

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE AIL INDUSTRY LIAISON MEETING 24.01.08

Water Preferred Policy

The Highways Agency updated the meeting as to the status of the consultation on the accompanying guidance for the water-preferred policy. They highlighted that they had recently published a "Summary of Responses" document that details the responses they received. The document focuses on the questions that were asked within the consultation, and details some initial reaction the Highways Agency have to the issues raised by respondents.

The Highways Agency stated that it was their intention to hold a Workshop where all respondents would be invited to discuss the issues raised in the consultation. This Workshop would take place on February 20th in Birmingham.

Strategic Sites Working Group

The Highways Agency detailed the progress that had been made with this project. Their consultant had issued a draft report, which contains outline assessments of 25 different sites on the inland waterway network. The assessment considers site ownership, access by water and by road and the works that would need to be undertaken to make the site usable for the transhipment of special order category loads. The draft report concludes that there are 9 sites, which have the potential to be used for transhipment. Some of these 9 would still require further investigation and monies prior to being used.

The Strategic Sites Working Group will meet on February 7th to discuss the draft report and agree how the issues raised within it will be taken forward to conclusion.

Self-escorting

The meeting received a presentation from Steve Biddle of the RHA. Steve's presentation was of a draft training package for AIL escort drivers. The draft training package covers all issues associated with escorting an abnormal load incorporating much of what was in the Highways Agencies Code of Practice for escorts and escort vehicles. The RHA Training Department put the draft training package together.

It was the RHA's intention to consult widely on the content of the training package to ensure that it best fitted the needs of industry.

Research Projects

The Highways Agency updated the meeting as to the progress with the following research projects:

- **PSA Congestion Research** - This research is considering the impact of abnormal load movement on the Highways Agencies own internal PSA (Public Service Agreement) targets and is ongoing.
- **Speed Limits for Special Order Vehicles** - This research is considering the issues associated with increasing the Speed Limits imposed on abnormal load carrying vehicles. The TRL are undertaking the project on behalf of the Highways Agency, workshops have been held with representatives of industry and others and the project is ongoing.

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Photo courtesy of Tony Buckland, RM Page & Sons

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- **Movement of Abnormal Loads at Night** - This research is considering the issues associated with the movement of abnormal loads on the Highways Agency network at night. Again the TRL is carrying out the research on the Highways Agencies behalf and have held workshopsto discuss the issues with industry representatives and others.

The current focus of the work is on the provision of lay-bys for abnormal loads as this is critical should the Highways Agency decide to encourage loads to be moved at night on their network.

- **Management of STGO and C&U Loads** - This was an internal HA project which is considering their processes and systems in place for administering the movement of abnormal loads. The research project is ongoing.

NOTICES OF ROAD WORKS

Work at the A500/A34 Hanford Roundabout to improve traffic flow starts on Monday 4 February and will be completed in August 2008. The works will make the island safer for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. Work will be restricted to off-peak hours during weekdays with some overnight and weekend working. Regular traffic management bulletins will be circulated and an HA website will be set up for the scheme. Any enquiries about the scheme should be made to the Highways Agency Information Line available 24/7 on 08457 50 40 30.

The Highways Agency is due to commence work on Friday 8th February to resurface a length of the M69 motorway through the junction 2 area. This work will take place 24/7 for 11 weeks. Both carriageways from 2.5km south of Junction 2 to 4.5km north of Junction 2 will be affected. The work will take place on one carriageway at a time with all traffic running on the opposite carriageway under a contraflow arrangement with two lanes in each direction. A 50 mph speed limit will be in place and enforced by average speed cameras.

From the middle of February for a period of approximately 30 days the sliproads at M69 junction 2 will be closed – approximately 15 days for each slip road. Warning signs will be displayed 1 week in advance of this. During this period a diversion route will be signed for traffic unable to use the closed M69 slip roads via the B4069 through Sapcote and the B4114 through Narborough. The use of this route has been approved by Leicestershire County Council.

If you have any queries please contact Dave Wilson, on 07795 373527 or by e-mail to dave@djgba.fsnet

ESDAL

The meeting was updated with the progress of ESDAL and there was much discussion regarding the recent launch of Phase 2. The HTA representatives made it clear that there were still some issues that needed to be addressed before they could say that the implementation of Phase 2 had been a success. It was further made clear to the Highways Agency that there were issues, which had been highlighted throughout the development of ESDAL by industry, which were still yet to be addressed. One such issue was the usability of the mapping function.

The Highways Agency and their representatives acknowledged that although Phase 2 had been trailed extensively there was still some work to do to. They undertook to take note of the comments made and continue to liaise with industry and should it be required would host a workshop where concerns could be raised.

Tim West, HTA Committee

RECORD BREAKER

The heaviest load ever moved on the UK roads by Collett Transport was recently moved from Sheffield to the Port of Goole. The load, a steel casting, was transported on a purpose built trailer, the only one of its kind currently operating in the UK. The convoy weighed almost 500 tonnes, was 48m long and had a width of 6.7metres.

At Goole, Collett were responsible for loading to a charter vessel, along with a 240 tonne casting they had delivered to the port 4 weeks previously, lashing and securing on the vessel and delivery to the Port of Antwerp.

