
HGV safety scheme keeping cleaner trucks off London's roads, says FTA

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London's Mayor is scuppering his own work to clean up the capital's air, by trying to rush-through an ill-considered road safety scheme, says the Freight Transport Association.

FTA believes hundreds of cleaner trucks would be on London's roads now, if it were not for uncertainty over Sadiq Khan's plans for a Direct Vision Standard (DVS), which aims to improve the safety of heavy goods vehicles operating in the capital.

According to FTA, whose members operate just under half of the UK's HGV fleet, the length of time it is taking to finalise the qualification levels for the DVS, alongside an unrealistic schedule for its implementation, are causing frustration and confusion for logistics operators, which are being forced to postpone the procurement of new, cleaner vehicles because they may not be eligible for use in London in the years ahead.

FTA, the only organisation in the UK that represents all of logistics, is calling on Transport for London to rethink its plans for DVS and coordinate its implementation with the tightening up of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone, to give logistics operators a chance to plan their fleets properly. It has set out these points in its submission to TfL's phase 2 consultation on the DVS scheme. Natalie Chapman, FTA's Head of Urban Policy, says.

"The Mayor has scored a spectacular own goal with DVS. FTA, along with everyone living and working in London, wants to see an improvement in the city's air quality, but this could have happened faster if the new DVS had been better planned. FTA's submission to the latest consultation on the scheme provides evidence that truck owners and operators are delaying procurement of the cleanest Euro VI vehicles, because they have no idea whether they'll meet the requirements of the DVS."

According to figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, new UK truck registrations in Quarter 3 of 2017 were down 5.7% on the same period the previous year. FTA believes this is due, in part, to uncertainty about the DVS and Ultra Low Emission Zone in London and plans for clean air zones in other parts of the UK.

Ms Chapman goes on to explain: “FTA members support Sadiq Khan’s aspiration to reduce the number of injuries and deaths caused by heavy goods vehicles on London’s roads, but any road safety scheme involving new vehicles needs to be carefully planned to avoid disrupting supplies to the capital and requires the support and cooperation of all road users.

HGVs form the backbone of the capital’s logistics system transporting everything the city needs, from food and medical supplies to building materials and waste recycling. The Mayor should be doing everything he can to help responsible operators buy the cleanest and safest vehicles.”