 are earmarked to support the Consortium's German and Dutch operations.

William Stobart, deputy CEO of Culina Group, said: "It's been a difficult time for all the OEMs with global supply issues. But Scania has worked closely with us over the past two years to minimise the impact for both parties. This is testament to the true partnership between the businesses."

Chris Newitt, Managing Director for Scania UK, said this was the perfect opportunity to cement the ongoing relationship between the two companies during a period of such transition.

He added: "It's testament to the strength between the two organisations that we can make this announcement but also to those involved in making it possible over the many years that this deal is built upon."

The vehicles will be delivered to the group in batches of at least 500 vehicles per quarter. ■

Below: The trucks are the first Scania trucks to come fitted with the Northvolt battery cells giving 468kWh of usable capacity



The new trucks will be among the first Scania EV tractors to enter service in the UK

These trucks are part of the solution that the transport industry is asking for

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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.

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These programmes create a platform where employees can connect, share and support one another

WORKPLACE WELLBEING – NURTURING A SUBSTANCE-FREE CULTURE

A comprehensive approach can help create a clean, healthy workplace

In our previous article, we delved into the intricacies of workplace drug testing and the subsequent steps organisations can take when faced with positive results. Building upon this foundation, we now shift our focus to the role of a comprehensive approach to wellbeing and the strategies companies can adopt to establish and maintain a substance-free workplace.

At OdiliaClark, we believe that, in the main, employees do not want to attend work under the influence of a psychoactive substance. One of the key success factors to achieving this is a robust wellbeing

strategy, underpinned by education and supported by innovative mechanisms.

Promoting wellbeing through inclusive learning

The essence of a flourishing workplace lies in a holistic wellbeing strategy that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional health. By integrating educational initiatives into your company's ethos, you empower employees to make informed decisions about their overall wellbeing, supporting those who may need a little help.

Educating staff through eLearning and

taught programmes involves providing employees with insights into the effects of substance use and abuse, dismantling myths and clarifying misconceptions. This understanding allows employees to grasp the impact of substance use on their overall wellbeing and work performance, promoting ownership and a responsible workforce.

Empowering through peer support programmes

Recognising the significance of solidarity and shared experiences, we promote that all drug and alcohol programmes

are supported via the implementation of a peer support programme. These programmes create a platform where employees can connect, share and support one another through their respective wellbeing journeys. Such programmes are underpinned by education, allowing participants to build upon the knowledge gained and work together towards maintaining a substance-free culture.

Supporting learning through peer networks

Educational initiatives are most effective when reinforced through practical application and continuous learning. Peer support networks provide a valuable avenue for this reinforcement. By engaging in discussions, sharing experiences and offering encouragement, employees can solidify their understanding of substance-related issues and their impact on wellbeing. These peer networks create a safe space for individuals to voice their questions, concerns and successes, thereby enriching the learning experience.

Furthermore, incorporating peer supervision sessions and training sessions enhances the learning journey. Peer supervision offers a structured environment where participants can receive feedback, guidance and insights from their colleagues.

This collaborative approach ensures that the knowledge gained from educational initiatives is effectively applied to real-world scenarios, complemented with regular training sessions to keep peers and employees updated with the latest information, research and strategies. This proactive approach empowers employees to stay informed and adaptable, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and growth.

Together, peer networks, supervision sessions and training sessions form a comprehensive ecosystem of learning and support. They allow teams to bridge the gap between theory and practice, helping them to collectively explore effective strategies for maintaining a substance-free lifestyle in the workplace and beyond.

Fostering a brighter future

Drugs and alcohol management is just one piece of the puzzle in developing a flourishing workplace. OdiliaClark offers a resource for knowledge, empowerment and support. By providing employees with resources that enable

them to prioritise their wellbeing and make informed choices, organisations establish a culture that values health, safety and individual growth.

Our subsequent article will delve into real-life success stories from

organisations that have embraced these approaches, reaping the rewards of a well-informed and flourishing workforce. Join us on this journey as we continue to foster holistic wellbeing and substance-free workplaces together. ■

The essence of a flourishing workplace lies in a holistic wellbeing strategy that encompasses physical, mental and emotional health

Below: Educating staff through taught programmes provides employees with insights into the effects of substance use and abuse



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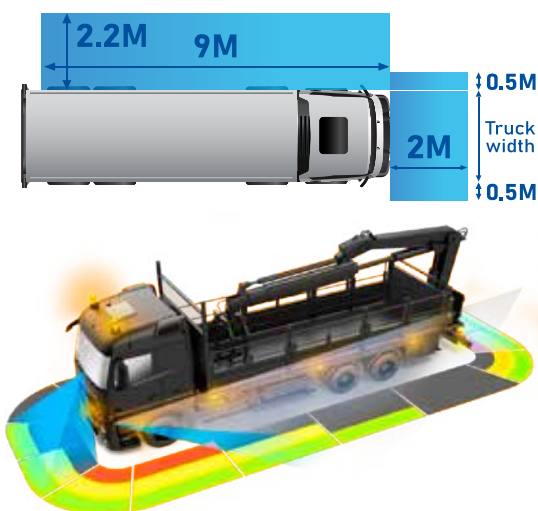
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