The casting was the largest and most expensive ever produced in the UK by Sheffield Forgemasters Ltd.

More details can be obtained from:

Eric Crosby, Senior Logistics Manager, Collett Heavy Transport
Tel: 01422 255249



DAILY CHECKS TO KEEP FLEET ON THE ROAD

Transport Operators will be well aware of the watchful eye of VOSA, which enforces vehicle roadworthiness.

A key VOSA tool used for targeting vehicles is the Operator Compliance Risk Score (OCRS), which is updated weekly with information on roadworthiness, including annual tests on vehicles and roadside fleet inspections, as well as general enforcement of driver's hours and overloading cases etc.

Operators with a good regulatory record (low scores) are given a green rating, and are less likely to be subject of VOSA's attention at a roadside stop or visit. Operators with a poor regulatory record (high scores) receive a red rating and will likely attract more interest from VOSA. Amber scores are for operators who fall in between the two ratings.

Operator's scores are likely to be pushed into the red rating if they fail to carry out safety inspections at appropriate intervals and regularly fail MOTs at first presentation. The view is that a poor MOT test history indicates a sloppy attitude towards vehicle maintenance and adherence to safety inspection systems.



DECEMBER 2007 – HTA MEETING AT HC WILSON TRANSPORT LTD

Thanks to Hugh and Graham Wilson, who hosted the Committee Meeting at the HC Wilson premises in Elmswell on 6th December. Hugh gave Committee members a guided tour of the yard, which very interesting.

Preventative maintenance, backed up with a clear audit trail can go a long way to protecting an operator from an unsatisfactory report. Evidence of forward planning for inspections and record keeping for all vehicles and trailers is crucial, whether maintenance is carried out in-house or by a contractor.

Drivers' daily inspections including checking for loose wheel nuts, leaks, lights, indicators, tyres etc are also essential. Each item should be ticked off on an inspection sheet, defects noted and a copy handed in to the transport manager every day, without fail. Records should be made and kept, even if a defect is not found (nil-defect reporting system).

Nil defect reporting systems provide valuable protection in the event of a roadside check that identifies, for example, several loose wheel nuts. Loose wheel-nuts would probably result in an "S" marked immediate prohibition, denoting a significant maintenance failure if a vehicle examiner suspects the security of the wheel is a result of a driver not doing his daily checks – a very serious issue.

If the driver has handed in a defect sheet indicating that the wheel nuts were checked and found to be secure, the vehicle examiner may be persuaded that the wheel nuts loosened on the journey. However, beware the driver who pays lip service to the daily checks or who does not carry out the checks at all.

The only way to guard against this is to conduct regular spot checks or audits to ensure the checks are really being carried out.

Operators will find it pays to keep on top of daily checks and to pay particular regard to whether the planned safety inspection records reveal defects that should have been reported by drivers.

John Dyne, Secretary HTA

TIME FOR AN URGENT REVIEW OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE?

The issue of whether the HA CoP should be properly regulated through legislation was raised again following the recent fatal collision on 22nd January 2008. There is also some disquiet, in certain quarters, as to the appropriateness of HA guidance on self escorting procedures.

See web links:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/dorset/7202716.stm>
www.abnormalescortforum.com

HTA SUBSCRIPTION TO RISE

At the December Committee Meeting it was felt that the annual HTA subscription should increase. The annual fee has been kept the same for several years now, but increased costs in general (postage, stationary, printing costs and ESTA subscription fees, etc) have meant that a increase is required. The increase is a modest £25, taking the annual subscription fee to £275.

HTA COMMITTEE

At the last HTA Committee meeting Rolf van Apeldoorn announced that he has retired from Broshuis Trailers and felt that he should stand down as Vice Chairman of the HTA to let someone else take his place. However, the other Committee Members felt that Rolf should continue with the role if he wanted to, in view of his expertise in the industry. Rolf will also continue to be HTA's ESTA representative.



ADVERTISEMENTS

If anyone wishes to advertise in an issue of Heavy Talk, please contact Katharine Narici on 01829 771774 or by e-mail (info@hta.uk.net), for details.

MEMBERS HANDBOOK 2008

The Handbook is nearly ready to go to press. It was hoped that the 2008 Handbook would be ready for January, but hopefully it will be distributed by the end of February/beginning of March. In the meantime, if anyone has changed address/contact details since we asked for an update last November, please let Katharine know.

DATES TO REMEMBER: HTA MEETINGS

Thursday, 21st February 2008 at 6 pm

Cybit Holdings plc are kindly hosting the meeting.
Hinchbrooke Business Park, Kingfisher Way,
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Thursday, 8th May 2008 at 6pm

Century House, High Street, Tattenhall, Cheshire

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

The HTA has been joined by:

MAR-TRAIN HAULAGE LIMITED, BOARDMILLS, LISBURN
(contact: Tim Martin)

TRUCKPOL

TruckPol is a nationwide police intelligence service which records information on all aspects of road freight crime. By submitting information to TruckPol you could be helping to solve a serious crime in our industry. Tel: 0247 6516246 www.truckpol.com

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