

Industrial HGV Task Force

Review of first six months of operations

October 2013 – March 2014

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Executive Summary

The Industrial HGV Task Force (IHTF) has worked successfully to target the most dangerous and non-compliant commercial vehicles on London's roads. The team has worked effectively in partnership with TfL and other agencies in order to maximise the success of its activities and has undertaken a large number of high visibility roadside enforcement operations in order to ensure a high level of visibility. The IHTF has acted as a deterrent to non-compliant operators seeking to enter London, undercutting the work of those operating legitimately.

The IHTF is an exemplar of partnership working in London. This joint approach to the activities and structure of the IHTF means that it has greater capability and has been more successful than any one agency working alone.

The IHTF has processed a number of cases to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner in order to ensure that the most dangerous operators are penalised and their operations changed, although the processing of these cases have been delayed because of the increased workload it has created for the Traffic Commissioner. These delays can sometimes allow a firm to continue operating until their case is heard.

As well as focusing on penalising the deliberately non-compliant and dangerous operators on London's roads, the IHTF has undertaken proactive engagement with the operators who appear not to be fully aware of their responsibilities.

The work of the IHTF is supported by the UK's largest trade bodies including the Road Haulage Association (RHA) and the Freight Transport Association (FTA).

In order to maintain the success of the IHTF in combating the most dangerous vehicles on London's roads, TfL recommends that all partner agencies should continue to support the team through continued funding, including additional support for the Traffic Commissioner, provision of equipment, manpower and training resources as well as providing intelligence support.

Document overview

This report has been produced by Transport for London on behalf of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, Metropolitan Police Service and City of London Police.

Background

In 2012 the number of pedal cyclists killed or seriously injured (KSI) on London's roads increased by 18 per cent, compared to 2011, accounting for 16 per cent of all casualties, 23 per cent of all serious injuries and 10 per cent of all fatalities. In 2011, 7 out of 9 cycle fatalities involved Heavy Goods Vehicles in the construction and waste industries despite HGV's making up only 4 per cent of road miles driven. The recently launched Safe Streets for London: Road Safety Action Plan sets out the Mayor of London's target to reduce KSIs amongst all road users by 40 per cent by the year 2020. Vulnerable road users currently make up 80 per cent of victims in collisions.

In order to address the problem of fatal collisions between cyclists and construction HGVs the Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport for London (TfL) jointly announced a series of actions on the 4th September 2013, one of which was the creation of a dedicated Industrial HGV Task Force combining matched resources, funded by DfT and TfL, from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), Vehicle Operator and Services Agency (now the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency – DVSA) and from the City of London Police (CoLP). The team was set up with the objective to conduct effective targeted enforcement operations against non-compliant operators, drivers and vehicles in the construction and waste industries, over and above the usual commercial vehicle compliance activities of DVSA and the Police.

Trade bodies, namely the Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association, have been supportive of the introduction of the IHTF.

The work of the IHTF is the latest in a series of joint initiatives demonstrating the strong and successful partnership between DVSA/TfL. These included Operation Kansas (enforcement against dangerous novelty vehicles), enforcing weight restrictions on the M4 elevated section during the 2012 Games, providing Vehicle and Traffic Examiner resources for the new Blackwall Tunnel enforcement site and the development of an information sharing agreement allowing all parties to share information on non-compliant operators/vehicles.



Officers conducting license and vehicle checks

Team structure

The IHTF consists of the following

Agency	Number of Officers
Metropolitan Police Service	7
City of London Police	1
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency	8
Total	16

The majority of the officers on the task force were selected for their experience and training in enforcement against non-compliant commercial vehicles; those less experienced were motivated to contribute to improving the safety of vulnerable road users. The task force is jointly supervised by a DVSA Senior Vehicle Examiner and a MPS Sergeant. The use of officers from multiple agencies ensures that the IHTF is able to respond to and enforce against the full range of commercial vehicle and driver offences both at the roadside and during operator visits.

The team utilises a range of equipment including solo MPS and CoLP motorcycles, MPS and DVSA Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cars, DVSA Mobile Inspection Vans and MPS cars. The team access this equipment from a pool of vehicles shared with other units and teams. Vehicles used by the IHTF therefore have no distinct branding to set them apart from other Police/DVSA units.

Team activities

Since the start of roadside operations on 1st October 2013 the team has targeted, stopped and processed over 1900 vehicles at the roadside¹. Of the vehicles targeted and stopped in the construction and waste industries 72 per cent were found to be non-compliant. This figure is significantly higher than DVSA and the MPS would expect from general population of commercial vehicles on London's roads. As a comparator the DVSA Fleet Compliance Check Report² found only 9.9 per cent of GB vehicles to be non-compliant.

