EFM

ESSENTIAL FLEET MANAGER *Magazine*

For fleet professionals operating within the **Public Sector, Housing, Utilities** *and* **Infrastructure Management**

ISSUE 2
2026

Special Feature: Regulatory Compliance

FMG THINKING AHEAD *Supplier Insight:* **FMG** *(Pages 16-17)*

EFG ESSENTIAL FLEET GROUP LTD

Essential Fleet Manager Magazine

ISSUE 2(2026)

A dedicated publication for fleet professionals responsible for the vehicles that keep the UK's Essential Services running, delivering news, insights, and updates on suppliers, procurement, vehicles, and industry developments that shape the sector.

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Health Service to **Save Millions** with **Major Boost** to **Electrify NHS Fleet**

The NHS in England is set to save millions of pounds in fuel and maintenance costs as it accelerates the transition of its vehicle fleet to electric, backed by fresh government investment in charging infrastructure.

In late February, the Department for Transport confirmed an additional £4 million for the NHS Chargepoint Accelerator Scheme. The funding will support further installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across NHS sites, building on a programme that has already delivered more than 1,000 charging points for electric ambulances and fleet vehicles.

The latest announcement brings total government investment in NHS charging infrastructure to £22 million. This includes £10 million allocated last month by the Department of Health and Social Care and £8 million previously provided by the Department for Transport.

By lowering operating costs and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, the savings generated are expected to be reinvested directly into frontline patient services.

Modernising 20,000 Vehicles and Cutting Emissions

The NHS operates around 20,000 medical vehicles across England, collectively travelling approximately 460 million miles each year. Electrifying this fleet represents a major step towards decarbonising NHS operations, while also delivering measurable financial and air quality benefits.

Reducing emissions at this scale will improve air quality around hospitals and in surrounding communities — an important consideration for public health. At the same time, lower fuel and maintenance costs associated with EVs are expected to release tens of millions of pounds annually back into patient care.

The fleet transition aligns with broader NHS performance improvements. Over the past year, the health service has delivered 5 million additional appointments and reduced waiting lists by 330,000 since July 2024, bringing them to their lowest level in three years.

Aviation, Maritime and Decarbonisation Minister Keir Mather said:

"Backing the switch to electric for our NHS fleet will save millions and help clean up 460 million miles of journeys across England — that's good for taxpayers, patients and communities.

"With over 116,000 public chargers now available, our investment is transforming the UK's charging network so more drivers can switch to electric with confidence."

To see the impact first-hand, Mather visited the London Ambulance Service headquarters in Waterloo, where government funding has supported charger installations across the fleet.

Delivering Efficiency and Productivity

The electrification programme forms part of a wider drive to modernise the NHS estate and improve productivity. Through cost reduction, innovation and operational reform, the service is currently exceeding its 2% annual productivity target. Between April and October 2025, productivity grew by 2.8% compared with the previous year.

Minister of State for Health Karin Smyth said:

"With cleaner vehicles and lower fuel bills for the NHS, everybody wins. Savings from this investment will go straight back into patient care.

"There is not just a moral case for this investment — there is a pragmatic one too. We are modernising the NHS to make it fit for the next century and beyond."

Chris Gormley, Chief Sustainability Officer at NHS England, added:

"Moving to electric vehicles helps make the NHS fit for the future — improving response times and air quality around hospitals. Zero-emission vehicles are expected to save the NHS tens of millions annually, allowing more

resources to be directed to frontline care."

Record Growth in Public Charging

The NHS investment comes amid rapid expansion of the UK's public charging network. Newly published figures show there are now 116,052 public EV charging sockets nationwide — a record high. The revised methodology counts individual sockets rather than devices, offering a clearer picture of how many vehicles can charge simultaneously. Industry estimates suggest there are now significantly more charging sockets than fuel pumps across the country.

The government has committed more than £1 billion to EV charging infrastructure, including:

- £600 million announced last year
- £400 million for local authorities to deliver 100,000 charge points

Industry stakeholders have welcomed the move. Jade Edwards, Head of Insights at Zapmap, said improved reporting will give drivers clearer visibility of charging availability.

Ian McKee, Head of Communications at ChargeUK, said the updated "EV charger" metric enhances transparency and demonstrates continued progress in delivering infrastructure where it is needed.

Matt Adams, Head of Electrical Transport Systems at BEAMA, added that NHS drivers will benefit from quieter, more comfortable vehicles and dedicated infrastructure — advantages that support both staff wellbeing and local communities.

Supporting Drivers Nationwide

The announcement follows confirmation that renters, landlords and businesses can now claim up to £500 towards installing EV chargers under extended Home and Workplace Charging Grants.

In addition, the government's Electric Car Grant offers discounts of up to £3,750 on new electric vehicles, helping more than 65,000 drivers make the switch.

For fleet operators, the NHS transition provides a high-profile example of how targeted infrastructure investment, operational reform and clear decarbonisation strategy can deliver both financial and environmental returns — reinforcing the business case for electrification at scale.●

Industry Unites to Call for **Clear**, Consistent **EV Signage**

Leaders across the electric vehicle sector are urging the government to ensure EV charging points are signposted on UK roads as clearly as petrol stations, warning that poor visibility remains a barrier to wider EV adoption.

Industry figures say thousands of public chargers are already installed and operational across the country but are often difficult for drivers to find due to inconsistent or limited roadside signage.

The sector is now calling for changes to road sign regulations so electric vehicle charging is treated on an equal footing with traditional fuel stations, with clearer and more consistent signs introduced across motorways, major roads and urban areas.

A visibility challenge

While the UK's public charging network has grown rapidly in recent years, many chargers are located in car parks, retail destinations or residential streets where they are not easily visible from main routes.

By contrast, petrol stations are typically clearly signposted and prominently displayed to drivers travelling along major roads.

Industry representatives say improving signage could help drivers become more aware of the charging infrastructure already available and reduce concerns about finding a charger during longer journeys.

Boosting driver confidence

Supporters of clearer signage argue that making charging locations easier to identify could also help build confidence among motorists considering switching to electric vehicles (EVs).

For drivers new to EVs, particularly those planning longer journeys, the ability to easily spot nearby charging points can provide reassurance that the infrastructure is accessible and reliable.

The sector is urging policymakers and road authorities to introduce consistent national standards for EV charging signs and make it easier for local authorities to add charging locations to existing direction signs where infrastructure is already in place.

Advocates say relatively simple changes to road signage could play a meaningful role in supporting the continued growth of electric vehicle adoption across the UK. ●

Model shown is 26MY Defender 90 Hard Top S with optional Tasman Blue metallic body, white contrast roof and 18" steel wheels. Official in g/km: [219-237]. The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation with a fully figures may vary according to factors such as driving styles, environmental conditions, load, wheel fitment, accessories fitted, actual wading. *Wet: Volume as measured by simulating the loadspace filled with liquid.

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Fuel Consumption Figures for the Defender Hard Top range in mpg (l/100km) (weighted combined): [33.7-31.5 (8.4-9.0)]. CO_2 Emissions
charged battery. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ. CO_2, fuel economy, energy consumption and range
route and battery condition. Off-road sequences carried out on private land with full permissions. Always check route and exit before

Innovation, New **Launches** and **Real-World Fleet Solutions** Take **Centre Stage**

For fleet operators across the UK, the Commercial Vehicle Show 2026 remains one of the most valuable opportunities to evaluate the vehicles, technologies, and services shaping the future of commercial transport. Taking place at the National Exhibition Centre from 21–23 April, the event will once again bring together manufacturers, technology providers, policymakers, and industry experts under one roof.

For operators facing increasing pressure around decarbonisation, compliance, operational efficiency, and driver wellbeing, the show offers practical insights and direct access to solutions designed for real-world fleets. Rather than simply showcasing the latest vehicles, the event focuses on helping operators make informed decisions about fleet investment, infrastructure, and long-term strategy.

A Hub for Fleet Decision-Makers

The show gives operators the chance to explore the latest heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), light commercial vehicles (LCVs), and alternative fuel technologies alongside the systems that support them. For fleets managing complex or mixed vehicle types, the event provides a rare opportunity to compare products and services side by side.

Attendees can speak directly with manufacturers, technology providers, and infrastructure specialists to understand how emerging solutions perform in everyday operations. With tightening emissions targets and rising operational costs, the emphasis is firmly on practical innovation—technologies that can be implemented today, as well as those likely to shape fleet strategy over the next decade.

Ten launches to Headline Opening Day

The pace of innovation will be reflected in ten major launches scheduled for the opening day of the exhibition on 21 April. Across the expanded exhibition floor in Halls 4 and 5, leading manufacturers and organisations will unveil new vehicles, concepts, technologies, and services. Launches will come from companies including Kia, Renault Group, Farizon Auto, Isuzu UK, Harris Group, Iveco, Shell UK, Chery Commercial Vehicles, and National Highways. The event will open with an industry address from Mike Hawes, Chief Executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, setting the tone for three days focused on the future of the UK's road transport industry.

Among the highlights, Chery Commercial Vehicles will introduce its new electric commercial vehicle brand DELIVAN to Europe for the first time. Developed by the company's technology arm VAN BU, the brand focuses on integrating electrification, intelligent digital systems, and connected fleet solutions to support the transformation of logistics and urban mobility. Meanwhile, Iveco will showcase its latest advancements in sustainable commercial transport, including the UK public debut of the eJolly and eSuperJolly, marking the manufacturer's initial step into the medium van segment.

Elsewhere, Kia will return with its expanding PV5 range, including European premieres of two new body styles based on its Platform Beyond Vehicle (PBV) concept, alongside a network of approved converters specialising in racking, refrigeration, and tipping solutions. Manufacturers returning after major announcements last year include Renault Group, which showcased a new generation of vans, and Farizon, which highlighted its SV electric van and its potential for specialist conversions. Pick-up specialist Isuzu UK will also return with its latest D-Max line-up aimed at operators requiring durability and versatility.

Destination Net Zero: Supporting Fleet Transition

A key feature of the event is Destination Net Zero, located in Hall 4. This dedicated area focuses on assisting operators in transitioning to lower-emission transport.

Here, fleets can explore battery-electric vans and trucks, hydrogen fuel-cell technology, and alternative fuel systems, alongside the broader ecosystem needed to support them — including charging infrastructure, energy management systems, and depot planning.

For many operators, the biggest challenge is not just selecting a vehicle but understanding how it integrates into daily operations. Destination Net Zero aims to bridge that gap by linking vehicle technology with the infrastructure and planning necessary to make low-emission fleets viable at scale.

Hands-on experience and industry collaboration

One of the most valuable aspects for fleet buyers is the Ride & Drive experience. Within a controlled environment, operators can test the latest vehicles and gain first-hand insights into performance, handling, comfort, and in-cab technology — especially important for fleets considering electric or alternative-fuel vehicles.

New for 2026 is the Collaboration Zone, designed to connect fleet operators with government bodies, industry organisations, and policy experts. Located in Hall 4, this space will provide guidance on regulatory changes, compliance requirements, and funding opportunities.

Alongside the main exhibition, Bus Expo broadens the event's focus to passenger transport fleets, featuring vehicles, technologies, and services for bus and coach operators, as well as the Bus & Coach Leaders Forum.

Together, these features make the Commercial Vehicle Show 2026 a key event for operators managing vans, trucks, buses, or mixed fleets — offering practical insights, hands-on experience, and a clear view of the innovations shaping commercial transport.●

To find out more and to book your free place, visit: **www.cvshow.com**

Special Feature

Regulatory **Compliance**

A **Regulatory Shift** Hidden in **Plain Sight**

By: **Chris Harrington**, Associate Legal Director, **C E Transport Law Ltd**.

Across the essential services sector, fleet electrification is accelerating. Utilities, telecommunications providers, infrastructure contractors and public service organisations are increasingly replacing diesel vans with battery-electric alternatives as part of wider decarbonisation commitments.

On the surface, the transition appears straightforward. Electric vans often look almost identical to the diesel vehicles they replace. The same engineers, technicians and operatives continue to drive them, travelling the same routes and delivering the same services to customers and communities.

However, one critical factor is often overlooked... Payload! The vehicle's weight has increased.

Electric vehicles (EVs) typically carry significantly heavier battery systems than conventional diesel powertrains. As a result, a vehicle's overall weight can increase substantially. In some cases, what appears to be a standard light commercial van may exceed the familiar 3.5-tonne threshold, moving it into a different regulatory category.

Once that threshold is exceeded, a vehicle that appears to be "just another van" may fall within the scope of the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 1995 (GVA 1995), introducing additional regulatory obligations for the operator.

For organisations that have historically operated fleets of light commercial vehicles, this shift can occur without the legal implications being fully recognised.

