



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DVTA ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY

The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) recently undertook a strategic review of its Road Transport Enforcement Section. It was considered an opportune time to review the roles and functions of the Section and to undertake this in light of the needs and expectations of the industry and our partners. Thank you to all who took part in the consultation process or assisted the review in any way.

It was clear from the feedback received, that the industry would like action to be focussed more directly on the illegal sector. There was also a view that compliance with the regulations in Northern Ireland (NI) was lower than in the rest of the United Kingdom and that there was a need to consider new methods of measuring performance – to demonstrate that real progress was being made in reducing non-compliance. Our contact with other bodies, including enforcement organisations, highlighted new methods and technology for assisting enforcement.

Strategic Themes

We produced the new Enforcement Strategy in July 2005. A copy is available on the DVTA web site (<http://www.dvtani.gov.uk/publications/atoz.asp>). The themes of the strategy include:

Output-based, transparent measures of performance

At present performance is monitored through the use of targets for numbers of inspections of vehicles weighed, driver and vehicle documentation, including tachograph records checked and examination of vehicles for roadworthiness. Objectives and targets to demonstrate improvement in the level of compliance in key areas have been agreed and will be monitored by the Agency's Management Board.

Overt, covert and educational approach

The new approach will involve more targeted enforcement, be it through inspection, in-depth investigation or education. This will involve developing expertise in obtaining and categorising intelligence, the development of a database of information on the transport fleet and modern equipment such as automatic number plate recognition equipment.

Utilisation of modern technology

Investigation undertaken in the development of this strategy identified a number of technology-based systems that could make the Section more effective and provide flexibility. These include mobile brake testing and weighing equipment.

Being prepared for new initiatives

While we are presently implementing the new strategy, there are a number of new initiatives which we consider would increase our effectiveness and on which we take part in working groups. These include the operator licensing review that will introduce licensing for owner operators and a graduated fixed penalty and deposit scheme.

Goods Vehicles - Compliance Baseline Survey

The change process commenced with a major survey to establish the current level of compliance. Using information from the survey, data from the test centres and from Great Britain (GB), targets will be set for future improvement. Key findings of the survey were:

- 44% of vehicles were not roadworthy in some respect
- 18% had tachograph/drivers' hours offences
- 21% of vehicles were issued with prohibition notices
- 9% of vehicles checked will result in a prosecution

These are just a small sample of figures from a very detailed survey, which includes detailed information on non-compliance by age of vehicles and locations across NI and comparisons with GB. The information from the survey will be used in setting targets and informing our operational activity over the coming months. The document is available on the DVTA web site (<http://www.dvtani.gov.uk/publications/atoz.asp>).

Operation to launch the new strategy

A major operation was undertaken on 27th October 2005 to mark implementation of the new strategy. The operation was undertaken in partnership with a number of enforcement bodies and included the utilisation of an intelligence database of habitual offenders, automatic number plate recognition systems, and a dynamic axle weighbridge. A mobile brake tester was used for the first time in NI as part of an enforcement operation. The operation was very effective with the following results – of 157 vehicles checked there were 21 prosecution reports, 18 immediate prohibitions (3 for defective brakes) and 11 delayed prohibitions (5 for defective brakes).

Ongoing operational activity

While there has been a focus on development of the strategy, enforcement on the ground has been continuing with impressive results. From April 2004 to March 2005, 24,163 goods vehicles were checked, 3,375 taxis and 901 buses. From these inspections there will be 1,382 prosecutions.

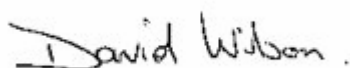
Working together

The benefits of more effective enforcement will be improved road safety, fairer competition, reduced damage to the environment and a contribution to reducing vehicle related crime.

We need your help and cooperation and we will be seeking new ways to communicate more effectively with all representatives of the transport industry. This is the first in a number of Trade Bulletins in which we will update you on our performance and which may focus on specific areas of the transport industry.

Please contact us if you require information in respect of tachograph, licensing regulations, or on maintaining your vehicle.

Also, please advise us (in complete confidence) about any taxi, bus or haulage driver or operator that is a habitual offender.



David Wilson

Director of Compliance & Planning

Road Transport Enforcement Section
Tel No. 028 9025 4100
Fax No. 028 9025 4111
Email: dvtaenforcements@doeni.gov.uk
Web site: <http://www.dvtani.gov.uk>