The IHTF was set up to deal with the most dangerous vehicles on London's roads and undertakes a targeted approach to enforcement utilising a number of tools, including Operator Compliance Risk Scoring, ANPR and roadside observation. The serious levels of non-compliance identified are a result of this approach and should not be considered a reflection of the industry as a whole.

In just under 6 months of operations the team have issued over 800 roadworthiness prohibitions for construction and use offences and over 130 drivers hours

¹ Results relate to the period 1st October 2013 – 29th March 2014

² DfT Fleet Compliance Checks 2012/2013 – Government Operational Research Service

prohibitions. These roadside prohibitions have been supplemented by issuing over 500 fixed penalty notices for a variety of driver and vehicle related infringements including bald tyres, defective steering and brakes and using a handheld mobile phone while driving. The team has also seized 24 vehicles for a variety of offences including driving without insurance and driving not in accordance with a license. 79% of vehicles seized were operating in the construction and waste industries.

To improve the safety of all vulnerable road users, the IHTF have targeted vehicles whose operators claim exemption from key road safety legislation, including operator licensing and plating and testing regulations. One particular type of exempted vehicle is volumetric concrete mixers. To date the IHTF have stopped a total of 8 such vehicles, only 1 of which was found to be compliant with all relevant legislation. Other exempted vehicle types stopped include mobile cranes. TfL will evidence the team's results as part of their continued lobbying of DfT to remove these exemptions.

Since inception the IHTF have undertaken over 100 high visibility roadside operations with over 5000 man hours of high visibility enforcement activity carried out in areas with very high levels of construction traffic movement. This has helped to ensure that the presence of the IHTF is well known to drivers and operator, creating a visible deterrent to non-compliant operators from entering London.

A core part of the IHTF's work is to engage with drivers at the roadside, during operator visits and during seminar style events. The IHTF regularly provides drivers with a variety of information relating to road safety, CPC driver training courses, drivers hours, cycle safety equipment, load security and other relevant subjects.

Representatives of the IHTF have delivered presentations on their enforcement activities at TfL facilitated seminars for new and lower risk non-compliant operators (the most serious cases of non-compliance continue to be referred to the Traffic Commissioner). They highlighted a number of issues which they have identified as being of concern, such as drivers hours infringements, insecure loads and minor mechanical issues.

The IHTF have worked in conjunction with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner to fast track serious cases to Public Inquiry. Since the beginning of operations over 45 follow up investigations have been conducted resulting in 19 public inquiry submissions and 34 cases put forward for further action by the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. The Police have progressed approximately 15 prosecutions through the Criminal Justice System.

TfL have supported the IHTF providing detailed analysis of the movement of non-compliant commercial vehicles utilising TfL's ANPR network along with information sourced from other agencies (e.g. DVSA, the Health and Safety Executive and the MPS). This has provided the IHTF with the ability to intelligently pursue high risk operators in the construction and waste sectors.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the initial results from the activities and structure of the Industrial HGV Task Force.

- All relevant agencies should commit to continued funding and resourcing of the IHTF. This will provide stability to the team and allow the team to engage fully in long term strategic operations.
- The Police officer roles within the IHTF should become permanent positions for which recruitment should be undertaken by the MPS and CoLP. These officers should be permanently based in the team and not rotated with other officers of similar skill. This will provide stability in the team, allow for the growth of an inclusive team identity and also allow MPS officers to undergo additional training and development thereby increasing the effectiveness of the team as a whole.
- The Office of the Traffic Commissioner for London and the South East of England should be given additional resources in order to increase the capacity for Public Inquiries (PI) and Driver Conduct Hearings. This will help deal with the increased volume of cases due to the work of the IHTF, reduce the lead time required to get PIs to the Traffic Commissioner and prevent some firms continuing to operate until their case is heard.
- IHTF activities to continue to be ring fenced and focussed on targeting the most non-compliant and dangerous drivers, vehicles and operators on London's roads for roadside checks, follow up investigations and educational work.



Officer conducting roadside check

Appendix A

Total results (1st October 2013 – 29th March 2014)

	Construction and Waste HGV	Other HGV	Other Vehicles	Total
Total number of vehicles stopped	919	931	110	1960
No. of satisfactory stops	200	325	23	548
Roadworthiness Prohibition (PG9)	441	351	68	860
Roadworthiness Inspection Notice	60	28	2	90
Driver Hours prohibitions (Total)	83	54	0	137
Overweight prohibitions	9	3	12	24
FPNs issued (Driver related)	72	59	8	139
FPNs issued (Vehicle related)	183	164	33	380
Vehicles seized	16	4	4	24

Data collated by TfL and the MPS