Consequences of Exceeding the 3.5-Tonne Threshold

Under the GVA 1995, vehicles with a maximum authorised mass (MAM) exceeding 3.5 tonnes are generally subject to the goods vehicle operator licensing regime. While certain exemptions may apply, most operators using vehicles above this threshold in connection with a trade or business will require a goods vehicle operator's licence (O-licence).

Holding an operator's licence brings with it a range of statutory responsibilities designed to ensure that vehicles are operated safely and in compliance with regulatory standards.

Operators must demonstrate that they satisfy several key requirements, including:

- Professional competence
- Financial standing
- Good repute
- A stable and effective operating base

These requirements are administered and enforced by the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain, who have broad regulatory powers in relation to operator licensing.

Importantly, the regulatory framework places responsibility firmly on the operator to understand and comply with the law. A lack of awareness or misunderstanding of licensing requirements will not generally be accepted as a defence.

Operating a goods vehicle without the appropriate licence where one is required can result in serious consequences, including:

- Criminal prosecution
- Vehicle impoundment
- Financial penalties
- Reputational damage

For organisations transitioning from conventional van fleets to electric vehicles, these requirements may represent a significant shift in regulatory exposure.

Driver Licence Flexibility for EVs

The UK government has recognised that the heavier batteries used in electric vehicles can have implications for driver licence entitlements.

Drivers with a standard Category B licence can now operate electric or hydrogen vans up to 4.25 tonnes maximum authorised mass. This change mainly benefits drivers who passed their test after 1 January 1997, who previously could only drive vehicles under 3.5 tonnes.

Compared to the usual 3.5-tonne limit, this concession aims to promote zero-emission vehicle use without needing extra licence categories.

However, it is important to note that this change applies only to driver licensing rules. It does not remove or modify other regulatory obligations that arise once a vehicle exceeds the 3.5-tonne weight threshold, including those relating to operator licensing.

Operators should also ensure that their insurance arrangements remain valid when drivers operate vehicles under this expanded entitlement, and may wish to seek confirmation from their insurance provider or broker.

Operating Centres and Depot Considerations

Heavier vehicles can also introduce practical compliance considerations relating to vehicle storage and operating centres.

- Operators holding an O-licence must specify where their vehicles are normally kept when not in use. These locations must be suitable for the size and number of vehicles being operated and must be approved as part of the licensing process.
- Where vehicles are routinely taken home by drivers or parked at locations other than a designated operating centre, operators may need to review their existing arrangements to ensure they remain compliant with licensing requirements.
- Within depot environments, operators should also consider whether appropriate traffic management systems, safe parking arrangements and pedestrian safety measures are in place to accommodate larger and heavier vehicles.
- Businesses transitioning from smaller van fleets may not previously have required such formalised operational controls.

Safe Loading and Weight Compliance

Vehicles within the 3.5 to 7.5 tonne category are capable of carrying heavier loads, making safe loading procedures particularly important.

Operators have a legal duty to ensure that loads are:

- Properly secured
- Evenly distributed
- Kept within the permitted weight limits of the vehicle

Inadequate loading practices can compromise vehicle stability, braking performance and road safety.

Electric vans can present an additional challenge in this regard. The weight of the battery may reduce the available payload capacity, increasing the risk that vehicles could be inadvertently operated while overweight.

Overloading offences may lead to prohibition notices, enforcement action and prosecution. Financial penalties imposed by the courts can be significant, particularly where offences are linked to commercial operations.

Awareness Across the Organisation

Many compliance risks arise not through deliberate misconduct but through organisational blind spots.

- Fleet procurement teams may prioritise sustainability goals, vehicle availability or operational cost savings when introducing electric vehicles. However, the regulatory implications of increased vehicle weight may not always be fully considered during the procurement process.
- Similarly, operational teams may continue applying procedures designed for conventional vans, even after vehicles have moved into a different regulatory category.
- For organisations operating critical services, this gap between procurement decisions and operational compliance can create a hidden risk.

A Key Consideration for Essential Service Fleets

The transition to electric commercial vehicles represents an important step toward a more sustainable transport system. For organisations delivering essential services, it is also part of a broader shift toward cleaner and more resilient infrastructure.

However, electrification is not solely a technological change. It can also represent a regulatory shift.

Vehicles that appear to function like traditional vans may, due to their weight, fall within a different legal framework requiring operator licensing and enhanced compliance oversight.

For fleet operators in the essential services sector, recognising this shift early is essential to ensuring that operations remain safe, compliant and legally robust while continuing to deliver the services on which communities depend.●

Practical Compliance Check

- ☑ **Check vehicle weight:** What is the maximum authorised mass (MAM) of the vehicle? Does it exceed 3.5 tonnes?
- ☑ **Assess operator licence requirements**: If vehicles exceed 3.5 tonnes, determine whether an operator's licence is required.
- ☑ **Review operating centre arrangements:** Ensure vehicles are parked at an appropriate specified operating centre when not in use.
- ☑ **Update depot safety procedures**: Make sure traffic management, parking, and pedestrian safety measures suit heavier vehicles.
- ☑ **Review loading practices:** Confirm loads are secure, evenly distributed, and within permitted weight limits, especially where payload capacity may be reduced.
- ☑ **Raise staff awareness:** Ensure drivers and operational teams understand when vehicles fall into a different regulatory category.
- ☑ **Coordinate internally**: Involve fleet, operations, and compliance teams when introducing electric vehicles to identify regulatory risks early.
- ☑ **Seek professional advice**: If unsure about regulatory obligations, consult a legal professional to ensure compliance.
- ☑ **Insurance:** Does the insurance policy cover the changes in your fleet? Never assume!

For help and advice relating to transport regulatory compliance, please visit: **www.cetransportlaw.com**

CE TRANSPORT LAW

How FleetGuard+ Works: Protecting Drivers and Operators When It Matters Most

FleetGuard+ is delivered in association with C E Transport Law and Steve Hale Transport Consultancy Ltd – a professional legal and wellbeing response service designed exclusively for UK transport operators and their drivers. Combining specialist transport law expertise with industry consultancy experience, the service provides immediate legal guidance and structured support following serious road traffic incidents.

Serious road traffic accidents can happen without warning, and the first few hours are often the most critical. How drivers and operators respond in the immediate aftermath can have significant implications for legal outcomes, driver wellbeing, and regulatory compliance.

FleetGuard+ was created to help fleet operators manage these situations with confidence. Designed specifically for the UK transport industry, the service ensures drivers and management teams understand the correct steps to take following a serious incident.

Immediate Specialist Support

FleetGuard+ is not a traditional insurance product. Instead, it provides immediate access to specialist transport professionals who guide drivers and operators from the outset of an incident.

Following a serious accident, drivers may be questioned by police, while management teams must make important decisions that could carry legal and regulatory consequences. Early guidance helps ensure the situation is handled appropriately and reduces the risk of mistakes that could increase liability.

Support for Drivers

FleetGuard+ provides drivers with clear guidance during what can be a highly stressful situation. Through a dedicated 24/7 crisis line, drivers can speak directly with experienced transport professionals who understand the challenges they may face after a serious incident.

Driver support includes:

- Immediate advice on what to do at the scene
- Guidance while police are present
- Confidential consultations before any police interview
- Post-incident counselling to support recovery and wellbeing

This support helps drivers feel informed and reassured while dealing with the aftermath of an accident.

Guidance for Management Teams

FleetGuard+ also supports operators, managers, and directors when responding to serious incidents. The service provides training and structured procedures, so leadership teams understand how to manage the situation from the outset.

This includes:

- Advice before any internal investigation begins
- A structured investigation process guided by legal professionals
- Protection of legally privileged communications
- Advice on managing internal and external communications

With professional oversight, companies can handle incidents responsibly while reducing potential legal risks.●


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Is **Legal Good Enough**?

Mark Cartwright, Head of Commercial Vehicle Incident Prevention, **National Highways**

Many fleets pride themselves on their legal compliance, but safety requires more than adherence to the letter of the law. Achieving true safety involves organisations assessing, thinking about, and acting carefully. The law sets minimum standards for vehicles and drivers, which apply to everyone. That does not mean that the explicit standards in law are the only ones you need to meet, whether as a driver or an employer. The gap between legality and safety is intentionally created to offer flexibility and accommodate individual judgment, but this gap must be addressed. It cannot be ignored.

Road traffic laws, drivers' hours regulations, and MOT requirements are all minimum standards. Ensuring drivers are qualified, and that vehicles are MOT'd, roadworthy, and insured for business use, are crucial first steps in fleet management.

Yet, they are not enough on their own to prevent collisions. A brand-new, insured, top-of-the-line vehicle will not keep anyone safe if it is not driven responsibly.

If you want your drivers to travel safely each day and return home unharmed or without causing harm to others, you must go significantly further.

Bridging the gap

Of course, the law does have a significant catch-all that applies to work-related risk management, namely health and safety legislation. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 applies to all driving at work and places a clear responsibility on organisations to identify and manage risk. In practice, however, health and safety professionals tend to focus on the workplace, fleet professionals, where they exist, are concentrated on vehicles, and line managers are focused on operational targets. All too often, no one actively manages health and safety on the road. This is despite the fact that around 135 people die in workplace incidents each year, while approximately 1,600 die on the roads. About a third of those deaths occur in collisions involving an at-work driver. The reason no one manages health and safety on the roads is often because organisations concentrate on the explicit actions they must take by law, rather than on areas where they need to use their own initiative to identify and eliminate risk. It is also far easier to manage situations and events that occur on site and can be easily monitored and witnessed. Driver risk, by contrast, is often invisible unless you deliberately look for it and address it.

Going beyond

Health and safety law provides guidance but rarely specifies exactly what actions you must take to ensure safety, as each situation is different. For instance, there is nothing in law that explicitly requires you to have a driving-for-work policy. However, without one, it becomes very difficult to confirm that you have communicated the necessary standards and expectations to your drivers. It is even more challenging to prove that you have done so. So, what steps should you take to genuinely reduce your collision risk?

Safety culture

The first step is to establish and nurture a safety culture. Think of this as a "first, do no harm" approach.

Whatever your operation, you probably have life-saving rules which no one is allowed to compromise. For example, no one goes on site without PPE and a hard hat, and no one operates machinery without all guards, rails and fail-safes in place. You also expect people to speak up if they see these rules being broken.

A real safety culture extends this mindset to everything, creating a psychologically safe environment where employees can raise concerns or questions about safety without fear of being penalised or embarrassed.

Very often, organisations have extensive training and safety drills around their core activity, but forget that the same degree of safety awareness needs to apply to driving. Employees and managers need to understand that the same risk awareness they bring to working with gas, diggers,

overhead power cables or train lines must also apply to the most dangerous activity most of us ever do, driving.

We may think of driving as an ordinary daily activity, but statistically, it carries far greater risk than almost any profession, even being a soldier or a firefighter. Many jobs carry a very high degree of potential danger, but that danger is mitigated by strict controls, high levels of training, a relentless sense of professionalism and an uncompromising approach to safety rules.

Yet those same professionals then get into their vehicles with a diminished sense of risk, very little management control or training, and take their chances among hundreds of other drivers. Many of those drivers have nothing more than minimal qualifications or experience.

Safety has to begin and end the day, and set the tone for all your employees' activities.

Focus on drivers

Many at-work drivers do not see themselves as "professional drivers". The vehicle is simply a tool that takes them, their equipment or their cargo from A to B.

Thorough management of road risk goes well beyond checking a driving licence. It should include:

- **Educating drivers** about fatigue and distraction
- **Ensuring journey planning** is risk-aware, using the safest routes and optimal driving times, and avoiding driving in poor conditions unless the journey is critical
- **Making sure operational demands** do not require or incentivise speeding, excessive driving hours or skipping breaks, hydration or rest stops
- **Ensuring all technology,** such as sat nav or music, is set up before setting off and not touched again until the vehicle is stationary
- **Ensuring drivers know** they will not receive and should not take calls from the office while driving, even hands-free
- **Ensuring drivers are fit to drive**, sufficiently rested, physically well, and that any medications or medical conditions have been noted and checked for compatibility with driving. This includes informing the DVLA where necessary.

A legally compliant vehicle and driver can still be involved in a collision if the driver is overworked, distracted, tired or rushing.

Measure, manage and monitor

No amount of policies or training will ensure that drivers perform safely if no one monitors or manages them, or checks that operational instructions are compatible with safe driving.

There are many technologies available today which can make driving behaviour and even in-cab behaviour visible to fleet managers. However, the technology itself simply records events. Managers must actually review the data and act on it.

There are many ways of approaching this. Some fleets focus on their most common causes of collisions or on particularly serious behaviours such as speeding. Others focus on the bottom ten percent of performers and work to improve their driving scores.

However you approach it, the data is valuable and must be acted upon. Coaching drivers, particularly when supported by footage or telematics data, can significantly improve behaviour and lower a driver's risk score.

Sometimes simply knowing that someone is monitoring their performance brings positive change. Coaching can also improve risk awareness. If a driver has always behaved in a certain way and got away with it, they may not realise the risks until they are pointed out. Finally, when management consistently enforces policy rules, those rules begin to carry real meaning.

Compliance is not enough

Ultimately, safety is a question of responsibility. Fleets can follow every rule, but if they are not proactively managing drivers they are leaving responsibility for safe on-road behaviour entirely to the judgement of the individual driver.

That means the organisation is also exposed to the consequences of that driver's misjudgement, with potentially devastating results.

At the end of the day, responsibility for identifying and mitigating risk remains with the operator.

Proactive fleet management has many elements, and it may seem overwhelming, especially where those responsible for drivers are not fleet professionals.

However, organisations do not need to build systems from scratch. Driving for Better Business has created a comprehensive suite of resources that guide organisations through every step of identifying and managing driver risk, improving performance and benchmarking progress.

We have created a matrix-based approach to continuous improvement, so whichever resource you start with, you can clearly see where it sits within the risk management journey and find tools to help you take the next step.

In our FREE resource library, you will find:

- An editable policy builder tool with regular updates and an annual refresh reminder.
- A gap analysis too
- Driver Roadworthiness Guide
- A mental health toolkit for managing drivers
- CALM Driver (a mental health resource).
- Van Driver Toolkit providing dozens of toolbox talks, PDFs and videos
- Car Driver Toolkit
- Incident Investigation Guide
- National Highways driver training courses
- Fleet Safety Focus updates
- A benchmarking tool

Soon we will also be adding resources on:

- Trauma response
- Managing young and novice van drivers
- Using data to control risk●

FMG

THINKING AHEAD

PROTECTING THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WHEEL

For those responsible for managing vehicle fleets, safety is more than a compliance requirement, it's a legal and moral obligation to do all we can to ensure every driver returns home safely at the end of the working day. Fleet leaders across the UK recognise this obligation.

Yet as fleets grow more complex and operational pressures intensify, protecting drivers requires more than good intentions. It demands a coordinated strategy that combines technology, data insight, operational support and a genuine focus on driver wellbeing.

At FMG, we work closely with major fleets, utilities and leasing providers across the UK to support driver safety strategies at every stage — from preventative insight to full incident management. The goal is simple: to protect the people behind the wheel.

UNDERSTANDING DRIVER BEHAVIOUR IN YOUR FLEET

Fleet drivers face a wide range of hazards on the road – bad weather, traffic delays, fatigue and time pressures - and understanding the root cause of incidents is key to incident prevention.

Our vehicles and the devices within them are generating more safety data than ever before, but for many fleet managers it's becoming unmanageable, it's all too easy to get lost in the numbers. Here at FMG we analyse fleet data to help fleet managers see and understand patterns and trends within their driver community to identify the factors they can influence to prevent further incidents.

For example, the location of repeat incidents can be examined for better lighting or signage, the weekly meeting rescheduled to avoid rush-hour driving or perhaps a targeted training programme is required. Harnessing the power of driver-focussed data analytics in this way can proactively support incident reduction.

24/7 DRIVER AND VEHICLE SUPPORT

All new vehicles have some form of sophisticated ADAS and whilst they're contributing to a reduction in the frequency of low level low impact claims, we can't prevent incidents completely.

When incidents do occur, we provide support when our customers and their cars, vans, utility vehicles and commercial vehicles require assistance. And since they don't operate on a 9-5 working day model, neither do we. Instead, our incident management experts are here round the clock, ready to listen, reassure and take control of putting things right.

CHECKING IN WITH YOUR DRIVER

We're all for providing drivers with choice, and they can opt for a digital journey with us, reporting their claims online at their convenience if they wish. However sometimes customer safety must override this choice.

In crafting our digital solutions, we've pinpointed the areas where technology will deliver the best value and understand the moments where intuitive human intervention will improve the service. If your driver is stranded at the roadside, we insist upon speaking with them to check on their wellbeing and to arrange immediate roadside assistance.

A LIFELINE FOR DRIVERS IN DISTRESS

For a driver in distress, fast and efficient vehicle recovery is a lifeline, and we work in close and long-standing partnerships with the UK's highest quality vehicle recovery operators. Every vehicle recovery situation requires strict safety protocols, and our partners are qualified to the highest quality standards in vehicle breakdown and recovery operations, whether it requires emergency services, motorway lane closures, forensic preservation or specialist cranes or winching equipment.

Wherever your drivers gets stuck, we ensure full UK coverage, from the busiest motorways to the remotest lanes of the Highlands and Islands, from cars and vans to EVs and HGVs, and every complex incident type too.

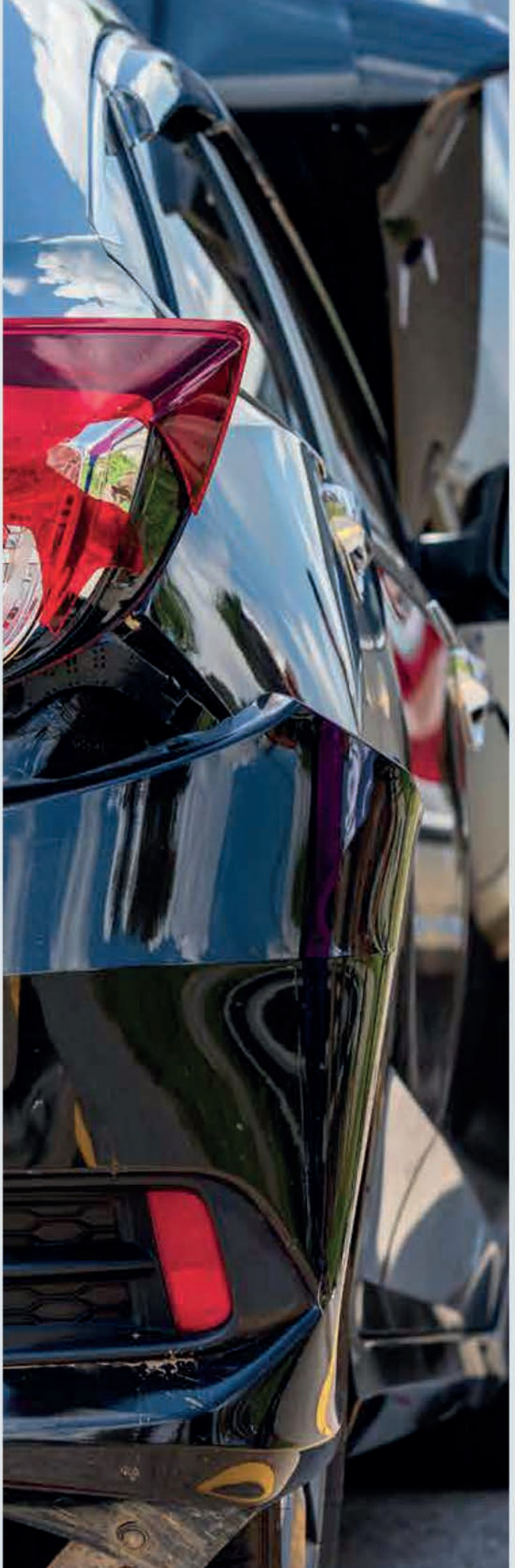
BEST PRACTICE IN VEHICLE REPAIR

Our network of vehicle repairers are also subject to rigorous compliance and performance standards, with partners on our repairer network certified to the BS 10125 benchmark for best practice in safe and compliant repairs. This standard outlines the key processes, people and procedures to provide safe repairs and offers reassurance to our customers too.

Managing a modern fleet is a complex job which requires a constant commitment to compliance and safety standards, alongside the need to balance efficiency, cost management, sustainability, training and recruitment. If you'd like to discuss how FMG can provide smooth and seamless support alongside your fleet operation, please get in touch at hello@fmg.co.uk.

0344 243 8888

marketing1@fmg.co.uk



Part of the **TTC** Group

Does **Ticking** The **Fleet Compliance Box** Create a **False Sense** of **Competency**?

37% of businesses say lack of competence has led to incidents or failures, reports TTC Group

A recent survey of business leaders by employee competency management specialist TTC suggests many organisations may be confusing compliance with competence. While businesses race to meet regulatory requirements, hidden skills gaps remain.

For fleet operators managing thousands of drivers and vehicles, completing compliance checks such as verifying licences, insurance and mandatory training can create the impression that drivers are fully fit for the role. But compliance alone does not guarantee competence.

Bridging The Confidence Gap

Compliance is essential, but it represents a minimum standard rather than a full picture of capability. Fleet teams work hard to meet regulatory demands and keep pace with shifting audit requirements. Yet ticking compliance boxes does not necessarily mean drivers have the knowledge, confidence and skills to operate safely every day.

TTC's research shows most fleet organisations believe they are meeting their obligations. Around 88% say they are confident they meet compliance requirements, while 86% believe their compliance activities are effective.

However, the same organisations also report significant capability challenges. Only 45% say employees consistently meet competence standards, and 46% say skills gaps have already caused costly repercussions, the highest figure of any sector surveyed by TTC. A further 34% report operational failures linked to competence gaps.

This contrast highlights a clear confidence gap. Organisations may feel compliant, but that does not always translate into workforce capability.

A Sector Facing Significant Training Needs

The survey also revealed that the fleet sector faces some of the largest training requirements of any industry. On average, fleet organisations estimate 44% of employees require additional training, again the highest proportion among sectors surveyed. At the same time, many fleets show a mixed level of compliance maturity, 50% operate proactively, 29% follow procedural approaches and 18% remain reactive in how they manage compliance and risk.

Competency management systems are widely used but not universally adopted. Around 82% of fleet organisations use a dedicated competency management system, while 18% rely on alternative or fragmented tools, which can make it harder to gain a clear view of workforce capability.

The research also highlights the types of skills gaps fleets are most concerned about. The most common include communication and people skills (38%), problem solving and judgement (37%) and safety-related skills (36%). These gaps can directly affect day-to-day fleet operations, from driver decision-making on the road to communication with customers and colleagues.

Hidden Risks When Compliance Equals Competence

Assuming competence based on compliance alone can expose organisations to hidden risks. According to the survey, fleet organisations are particularly concerned about reputational damage (42%) and workplace incidents and safety failures (39%). These risks can affect everything from insurance costs and legal exposure to operational efficiency and brand trust.

At the same time, fleet teams are managing growing volumes of data — from telematics and driver behaviour to compliance records and training outcomes. Turning that information into clear, actionable insight remains a challenge.

Technology Closing The Gap

Increasingly, fleet organisations are turning to technology-enabled competency management systems that provide a clearer view of driver capability.

The research shows strong support for technology-based solutions within the sector. More than half (54%) of fleet organisations say integrated technology platforms for managing competence and training would significantly improve capability, while 39% want better competence assessments and 36% call for improved training options. These platforms connect training, compliance, performance and behavioural data to build a clearer picture of workforce capability.

Moving beyond spreadsheets and basic licence checks allows fleets to track who is competent in which task across the entire organisation. By profiling each employee's risk and competency level, automated remediation can be applied. For example, if a driver fails a hazard perception assessment, targeted bite-sized learning modules can be assigned to address that knowledge gap.

Real-time dashboards can also provide a live view of overall fleet risk, helping managers identify issues early and intervene before problems escalate.

Delivering Measurable Results

Bringing training, compliance and performance data together is already delivering measurable results for UK fleets. One construction and property services company working with TTC, centralised licence, MOT and insurance checks alongside digital risk assessments. The results included a 46% reduction in new driving offences such as speeding and a 51% reduction in own-fault company car claims, delivering more than £250,000 in savings from reduced claims costs.

These outcomes demonstrate how structured competency management can reduce risk while delivering significant financial returns.

Moving Beyond Compliance

As the role of fleet professionals evolves alongside regulatory change, government policy and new vehicle technologies, the challenge is no longer simply achieving compliance.

For safety-critical sectors such as fleet management, the next step is ensuring drivers are not only compliant but genuinely competent. Harnessing modern technology allows fleet leaders to identify, develop and track the skills, knowledge and behaviours their drivers need to operate safely and effectively.●

To find out more visit: **www.thettcgroup.com**

ttc Trusted Training & Compliance

The **Mileage Question:** Why **Accurate Recording** Is **Central** to **Compliance** — and **Cost Control** in the **EV Era**

Accurate mileage recording is no longer a routine administrative task — it is a cornerstone of fleet compliance, financial control and risk management. In an era shaped by electrification, tighter regulation and heightened duty of care expectations, disciplined mileage oversight protects budgets, safeguards maintenance compliance and provides the operational intelligence fleets need to run safely and efficiently.

For fleet operators, mileage should be viewed as a compliance benchmark, a financial control mechanism and, increasingly, a core component of organisational risk management.

Whether overseeing a small car or van fleet or managing a complex national operation, the principle remains consistent: without disciplined mileage oversight, businesses expose themselves to avoidable legal and financial risk.

Compliance and Legal Risk Exposure

Inconsistent or inaccurate reporting can result in missed servicing, MOT failures, unexpected repair costs and tax discrepancies. In more serious circumstances, it can lead to scrutiny following a collision or roadside inspection if a vehicle is found to have exceeded manufacturer service intervals or fallen outside prescribed maintenance guidance.

Allowing vehicles to operate beyond scheduled maintenance thresholds can invalidate warranties and weaken resale values. Failing to monitor contractual mileage on leased assets may trigger substantial end-of-term penalties.

Within grey fleet operations, the risks intensify. Employees using their own vehicles for business purposes remain subject to employer duty of care responsibilities. Organisations must be able to demonstrate that those vehicles are roadworthy, appropriately maintained and suitable for work-related journeys. Without reliable visibility of annual mileage and service alignment, providing that assurance becomes difficult. In the event of an incident or regulatory review, insufficient documentation can prove damaging.

Financial Governance and Cost Control

On a routine monthly basis, weak mileage governance can distort expense claims, fuel reimbursements and increasingly, EV charging repayments. Minor discrepancies, when multiplied across an entire fleet, quickly escalate into meaningful financial exposure.

Leased fleets introduce further commercial sensitivity. Annual mileage allowances form part of contractual agreements, and excess charges can erode budgets quickly. Access to accurate, real-time mileage intelligence allows operators to forecast usage trends, adjust vehicle allocations and renegotiate terms before penalties accrue. In a residual value market that remains particularly sensitive around EVs, precise mileage data is increasingly influential in protecting asset performance.

Maintenance Alignment and Operational Continuity

Maintenance compliance remains intrinsically linked to mileage accuracy. Manufacturers specify service intervals based on elapsed time or distance travelled, whichever occurs first. A vehicle that quietly surpasses its mileage threshold without triggering a maintenance alert may continue operating — until a mechanical fault emerges.

Proactive monitoring enables fleet managers to schedule servicing in advance, protect warranty conditions and reduce the likelihood of disruptive roadside breakdowns. Excessive mileage without corresponding maintenance increases the risk of tyre degradation, component wear, brake fatigue and, ultimately, vehicle-off-road (VOR) time.

Accurate mileage tracking strengthens safety, reduces downtime and reinforces duty of care compliance.

Data Integrity, Technology and Audit Trails

Effective control begins with process discipline and data integrity. Regular mileage capture, whether through scheduled reporting, service-based updates or integrated digital systems, establishes a defensible audit trail.

Increasingly, fleet operators are reducing reliance on manual submissions. Telematics platforms now offer automated

odometer readings, journey verification and real-time usage analytics, significantly lowering the risk of human error. Beyond compliance, this data supports strategic planning by identifying under-utilised vehicles, forecasting future demand and improving asset allocation.

Ongoing monitoring is equally important. Regular internal reviews help ensure reported mileage aligns with telematics data, service schedules remain on track and fuel or charging claims reflect genuine business travel. Unexpected spikes or anomalies should be examined promptly, not only to control cost but to identify potential misuse or emerging mechanical issues.

Electrification and the True Cost Per Mile

The transition to electric vehicles introduces further complexity. Although EVs typically require less routine mechanical maintenance, they introduce variable charging costs that depend on where and how vehicles are powered. Tariffs differ markedly between depot charging, home charging and public rapid networks.

Without accurate mileage data, calculating a reliable cost per mile becomes difficult. For organisations reimbursing home charging, precise mileage records are essential to ensure payments remain accurate and defensible under guidance from HM Revenue & Customs. Weak oversight risks financial leakage and potential tax discrepancies.

Mileage intelligence also plays a critical role in EV strategy. Accurate real-world data on daily distances and duty cycles ensures electrification decisions are grounded in operational reality rather than assumption.

Establishing a Formal Mileage Compliance Framework

A formal mileage compliance policy is critical. Such a policy should clearly define:

- Reporting expectations
- Approved recording methods
- Driver responsibilities
- Escalation procedures for missed submissions
- Audit requirements and data retention standards

Consequences of deliberate falsification

Mileage governance must be embedded within broader fleet compliance frameworks rather than treated as a standalone administrative task.

Vehicle Utilisation: Are You Running the Right Fleet?

Mileage data also tells a story about utilisation — and that story is often revealing.

Across many fleets, a small percentage of vehicles carry the majority of the workload, while others remain underused. Without accurate mileage tracking, idle assets can quietly remain in the fleet, tying up capital, lease costs, insurance and maintenance budgets.

Clear mileage visibility enables fleet managers to:

- Identify consistently low-use vehicles
- Reallocate assets more efficiently
- Reduce fleet size where appropriate
- Redeploy vehicles to higher-demand areas

Assess whether pool vehicles or shared mobility models would be more cost-effective

This insight becomes especially valuable when planning EV transition strategies. Low-mileage vehicles with predictable routes may be ideal early candidates for electrification, while high-mileage or irregular-use vehicles may require further assessment.

Without reliable mileage intelligence, EV transition decisions risk being based on assumption rather than evidence.

From Administration to Strategic Control

Mileage control is ultimately about visibility and foresight. It allows fleets to shift from reactive management to proactive governance. It strengthens compliance resilience, improves financial forecasting and supports data-driven decision-making in an increasingly scrutinised operating environment.

In an era defined by electrification, tighter regulation and heightened accountability, the simple act of recording mileage accurately has taken on renewed strategic importance. For professional fleet operators, it remains one of the most understated — yet powerful — tools available to safeguard compliance, protect budgets and enhance operational control.●

Driving **Beyond Compliance**: How **ScORSA** Is Helping **Fleet Operators** Build a **Safer Road Risk Culture**

For fleet operators and businesses whose employees drive for work, occupational road risk remains one of the most significant health and safety challenges. Ensuring legal compliance is only part of the solution. Real protection for people, organisations and reputations comes when a proactive, safety-first culture is embedded across the business.

Essential Fleet Manager Magazine spoke with Caitlin Taylor from the Scottish Occupational Road Safety Alliance (ScORSA), a project delivered by RoSPA and funded by Transport Scotland, about the important role the organisation plays in promoting occupational road safety and supporting fleet compliance.

Caitlin explains how ScORSA works with partners and employers to provide guidance, resources and leadership that help organisations move beyond minimum legal standards, supporting the development of safer drivers, safer vehicles and safer journeys for all.

Q: What are the issues that have been identified in fleet operational risk that ScORSA sees as most critical?

One of the most critical issues is how organisations manage and influence safe driving behaviours within a work context. Factors such as time pressure, workload, fatigue, distraction, and vehicle familiarity can increase risk if not properly managed. These challenges are rarely about individual fault; they are usually rooted in systems, expectations, and organisational culture.

Grey fleet management is another significant challenge. Employees using their own vehicles for work require checks on insurance, vehicle condition, and licence validity, even though these vehicles sit outside direct corporate control. Without clear processes, gaps can quickly develop.

Organisations often collect large amounts of information, such as incident reports, licence checks, inspections, and telematics, but the challenge lies in using it effectively. Recording data is just the first step; the quality of review, analysis, and follow-up action is what reduces risk. Incidents may be logged without examining underlying causes, and telematics data may not translate into coaching or policy improvements. Policies and compliance checks may exist, but are rarely reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with operational realities. Without structured review and visible leadership, opportunities for learning and improvement are missed.

Q: To what extent do you help organisations identify areas of concern before going on to provide solutions?

A significant part of our role is to act as a critical ally. Instead of providing ready-made solutions, we encourage organisations to reflect on their systems, assumptions, and oversight. Our framework prompts discussion on leadership accountability, policy clarity, operational controls, and how risk information flows.

Many organisations are already doing positive things, but may not have assessed whether these elements connect coherently. Using our framework, they can identify blind spots, duplication, or unclear responsibilities. Establishing a clear understanding of their current position enables them to determine achievable next steps, reinforcing internal ownership and supporting sustainable, long-term improvement.

Q: Of those issues, which are the most challenging to address?

The most challenging issue is often cultural rather than technical. Systems and processes can be introduced relatively quickly, but embedding a consistent safety culture requires sustained leadership commitment and engagement across the organisation. Ensuring that occupational road risk is recognised as a shared responsibility, rather than solely an operational or compliance matter, takes time. Grey fleet management adds complexity because it requires balancing employee flexibility with employer duty of care. Addressing these challenges effectively requires a long-term, collaborative approach rather than a one-off initiative.

Q: As well as explaining your steering group, how do you engage and collaborate with operational fleet professionals and other partners to develop valuable tools and resources?

ScORSA's work is guided by a multi-agency steering group made up of road safety professionals, operational fleet managers from both private and public sector organisations, and representatives from Transport Scotland. This mix of strategic and operational expertise is vital in ensuring our projects remain realistic, relevant, and firmly grounded in the day-to-day challenges faced by fleet operators.

The steering group shapes priorities, sense-checks outputs, and ensures products reflect real-world conditions. Fleet managers bring emerging issues and share successful practices from their own organisations

Beyond the steering group, we engage a wider network of fleet professionals through webinars, events,

and discussions. Operators exchange experiences, highlight new risks, and share best practices. Insights gained help us refine tools and guidance, which are then shared across the network to support learning and continuous improvement. Collaboration ensures solutions are practical, scalable, and effective in real operational environments.

Q: How does ScORSA help operators raise awareness and communicate effective solutions?

At ScORSA, raising awareness is rooted in ensuring organisations understand both current and emerging risks in fleet operations. We undertake and commission research to explore emerging complexities, including artificial intelligence in fleet management systems, advanced driver assistance systems, and the increasing integration of automated vehicle technologies. By identifying and analysing these trends early, we help operators stay ahead of change and make informed decisions before risks become incidents.

We strengthen this insight with practical case studies drawn from member organisations, showcasing real-world examples of how occupational road risks have been identified, addressed, and monitored. These case studies provide tangible evidence of effective management in practice and enable organisations to learn from peer experience.

We also deliver targeted campaigns on distraction, fatigue, seasonal driving pressures, and emerging technologies. These highlight issues and direct organisations to guidance, toolkits, and resources, helping them move from awareness to action in a structured and sustainable way.

Q: Beyond compliance, how do you help operators to create an all-around safe vehicle and driver culture?

Moving beyond compliance requires embedding road safety into organisational values rather than treating it as a tick-box exercise. We encourage proactive measures, including regular driver risk assessments, ongoing training, and robust near-miss reporting.

A safe culture recognises that vehicles are workplaces and driving is safety-critical. By integrating occupational road risk into wider health and safety strategies, organisations create an environment where safe driving is the norm and drivers feel supported rather than scrutinised. This cultural shift ultimately protects both people and reputation.

Q: How does ScORSA membership demonstrate commitment to occupational road safety?

ScORSA is a free membership programme, funded by Transport Scotland and delivered by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Membership of ScORSA provides independent recognition that an organisation is actively engaging with best practice in occupational road risk management. It demonstrates to stakeholders, including clients, insurers, regulators, and employees, that road safety is being managed systematically and not simply reactively.

For many organisations, membership evidences structured oversight, continuous improvement, and leadership commitment to safer operations.

Q: What measurable benefits do organisations gain through ScORSA membership?

ScORSA membership is designed to provide structured support and shared learning. Organisations that engage with the framework often tell us that they learn something new through the process, whether that relates to emerging risks, gaps in their governance arrangements, or opportunities to strengthen existing controls. The reflective nature of the framework encourages organisations to step back and critically review their approach to occupational road risk. As a result, many members make practical improvements to their policies and procedures.

Members also value the sense of community that comes with being part of the network. The opportunity to connect with other fleet professionals, share experiences, and discuss challenges openly creates a supportive environment where organisations can learn from one another rather than working in isolation. That peer exchange often provides reassurance as well as practical insight. For many, success is reflected not only in data but in increased confidence, improved policy clarity, and a more consistent and informed approach to managing occupational road risk across the organisation.●

EV-EXBOX

The EV-EXBOX team, who specialise in the risk assessment of EV charging infrastructure across a wide range of facilities, often come across fleet depots that are entering a period of rapid transition.

As operators electrify their fleets, they must integrate EV charging infrastructure into environments often originally designed around diesel and petrol storage and dispensing.

This shift brings clear operational and environmental benefits, but it also introduces new layers of risk, particularly where electrical equipment that is, by design, not intrinsically safe (ATEX rated) is installed close to diesel and petrol infrastructure such as above- or below-ground fuel storage tanks, waste oil tanks, tanker delivery areas, vent pipes and oil-water separators.

To overcome these challenges on what are often space-constrained locations, a well-structured risk assessment and a disciplined approach to installation and design of the EV charging infrastructure are essential.

Without them, operators may inadvertently create ignition hazards, violate ATEX zoning requirements, or compromise the safe operation of both EV and ICE vehicles.

This article outlines the key considerations fleet managers should address when planning EV charging infrastructure in mixed-fuel depots, drawing on established guidance and practical examples from real-world depot layouts.

Ensuring **Safe EV Charging Installations** in **Mixed-Fuel Fleet Depots**

Depots that store and dispense diesel, petrol, biofuels or heating oil must comply with the 2002 DSEAR (Dangerous Substances & Explosive Atmospheres Regulations).

In the past, explosive atmospheres in depot refuelling facilities were mainly associated with a risk relating to petroleum spirit. However, under the 2008 EU CLP Regulation (European legislation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of hazardous chemicals), several substances now meet the criteria for classification as flammable which did not do so in the past.

The change means that, for example, gas oil and light heating oils are classified as **flammable liquids**. This does not mean that these products are more dangerous than they were prior to the classification, but insurers may expect you to risk assess them as flammable.

Fuel refuelling and storage areas can be defined as:

> *A place in which an explosive atmosphere consisting of a mixture with air of dangerous substances in the form of gas, vapour or mist is not likely to occur in normal operation but, if it does occur, it will persist for a short period only.*

From a risk assessment perspective, a depot should not have electrical equipment that is not intrinsically safe within these zone extensions from the tanks and refuelling infrastructure. This principle applies not only to EV chargers but also to feeder pillars, substations, power cabinets and even the charging connection point on the vehicle.

When the EV-EXBOX team talk to EV charging infrastructure installers, we realise that an understanding of DSEAR and ATEX zones is not always part of their core skill set, and we see non-ATEX equipment often creeping into hazardous areas.

The confusion often comes from the fact that DSEAR is a goal-based regulation. It tells you what outcomes you must achieve, but not the exact distances, layouts or engineering solutions you must use.

DSEAR therefore does not tell you:

- *"EV chargers must be X metres from diesel tanks."*
- *"Vent pipes must be Y metres from electrical equipment."*
- *"Zone 2 extends exactly Z metres."*

For this information, you must look to technical standards and competent engineering judgement, which should consider the following areas:

Tanker delivery areas – During deliveries, hazardous zones expand significantly. Vapours can accumulate around the tanker stand area, hose connections and fill points.

Above- and below-ground fuel storage tanks – These create permanent ATEX zones around vents and tank tops.

Fuel separators and interceptors – These create permanent ATEX zones around vents.

Chambers and access lids to below-ground fuel infrastructure – These can release vapours when lids are removed. Vapour-tight lids can be safe if they are well maintained and regularly inspected, but they create an ATEX zone when removed.

Vehicle refuelling areas – The reach of a fully extended fuel hose towards an EV charger or associated charging infrastructure is a critical determinant of safe placement. Likewise, the reach of a fully extended EV charging cable towards an ATEX zone is a critical determinant of safe placement.

Understanding these risks is the foundation of any competent installation strategy. DSEAR tells you what outcomes you must achieve, and industry guidance tells you the numbers.

For fuel storage infrastructure—including tanks, dispensing equipment, tanker deliveries, vent pipes and separators—the best sources of technical guidance can be found in the following publications:

- APEA Blue Book – Guidance for Design, Construction, Modification, Maintenance and Decommissioning of Filling Stations (Blue Book 5th Edition) Energy Institute – Guide to Electric Vehicle Charging Installations at Filling Stations, 2nd Edition
- BS EN 60079 series (ATEX zoning)

A further consideration that can be overlooked by depot operators is: in the rare event that an EV fire occurs, is the EV charging location readily accessible to fire and rescue services?

This is important, as fire spread between electric vehicles and between electric vehicles and other flammable and combustible materials can be exceptionally fast. Whereas historically fire spread between diesel vehicles may take in the region of 10–15 minutes, vehicle-to-vehicle fire spread where jetting from an EV battery pack occurs can take less than two minutes.

Anything that prevents the fire and rescue services from being able to tackle the fire easily typically means more vehicles or wider fire spread on site will occur. This may present a significant risk to business continuity.

In the event that something goes wrong with regard to EV charging infrastructure, a competent risk assessment may be the first thing you are asked to provide in any ensuing investigation—especially by your insurers.

EV Charging: Liability, Negligence and Insurance Exposure

When the EV-EXBOX team discussed the implications of not having a competent risk assessment in relation to the installation of EV charging infrastructure with one of the world's biggest insurance brokers, this is what they told us:

In the event of a serious incident related to EV charging infrastructure, who would be responsible?

> *This is an area where blame could attach to both site owners/operators as well as the contractors involved in the design and construction of the installation.*
>
> *If the site owner/operator provides the design brief to the contractor on the positioning of the charging area, then any property losses or physical injury claims arising from the positioning of the charging area would likely rest with them.*
>
> *However, any changes to that brief made by the contractor could pull them into the claim. If the contractor was responsible for the design of the site, then they would most likely be joining the site owner in any subsequent legal action.*

As the operator of an EV charging facility, would my insurance policy cover me in the event of a fire?

> *Insurers for the site owners/operators might take the view that positioning an EV charging area close to business-critical areas or combustible materials was negligent, and that the policyholder has failed to mitigate their exposure in doing so.*
>
> *If the same insurers were not told about the installations, then it is certainly feasible that any claim resulting from the installation could be declined.*
>
> *Electrifying fleet depots that continue to store and dispense diesel or petrol is entirely achievable—but only with a disciplined approach to risk assessment and installation design.*
>
> *The presence of flammable liquids, tanker deliveries, venting systems and refuelling operations creates a complex environment where electrical equipment must be placed with precision and foresight.* ●

If you have installed or are considering installing EV charging infrastructure in your fleet depot and have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the EV-EXBOX Team: **info@ev-exbox.com**

Visit: **www.ev-exbox.com**

Rethinking Fuel Transport: Why **Aluminium Tanks** Are the **Smarter Choice** for **Fleets**

As a specialist designer and manufacturer of aluminium tanks for diesel, petrol, and other fluids, ACGB has observed first-hand how outdated fuel-handling practices continue to expose businesses to unnecessary risk. Charles Macé, Key Account Manager at ACGB, highlights these limitations and explains how purpose-built aluminium tank systems, designed for integration into light commercial vehicles, provide a safer, cleaner, and more efficient alternative.

THE **OPERATIONAL** REALITY

Across sectors such as construction, utilities, highways maintenance, agriculture, and plant hire, fuel is still frequently transported in jerrycans, rotationally moulded (plastic) tanks, or steel tanks often mounted on trailers.

While these traditional solutions have been in use for decades, they struggle to meet the demands of modern fleet operations. Risks include spillage, contamination, theft, and safety hazards, all of which can compromise regulatory compliance, increase operational costs, and put drivers at risk.

"As fleet operators, you face the constant challenge of balancing uptime, regulatory compliance and total cost of ownership. From our experience, traditional fuel-handling methods such as jerrycans, rotationally moulded plastic units and steel tanks carry significant operational risks, including spillage, contamination, theft and safety hazards. These limitations clearly demonstrate the need for a more engineered, reliable approach to fuel containment and transfer."

The **table below** outlines the methods commonly used by fleet operators, along with the key risks and operational challenges associated with each.

ACGB aluminium reservoirs

Charles Macé
Key Account Manager, **ACGB**
e: *Charles Macé e: c.mace@acgb.com*

JERRYCAN	**MANUAL HANDLING RISK**	Repeated lifting and pouring increases the likelihood of musculoskeletal injuries.
	SPILLAGE AND CONTAMINATION	Decanting fuel via funnels often leads to spills, ground contamination, and product loss.
	INEFFICIENT REFUELLING CYCLES	Multiple containers are required to fuel larger machines, increasing downtime.
ROTATIONALLY MOULDED (PLASTIC) TANKS	**LACK OF DIMENSIONAL FLEXIBILITY**	Produced from fixed moulds, their dimensions cannot be adapted to the internal layout of a van.
	FINITE SERVICE LIFE	These tanks typically carry a defined service life often limited to a few years.
	STRUCTURAL ISSUES	Plastic units expand when filled and under thermal variation, affecting mounting stability and connections. They also lack from anti-slosh baffles due to their manufacturing process. The dynamic movement of liquid under braking, cornering, or uneven terrain can destabilise the vehicle, particularly in partially filled condition.
STEEL-TANKS	**WEIGHT PENALTY**	Inherently heavy, they reduce the payload and potentially require drivers to hold additional licence categories.
	INTERNAL CORROSION	Steel tanks rust over time, especially where condensation forms. Internal corrosion not only reduces service life but risks fuel contamination, leading to injector damage and unplanned maintenance on high-value machinery.
	TOWING CONSTRAINTS	When the tank is mounted on a trailer, manoeuvrability on tight or urban sites can be compromised.

ALUMINIUM: THE **SMARTER ALTERNATIVE**

ACGB aluminium reservoirs

For more than 50 years, ACGB have chosen to focus nearly exclusively on this material. Our approach centres on purpose-designed aluminium tanks, manufactured and tailored to the operational realities of UK fleets.

Tanks made from aluminium provide decisive technical advantages like :

- **Corrosion resistance**: Aluminium does not rust internally or externally, protecting fuel quality and extending service life. They can also be trailer-mounted since they can resist UV and temperature variations.
- **Reduced weight:** Lower mass improves payload capacity and vehicle efficiency. This also allows their integration within a van body, since they're only half the weight of a steel version.
- **Structural integrity:** Properly fabricated and baffled, aluminium tanks offer excellent durability under dynamic load conditions.
- **Long-term cost efficiency:** Lower maintenance and longer lifespan offset initial capital expenditure.

"Whatever your priorities, aluminium is the smart choice every time. It delivers all the benefits of a metallic tank without the usual drawbacks, such as excessive weight or corrosion. For those focused on total cost of ownership, its typical 15–20 year lifespan translates into tangible, long-term value for your fleet."

ADR-COMPLIANT STANDARD RANGES

ACGB offers a full range of UN and ADR-approved transport tanks for road use in the UK, from 90 litres up to 900 litres for diesel, and up to 330 litres for petrol. Each tank is engineered to meet all relevant ADR requirements for the transport of dangerous goods, giving operators complete peace of mind whether they are working on public roads or private sites.

BESPOKE VAN-INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

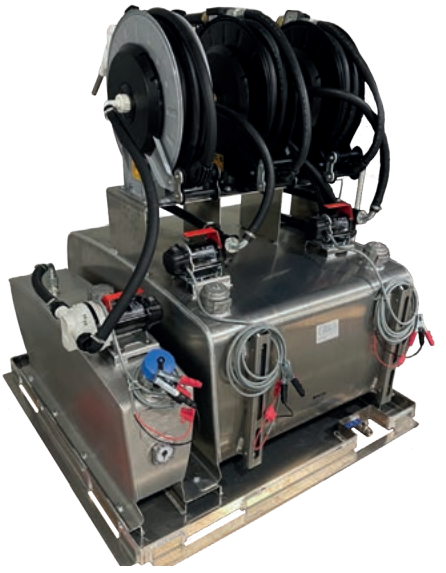
In addition to standard models, ACGB designs bespoke tanks tailored to the internal layout of the customer's van. While the majority of demand remains for fuel transport, these custom tanks can also store other fluids such as water, oil, tar remover, or coolant. For AdBlue, stainless-steel tanks are used to ensure full material compatibility, providing a safe and reliable solution for every application.

"Our bespoke design process takes the vehicle's racking systems into account, adapting tank dimensions to fit seamlessly within the available space. This approach ensures the tank becomes an integral part of the vehicle's architecture, rather than an afterthought."

These tailored tanks can be delivered equipped with a complete suite of accessories, including transfer pumps, hose reels, volumetric flow meters, automatic shut-off nozzles and more. Depending on the fluid and available source of energy in the van, ACGB suggests the right alternatives to choose from.

Another feature of our tanks is the remote filling configuration. The filler cap can be made accessible from outside the vehicle body, eliminating the need to open rear doors or climb into the load area during refuelling. For fleet managers operating under strict environmental policies, remote filling systems support best practice in safe containment and handling.

"This external filling port is a key enhancement, helping to keep both the vehicle interior and exterior free from spills, while also making refuelling at the pump faster and more efficient."



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BEYOND FUEL: LUBE SKIDS FOR ON-SITE SERVICING

Fuel transport is only part of the fluid management challenge. Modern fleets also require efficient, on-site solutions for oil servicing. To address this, ACGB designs and manufactures fully equipped, compartmentalised aluminium tanks capable of transporting both new and waste oils within a single integrated unit, allowing oil changes to be performed directly on site.

"Our lube skids feature a compartmented tank for fresh oil, another dedicated to waste oil recovery, and all the pumps and accessories needed to extract used oil and dispense new oil back into the machine."

ACGB's lube skids are built with mounting frames for van, trailer, or service body integration, ensuring loads remain stable and secure during transport. Optional lift pockets provide additional mobility, allowing the skid to be easily transferred between vehicles in the event of a breakdown.

"Just like fuel transportation to a job site, we wanted to offer a cleaner and safer alternative to hauling loose oil drums in the back of a van. Dealers representing brands such as JCB and John Deere have widely adopted our lube skids because of their positive impact on operator safety and operational productivity, improving efficiency by around 20% on average, while also supporting brand reputation."

Full customisation is another major advantage of ACGB's lube skids. Skid volumes and the number of fresh oil compartments can be tailored to each customer's daily consumption, ensuring vehicles carry only the required amounts. This prevents vehicle overload and eliminates unnecessary trips to replenish oil during the workday, keeping operations efficient and uninterrupted.

CONTAINMENT AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

As regulatory frameworks tighten and fleet efficiency expectations grow, traditional fuel and oil handling methods are increasingly inadequate. Modern aluminium tank systems, like ACGB's, provide a robust alternative aligned with today's operational demands.

For fleet operators, the shift is no longer simply about transporting fuel and lubricants from one location to another. It is about adopting systems that improve safety, reduce operational risk and support more efficient day-to-day operations. By replacing improvised or legacy solutions with purpose-designed containment and transfer systems, fleets can improve productivity, strengthen compliance and protect both their people and their reputation.

A JCB service vehicle before the installation of an ACGB lube skid, showing loose oil drums and containers stored in the rear of the van, creating a cluttered, inefficient workspace and increasing the risk of spills and contamination.

A JCB service vehicle after the installation of an ACGB lube skid. The integrated compartments keep new and waste oils securely stored, with all pumps and accessories neatly in place, creating a safer, more organised and efficient workspace.●

Telematics: Navigating Data Privacy

Fleets are becoming more connected than ever. Telematics systems track vehicle location, monitor driver behaviour, and collect operational data to optimise performance and safety. But as this technology evolves, so do privacy concerns.

Operational vs Personal Data

Telematics captures both operational and personal data. Operational data includes vehicle diagnostics, speed, and fuel usage—information critical for efficient fleet management. Personal data, however, links these metrics to individual drivers and may include driving patterns, hours worked, and even biometric data from fatigue-monitoring systems. Whenever telematics touches personal data, serious legal obligations arise.

Even something as simple as GPS tracking can identify a driver, and in the UK, this triggers compliance requirements under data protection law.

Legal Framework

The main framework is the UK Data Protection Act, which mirrors many of the principles of GDPR. Personal data must be collected for a lawful purpose, stored securely, and deleted when it is no longer necessary.

Non-compliance can lead not only to fines and legal action but also to reputational damage for the business.

Transparency and Communication

Transparency with drivers is essential. Employees should understand what data is being collected, how it will be used, who has access, and how long it will be retained.

Clear communication ensures that telematics is seen as a tool for safety and efficiency rather than intrusive surveillance.

Data Security

Data security is another critical factor. Telematics information is often transmitted across mobile networks and stored in the cloud, exposing it to potential risks such as unauthorised access, data breaches, or insider misuse. Strong encryption, strict access controls, and clear retention policies are vital to mitigate these risks. Only data that is necessary should be collected, and it should be retained only for as long as required.

Third-Party Providers

Many telematics solutions also involve third-party providers for storage, analytics, or cloud services. Contracts must clearly define responsibilities, limit data sharing, and enforce compliance with UK data protection law. At the same time, fleet managers must consider the human side: poorly communicated telematics programmes can be perceived as intrusive, potentially harming morale and trust. Ethical and transparent policies are therefore essential for a healthy workplace culture.

As more fleets continue to integrate telematics into daily operations, balancing efficiency with privacy is no longer optional. Businesses that succeed will be those that treat data protection with the same seriousness as vehicle performance.

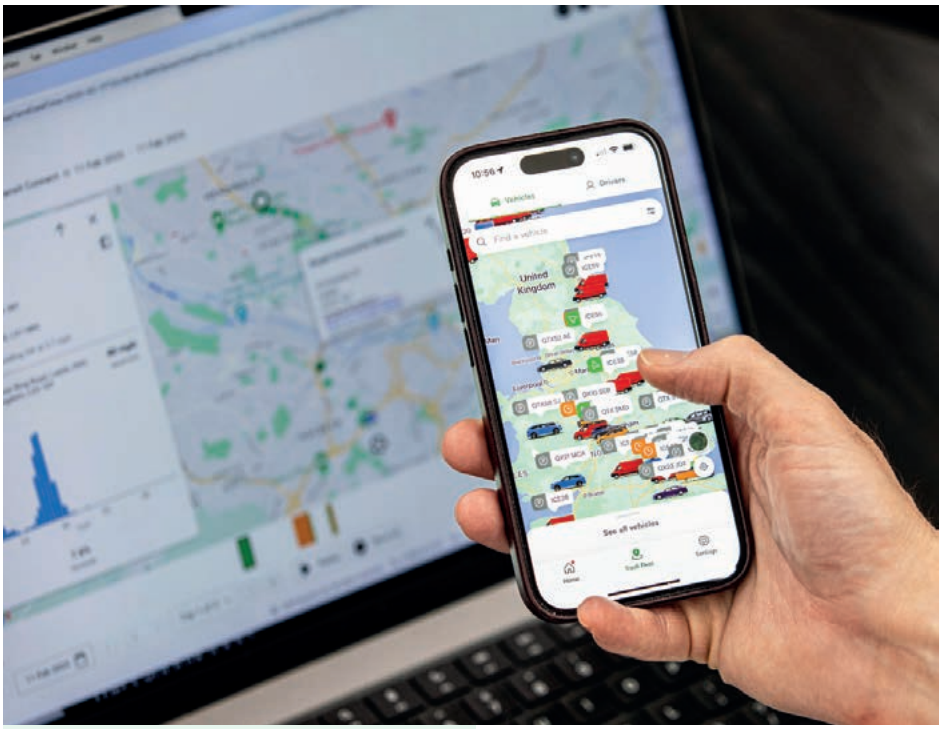
Fleet **Check List**

- ✔ Conduct a privacy impact assessment before deploying telematics.
- ✔ Separate operational and personal data wherever possible.
- ✔ Anonymise or pseudonymise data for analytics.
- ✔ Implement robust cybersecurity measures.
- ✔ Educate employees on data collection, purpose, and limits.●

Quartix

Real-Time Vehicle Tracking

Work Safe, Home Safe: How **Morson Vital** is **Raising the Bar** on **Road Safety**



Working on live rail infrastructure is, by any measure, a high-risk occupation. But for Morson Vital, which places thousands of specialist rail contractors onto projects across the UK, the risks don't begin and end on the tracks. With a fleet of over 650 vans that contractors take home and drive to site each day, sometimes collecting colleagues along the way – safety is managed every step of the way.

Morson Vital has been a Quartix customer since 2014, and Fleet Manager Keith Woodcock has overseen the operation for 17 years, watching it grow to more than 650 LCVs deployed across 23 offices nationwide. Over that decade-long partnership, the way Morson Vital uses the Quartix fleet tracking system has evolved considerably, from basic fleet visibility to a fully integrated safety operation.

"Your shift starts the minute you get in the van," Keith tells his contractors, *"And it only finishes when you get home."* That philosophy, captured in the company motto Work Safe: Home Safe printed on every vehicle, is the principle that underpins every decision the fleet team makes.

Reframing the Risk Conversation

At Morson Vital, driving is positioned within the organisation's broader safety culture. Even though many operatives work in hazardous environments, operating cranes, working on live rail infrastructure, Keith is clear that the road journey carries equal, if not greater, risk.

It's a point we hear echoed by fleet managers across industries, and one that challenges the tendency to treat driving as a background activity rather than a skilled, high-stakes task.

Fatigue: The Hidden Threat

With rail blockades requiring 24-hour availability and contractors sometimes travelling significant distances before a shift begins, fatigue is a constant concern. Door-to-door hours are monitored through the Quartix telematics system in line with strict Network Rail policy, drivers complete a fit-to-drive declaration on the Quartix app at the start of each shift, and hotel stays are arranged when a journey would otherwise push someone into what the team describes as a *"red-risk"* shift. Quartix geofencing alerts flag vehicle use outside scheduled hours, and driver ID technology maintains a clear, auditable record of who was behind the wheel at any given time.

Keeping Vehicles Road-Ready

Before a single journey begins, Morson Vital also relies on digital vehicle checks to ensure every van is safe to go out on shift. Using the Quartix Check app, drivers complete inspections before each shift with defects reported instantly, often reaching maintenance providers the same day. It's a straightforward process that has dramatically reduced out-of-hours breakdowns and gives the fleet team a live view of vehicle condition across all 23 depots.

The Insurance Savings

The numbers from Morson Vital's experience make a compelling case for investment in integrated fleet technology. Before introducing Quartix dashcams and crash data, the business carried an insurance claims lost ratio of 87%. With forward and driver-facing Quartix cameras and integrated telematics now in place, that figure has dropped to 32% - a 55-point improvement saving tens of thousands of pounds each year.

Beyond the financial return, the operational benefits are equally significant. Footage has resolved disputes, clarified responsibility for vehicle damage and accelerated incident response. If there is a collision or incident, the team knows about it immediately and can act without delay. The cameras have also proven to be a powerful behaviour-change tool: driving scores frequently improve as soon as they are installed, before any formal intervention takes place.

Building a Safety Culture

Over its decade-long partnership with Quartix, Morson Vital has built a culture of accountability reinforced by the right data at the right time. Driving scores reviewed weekly. Fuel anomalies challenged. Vehicles kept roadworthy through proactive monitoring. Every element working together toward the same goal.

For fleet managers, the takeaway is: a successful safety culture requires deliberate investment, consistent measurement and visible commitment, from the boardroom to the slogan on the side of the van.●

If your fleet's safety culture needs a stronger foundation, **Quartix** *can help. Visit quartix.com or call 01686 806 663*

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Optimising Your **Trailer Fleet**: **Practical Tips** for **Efficiency**, **Safety**, and **ROI**

Managing a fleet of trailers is no small task. For utility companies and any business operating multiple trailers, efficiency, compliance, and safety are essential to keeping operations running smoothly. Poorly maintained trailers can lead to costly downtime, accidents, and regulatory penalties — all of which impact your bottom line. In this article, we share practical trailer fleet management tips to help you optimise your return on investment, reduce downtime, and ensure the safety of your drivers and equipment.

Trailer Maintenance Planning Schedule

Preventative maintenance is the backbone of any effective fleet management strategy. Trailers are exposed to heavy loads, varied road conditions, and frequent use, so creating a robust maintenance and servicing schedule is critical. Regular maintenance not only keeps your trailers road-legal but also extends their lifespan, reduces unexpected repair costs, and ensures safety for both your team and other road users.

Some best practices for maintenance planning include:

- **Routine servicing intervals**: Schedule inspections and maintenance at least every 6-12 months, depending on intensity of use. For heavily used trailers, reducing this interval to every three months, is advised.
- **Daily checks**: Encourage drivers to perform daily pre-use inspections. Key areas to check include brakes, tyres, lighting systems, and couplings.
- **Record keeping**: Maintain detailed logs of all servicing, repairs, and inspections. This aids compliance with legal and insurance requirements and allows fleet managers to track patterns in wear.

Being proactive with maintenance reduces breakdowns, maintains productivity, and keeps your fleet operating efficiently.

Training for Drivers and Operators

Your drivers and operatives are the first line of defence against trailer damage. Well-trained personnel can significantly reduce wear and tear while improving safety standards across the fleet.

Key steps in driver and operative training include:

- **Pre-trip checklist training**: Provide a standard checklist for drivers before journeys to ensure critical components are checked consistently.
- **Correct loading procedures**: Overloading can cause serious damage and safety risks. Train staff in proper weight distribution, securing loads, and recognising maximum load capacities.
- **Specialised equipment training**: Some trailers feature hydraulic lifts or mechanical systems requiring specialist knowledge. Ensure operatives are trained in proper use and maintenance.
- **Emergency response procedures**: Establish clear protocols for roadside breakdowns or incidents. Drivers should know how to safely secure the trailer, communicate with fleet management, and implement immediate safety measures.

Investing in driver education reduces imcidents, improves efficiency, and lowers maintenance costs.

Standardise Preventative Care

Consistency is key to effective trailer management.

Consider implementing the following company-wide policies:

- **Lubrication of moving parts**: Regularly lubricate hinges, couplings, and hydraulic components to prevent wear and mechanical failures.
- **Cleaning and corrosion prevention**: Dirt, salt, and debris can cause corrosion and rust. Clean trailers thoroughly after heavy use, particularly in harsh weather or on construction sites.
- **Stock essential spare parts:** Keep tyres, brake components, lights, and other critical parts on hand. Quick access allows fast repairs, reducing downtime and keeping operations on schedule.

Standardising these preventative care measures creates consistency and accountability, ensuring all trailers receive proper attention.

Conclusion

Optimising a utility or commercial trailer fleet is about more than simply purchasing the right equipment. True efficiency comes from managing your trailers intelligently, through well-planned maintenance schedules, comprehensive driver training, and consistent preventative care policies.

By adopting these practices, you'll minimise downtime, enhance safety, and extend the lifespan of your trailers. This leads to a higher return on investment, smoother operations, and a fleet that can meet business demands reliably.●

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Tackling The Dangers of **Work-Related Driving**: What **Every Fleet Manager** Needs to **Know**

Road safety is essential to fleet management because it protects drivers, reduces accidents and minimises costly vehicle downtime. It also helps organisations maintain compliance, safeguard their reputation and ensure that operations run smoothly and efficiently every day.

Over the past twenty years, employers' awareness of the risks faced and created by at-work drivers, and the need to control them, has increased enormously. However, with at-work drivers involved in around a third of all road collisions, there is still much more that needs to be done to make our roads safer for all road users.

What key roadsafety challenges should fleet managers prioritise to reduce the risks associated with workrelated driving?

Developing a driving for work strategy

All employers must manage the health and safety risks to workers who drive or ride for work in the same way as they manage other work-related health and safety risks. Conducting a risk assessment and reviewing the data are the starting points. Information from both will enable an employer to develop a driving for work policy that covers the organisation's key driving risks and the control measures needed to mitigate them.

For any driving for work policy to be successful, it needs to be continuously reviewed and evolve to match the needs of the business, based on your driving data. Talk to your drivers about road safety and the risks they face and create on the road.

Managing occupational road risk is an ongoing process. Leadership of the management of occupational road risk needs to come from the top, and employees need to know that senior management is fully on board.

The 'fatal five'

The five main causes of road deaths are known as the 'fatal five': drink/driving; inappropriate speed; not wearing a seatbelt; fatigue; and distraction. Employers should have clear, evidence-based policies and procedures in place for all these issues as part of their management of occupational road risk, and provide training, guidance and advice to their employees where needed.

For fleet managers, addressing driver fatigue is a key health and safety issue, not only to protect their workforce but also to protect other road users. Employers must take steps to ensure that their drivers are not at risk of falling asleep at the wheel, including:

- **Organising** shifts and workloads to reduce the risk of driving while tired. Include time for rest breaks (and, if necessary, overnight stops). Breaks and break locations should be planned in advance.
- **Plan** journeys to minimise driving during periods when drivers are generally more tired (between 2am-6am and 2pm-4pm).
- **Avoid** systems of work (e.g. 'just in time' delivery, payment by calls made, unrealistic guaranteed call-out or delivery times, etc.) that put drivers under time pressure.
- **Set limits** for unbroken driving hours, including daily, weekly and monthly limits for all classes of drivers. No driver should be required to drive continuously for more than two hours without at least a 15-minute break. Professional drivers must follow the drivers' hours rules, which set statutory maximum driving hours.
- **Ensure** there are enough drivers to cover work schedules while maintaining required safety standards.
- **Educate** drivers about: the importance of getting adequate sleep before driving (tiredness can affect your driving in the same way as having a drink); how to recognise the early signs of fatigue (yawning, heavy eyelids, inability to concentrate, micro sleeps); and what to do if they begin to feel tired during a journey (pull over in a safe place to rest).
- **Foster** a culture that encourages drivers to acknowledge when they are fatigued and should not drive. Line managers have a vital role to play in preventing their staff from driving when tired.

Sharing our roads safely

It's been four years since a major update to the Highway Code introduced a new 'hierarchy of road users', reflecting the need to protect the most vulnerable road users from injury on our roads. Vulnerable road users are most likely to be injured in a collision – that means pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists. In 2024, in Great Britain, half of the 1,602 road collision fatalities were vulnerable road users. Employers should ensure that all their employees who drive for work understand the organisation's driving for work policy, are fully aware of changes to road rules, and receive refresher driver training where needed.

Tyre Safety

Defective and incorrectly inflated tyres pose a serious road safety risk. Yet in Great Britain, one in five tyres (around six million) on the roads are estimated to be illegal and unroadworthy. Defective or incorrectly inflated tyres increase the risk of your drivers being involved in a collision because they significantly affect how the vehicle handles. Ensure daily pre-journey checks of your fleet's tyres (air pressure, tyre condition and tread) are carried out to mitigate the risk of a tyre-related incident.

LGVs

For many businesses, Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) are an important part of their fleet. One of the challenges LGVs pose for road safety is that they can be driven by drivers with only a standard UK car driving licence (Category B). LGV drivers don't have to undertake the professional driver training that HGV drivers do. When you combine this with the fact that, due to their size, LGVs are commonly used in built-up urban areas – putting them in contact with many vulnerable road users – it is easy to see how important it is for employers to ensure their drivers are competent and that vehicles are fit for the road. In Great Britain in 2024, LGVs being driven for work were involved in 5,428 collisions that resulted in injury – that's 20 per cent of all injury collisions involving at-work drivers.

Employers should ensure that all LGVs in their fleet are roadworthy and safe, and routinely carry out vehicle checks. Work schedules and driving routes should be planned to allow drivers sufficient time to carry out their work and deliveries, and to allow time for rest breaks where needed.

Younger and older drivers at work

In Great Britain, young drivers aged 17–24 account for around 7 per cent of full driving licence holders but are involved in around 20 per cent of fatal and serious road collisions. One in five new drivers of all ages is involved in a collision within their first year of driving.

Ageing can also affect our driving ability in many ways. For instance, changes in eyesight can make it harder to see hazards and affect our ability to judge speed and distance. Changes in cognition can make our reaction times slower.

It's vital to consider age when conducting risk assessments and determining training requirements.

Electric vehicles

When introducing electric vehicles (EVs) to your fleet, take a fresh look at your organisation's driving policies and procedures to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and educate drivers on the driving techniques required to operate EVs, particularly regarding EVs' faster acceleration and deceleration.

Post-crash response

Ensure accident and incident reporting policies and procedures are in place, alongside comprehensive collision investigation procedures, as part of your occupational road risk management system. Train drivers and riders in accident, incident and near-miss reporting. They should know what to report, to whom, by when and how. Investigate accidents, incidents or near misses.

Climate resilience

Driving is the most dangerous work activity most people do at any time of year, but adverse weather conditions, such as snow, ice, high winds and fog, make it even more hazardous. Employers have a duty to ensure their drivers and vehicles are safe on the road and prepared for any conditions they may face. Plan ahead to manage the risks your drivers may face. When weather conditions are severe, decide whether the journey is actually necessary. Consider whether there are alternative modes of transport you could use, or whether you could make the delivery on a different day, for example.

For more than 100 years, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has played a central role in shaping UK road safety - from campaigning for seatbelt laws to creating pioneering initiatives such as The Tufty Club, Cycling Proficiency and the first minibus driver guidance. Today, we continue to support organisations across public and commercial transport to strengthen their safety culture and protect employees, passengers and other road users.

To support your organisation's work in this area, we've produced a free ebook: Tackling the dangers of work-related driving. This practical guide outlines how operators can reduce incidents, improve compliance and safeguard staff, highlighting the vital need to consider the health and safety of employees who drive for work (whether in fleet vehicles or in their own) as part of their wider approach to health and safety at work.●

Download your copy and find out more about RoSPA Fleet safety services here: **www.rospa.com/shop/health-and-safety-courses/fleet-safety-services#guide**

Seeing and **Being Seen**: Improving **Vehicle Visibility**

For fleets operating within the Essential Services Sector, vehicle visibility is more than a convenience, it's a legal and operational imperative. Whether on city streets, industrial sites, or depots, poor visibility is a major contributor to collisions, especially involving pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users.

Picture used for illustration purposes only

Regulatory and Safety Framework

UK law sets clear expectations for vehicle visibility. The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 require functioning lights and reflectors, while the Construction and Use Regulations govern mirrors and reflective markings for larger vehicles. Workplace vehicles fall under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, obliging employers to implement measures that protect both operators and pedestrians.

A relatively recent development is the Direct Vision Standard (DVS). Managed by Transport for London, DVS rates HGVs on how much a driver can see directly from the cab. Vehicles must meet a minimum three-star rating or be fitted with a Progressive Safe System (PSS), which can include cameras, sensors, audible warnings, and other aids. Vehicles entering Greater London without a valid DVS permit face fines of up to £550 per day.

Enhancing Visibility Through Technology

Lighting and reflective markings remain essential. LED headlights, high-intensity brake lights, and side marker lamps improve detection in poor light. Retroreflective tape on the sides and rear of trucks, along with high-visibility paint on workplace vehicles, further increases conspicuity.

Cameras and ultrasonic sensors help drivers identify blind spots, while audible reversing alarms warn nearby pedestrians or staff. Together, these measures reduce collisions, particularly in depots, construction sites, or congested urban areas.

Human Oversight: The Role of Banksmen

Even with cameras and sensors, technology alone cannot eliminate risk. Banksmen—trained personnel

who guide vehicles during reversing or manoeuvring—play a critical role in site safety. They visually monitor blind spots, alert drivers to hazards, and coordinate vehicle movements to prevent collisions.

Banksmen are particularly vital around pedestrian routes, where physical markings may not prevent accidents alone. They act as an active safeguard, ensuring vehicles remain clear of pedestrian walkways and designated crossing zones. By linking infrastructure with human supervision, banksmen reinforce safe vehicle operation and reduce reliance solely on technology.

Safe Site Markings for Pedestrians

Clear pedestrian pathways, high-visibility barriers, floor markings, and warning signage are fundamental to separating vehicles from foot traffic. Designated crossings and protected walkways guide pedestrians safely across busy areas. These markings work hand-in-hand with banksmen and vehicle technology to create a layered safety system.

Training also plays a key role. Drivers must understand blind spots, hazard anticipation, and how to use mirrors, cameras, and reversing alarms effectively. Pedestrians and staff should be aware of marked pathways and follow site protocols, ensuring a culture of shared responsibility for safety.

Industry Guidance and Best Practice

Initiatives such as FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) and CLOCS (Construction Logistics and Community Safety) provide guidance for visibility improvements. FORS encourages use of side guards, high-visibility markings, and reversing aids, while CLOCS focuses on protecting vulnerable road users through safer vehicle design and operational practices. HSE guidance also recommends combining risk assessments, visibility equipment, pedestrian markings, and trained banksmen into comprehensive operational safety plans.

Putting It All Together

Maximising vehicle visibility requires a layered approach: regulatory compliance, equipment enhancements, pedestrian protection through site markings, trained banksmen, and driver education. Fleets that integrate these measures not only meet legal obligations but significantly reduce collision risk, safeguarding drivers, pedestrians, and other road users across the country.●

Drink-Driving: The **Fleet Manager's Duty** to Tackle a **Persisting Risk**

Recent RAC data indicates that over 2,500 UK motorists have been caught drink-driving at least three times in the past 11 years. Currently, more than 220,000 drivers have alcohol-related endorsements on their licences. These figures highlight a persistent group of repeat offenders and emphasise the ongoing challenge drink-driving poses on public roads, posing serious risks to businesses that rely on safe, professional drivers.

For fleet managers, this isn't just a road safety statistic; it's a stark reminder of the duty of care employers owe to their drivers, clients, and the public.

Why Drink-Driving Matters to Fleets

Even with advanced fleet telematics and strict compliance rules, alcohol-related impairment still threatens operational safety. A driver affected by alcohol, whether from the previous night or slightly above the legal limit, has slower reactions and impaired judgment, greatly increasing collision risks. These incidents can lead to human harm, legal issues, financial losses, and reputational damage. Therefore, an effective fleet management approach must not only verify if a driver is legally allowed to drive but also ensure they are also fit to drive.

Testing Practices

Implementing alcohol and drug testing goes beyond compliance; it focuses on prevention, shaping culture, and showing a commitment to safety.

Random Testing: An Effective Deterrent

Industry surveys indicate that many drivers support random alcohol and drug tests. Approximately 47% of fleet and grey fleet drivers believe it's the right approach, with many saying it would influence their alcohol consumption before work.

Random testing, planned and unbiased, clearly communicates that impairment will not be tolerated. It should be routinely incorporated into your driver safety programme, and all drivers, not just those involved in incidents, should be included in the testing pool.

With-Cause and Post-Incident Testing

Testing should be standard practice after an incident or when there's reasonable suspicion of impairment. Industry discussions show that many fleets require testing following collisions or performance concerns, with refusal or positive results leading to further measures.

Using Third-Party Providers

Partnering with independent third parties for testing ensures fairness and legal compliance. Many fleets organise mass testing on scheduled training days to minimise disruptions and maintain objectivity.

Breath and Saliva Testing Technology

Modern testing methods include breathalysers for quick alcohol screening, saliva kits for detecting recent drug use, and hair tests for longer-term substance detection, particularly useful in workplace investigations.

Alcohol Interlock Devices

Although not yet mandatory across UK fleets, alcolock devices are becoming more common. These require drivers to pass a breath test before starting the vehicle, effectively preventing impaired driving, especially among high-risk or repeat offenders.

Building a Strong Policy and Safety Culture

Testing without a clear policy is just a box-ticking activity. An effective programme should feature:

- **Well-defined** alcohol and drug policies communicated to all drivers
- **Supervisor training** to recognise early impairment signs
- **Support systems** for drivers with substance misuse issues
- **Confidential channels** for reporting and whistleblowing
- **Consistent disciplinary** measures, coupled with support where appropriate

Guidance from safety organisations like RoSPA stresses that workplace impairment testing must be fair, confidential, and based on consent, aligning with UK health and safety laws.

Fleet managers should take note of the latest RAC data, which highlights that drink-driving persists despite strict laws and penalties. A small, yet persistent group of drivers continue to reoffend. This underscores the importance of fostering a safety-first culture that incorporates testing not only for enforcement purposes but also as a preventative measure. By implementing comprehensive testing procedures, clear policies, and educational support, fleets can reduce the risk of impairment on the road, thereby safeguarding their drivers and the communities they serve.●

Middlesbrough Uses **Technology** to **Improve Safety**, **Compliance** and **Efficiency**

Like many public sector fleet operators, Middlesbrough Borough Council was struggling to meet constantly changing government regulations while operating under ever-tighter budgetary restrictions. However, the council has risen to the challenge thanks to the impact of telematics, tracking and vehicle safety technology from Fleetclear.

Fleetclear has been working with Council's Waste, Recycling and Enforcement team for several years, supporting the safety and performance of a diverse fleet. This includes 26-tonne Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs), specialist recycling vehicles and road sweepers, as well as minibuses and vans.

The council's refuse, recycling and van fleet is fully equipped with Fleetclear live Digital Video Recorder (DVR) camera systems, vehicle tracking and telematics, and anti-rollaway technology. All data is consolidated through the Fleetclear Connect software platform, giving the team full visibility across operations.

Dale Metcalfe, Waste, Recycling and Enforcement Manager, oversees the day-to-day delivery of waste services, paid-for services and the council's enforcement arm. He explains:

"Like many fleet operators, we were facing increasing pressure around health & safety and compliance, which Fleetclear has taken care of. The technology has also improved how we operate by helping us run the fleet as efficiently as possible."

"For example, the telematics functionality ensures we use the right routes and that all drivers follow the required legislation when on the road."

The onboard camera systems provide drivers with a 360° view around the vehicle, which is particularly valuable when manoeuvring large vehicles in busy or hard-to-access areas.

"It also means drivers can see where operatives are at all times during collection rounds," Dale adds.

A Smooth Transition

The transition and installation process was described as very smooth, with the council kept informed throughout and provided with a clear installation timeline. New vehicles arrive already fitted with Fleetclear technology, fully configured and ready for use.

"New vehicles, along with their cameras and technology, appear automatically on the Fleetclear Connect dashboard, which we really like," says Dale.

Transformational Impact

"Switching to Fleetclear has been transformational for us as an organisation. We can now operate to the highest standards. The technology is easy to use and reasonably priced, which is a major consideration for organisations working with limited budgets."

Fleetclear's commitment to continuous improvement and product innovation is another key factor for the council, helping them stay at the forefront of vehicle safety technology.

"I recently attended a Fleetclear event in Wigan where I saw a demonstration of the new Live Lane Information System (LLIS). It uses AI to detect live traffic in adjacent lanes and activates an illuminated sign at the rear of the vehicle to alert operatives to approaching traffic.

"We're considering trialling it on some of our refuse collection vehicles where crew members are working in and around highways, as it can only help to improve safety."

Trusted Support

The standard of service provided by the Fleetclear team has also been a major positive for the council:

"We really value our interaction with the Fleetclear team. They're very helpful and, on the rare occasion there is an issue, it's usually minor and dealt with immediately. I have no reservations whatsoever in recommending Fleetclear to other operators and councils."

Looking ahead, Middlesbrough Borough Council is due to receive a new food waste collection fleet, along with seven new recycling vehicles, all of which will be fitted with Fleetclear technology.●

Fleet Compliance Made Simple with CheckedSafe

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring fleets operate safely, efficiently, and in line with regulatory requirements has never been more critical. For transport professionals managing vehicles under an Operator Licence, this responsibility carries significant legal and financial implications. Protecting—and ideally improving—your Operator Compliance Risk Score (OCRS) is essential to minimise enforcement action, reduce legal exposure, and avoid penalties. A strong compliance record also strengthens eligibility for initiatives such as the DVSA Earned Recognition scheme.

While HGV operators often face the highest regulatory scrutiny, best practice extends to all fleet types, including light commercial and passenger vehicles. Core principles—roadworthiness, driver oversight, and accurate documentation—apply across the board.

At the heart of compliance are simple but vital processes: pre-use walk-around checks, clear defect reporting, effective communication between drivers and transport teams, and reliable digital record-keeping. Operators must also maintain robust procedures for driver licence validation and driver hours management. CheckedSafe's compliance systems provide legally defensible data, ensuring that all records can withstand scrutiny during audits or investigations.

Supporting fleets in meeting these responsibilities is CheckedSafe. Founded in 2014, the company is best known for its Vehicle Compliance App, alongside a full suite of solutions including driver licence checking, GB domestic driver hours monitoring, dynamic risk assessments, lone worker protection, and plant and equipment compliance tools—together forming a fully auditable, paperless compliance ecosystem.

Essential Fleet Manager spoke with Gary Hawthorne, Director and Co-Founder of CheckedSafe, to explore the company's latest innovations and how its digital compliance tools help fleets strengthen safety, improve efficiency, and stay ahead of regulatory demands.

INTERVIEW

ROADWORTHINESS

For fleet operators, keeping vehicles roadworthy isn't just good practice; it's a legal requirement. Ensuring every vehicle is checked before it hits the road can be a challenge, and missed or incomplete pre-use inspections can put fleets at risk.

How does the CheckedSafe Vehicle Compliance App help drivers complete pre-use checks accurately and consistently, keeping compliance on track every day?

Our app leads drivers through each inspection item with clear, step-by-step guidance, ensuring nothing is missed and every check is completed consistently.

If a defect is identified, the app immediately prompts the driver to capture photographic evidence and record the reason for failure, creating a clear and auditable defect trail.

Every question is individually time-stamped, giving you full visibility over how inspections are conducted and helping you verify that checks are carried out thoroughly — not rushed or completed retrospectively.

For additional oversight, each inspection is geolocated, allowing you to confirm exactly where the check took place, whenever location verification is required.

The result is a transparent, defensible inspection process that protects your drivers, your vehicles, and your compliance record.

For operators managing mixed fleets, can the Vehicle Compliance App be customised so that checklists match different vehicle types, such as HGVs, vans, or specialist plant equipment?

Yes — all checklists are fully bespoke and tailored to suit your business and fleet requirements.

We assign specific checklists to each asset type, recognising that different vehicles and equipment require different inspection criteria — some more detailed than others.

Our system allows you to create and manage checks for any vehicle or asset, including forklifts, telehandlers, and other specialist equipment that requires routine inspection. This ensures every asset is assessed against the correct standards, with no one-size-fits-all approach.

It is best practice for transport managers not to rely solely on having a maintenance system in place. Data must be managed and interpreted

effectively. How does the CheckedSafe Compliance Management System (CMS) help with this?

We provide easy-to-use reports that help operators quickly identify issues, including defects and upcoming maintenance. We also provide instant email notifications when defects are recorded or updated, making defect management easier and faster than ever. You can filter the system to see how many active defects you have, how many vehicles are marked VOR, who has or hasn't completed a check, and much more.

If an operator has joined the DVSA Earned Recognition Scheme, is the CheckedSafe system compliant and fully compatible with the scheme's requirements?

Yes, we are an approved supplier for the Earned Recognition scheme, and we are more than happy to work with you to ensure you are fully prepared to join.

Beyond compliance, how do your digital tools help operators improve operational efficiency and reduce administrative burden across their fleets?

By giving managers full, instant visibility of all defects, checks, and driver data in one easy-to-use system. This saves time, reduces vehicle downtime, and allows teams to focus on proactive fleet management rather than chasing paperwork.

How does using CheckedSafe impact driver behaviour and safety culture? Do drivers engage more with compliance when it's digitised?

Engagement improves because the process is faster, clearer, and fully digital. With a modern app-based system, drivers can complete checks on a device they already know — their mobile phone — making the process intuitive and much easier to adopt.

With the rise of electric and hybrid vehicles, are there any specific features in CheckedSafe designed to support emerging fleet technologies?

We know that electric vehicles have unique safety requirements, so our team can create bespoke Electric Vehicle (EV) checklists tailored specifically to your fleet and operational needs, ensuring every EV is inspected safely and efficiently.

LICENCE CHECKING

For fleet operators, ensuring that every driver holds the correct licence is a fundamental part of compliance and road safety, regardless of the type of vehicle they drive at work. Incorrect or expired licences can expose operators to serious legal, financial, and reputational risks. Regular and accurate licence checking helps prevent unauthorised driving, reduces the risk of enforcement action, and ensures that all drivers are legally eligible to operate the vehicles assigned to them — whether vans, cars, HGVs, or specialist equipment.

How does CheckedSafe help operators simplify, verify, and manage driver licence checks for all vehicles driven at work, ensuring every team member is legally authorised while reducing risk and maintaining compliance?

Our driving licence checking system is simple, fast, and hassle-free. Drivers just e-sign a mandate and snap a photo of the front and back of their licence, and managers instantly receive the verified data.

Managers can quickly access licence details, expiry dates, convictions, and endorsements — all in one place.

The system then automatically re-checks licences based on a risk-based schedule or your preferred frequency, giving you a clear view of which drivers are low, medium, or high risk. This helps you stay compliant and focus resources where they're needed most.

DOMESTIC DRIVER HOURS COMPLIANCE

Managing driver working hours can be complex, especially when juggling mixed fleets and varying operational schedules.

How does CheckedSafe help operators comply effortlessly with GB Domestic Hours regulations and the Working Time Directive, while keeping accurate, auditable records?

With our industry-first solution, recording and managing domestic driving hours has never been easier. Drivers simply log in to the app and enter their daily hours, just like they would in a W20 book, and the data is immediately visible to managers.

Instant notifications highlight any potential infringements, prompting drivers to provide explanations directly through the app. Managers can quickly see who has or hasn't logged their hours, access summaries, and handle any issues efficiently.

This service is a genuine game-changer for fleet operations, streamlining compliance and giving managers real-time control — and we're thrilled by the strong uptake and continued growth we've already seen.

PLANT, MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT COMPLIANCE

In fleet operations, compliance isn't just about vehicles — it also extends to the plant, machinery, and equipment staff use daily. Regular maintenance and safety checks are essential to prevent accidents, downtime, and legal issues. Staying compliant with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) ensures equipment is safe and maintained to the correct standards.

How does CheckedSafe help operators stay compliant with PUWER by maintaining plant, machinery, and equipment while reducing safety risks and downtime?

We fully digitise plant safety checklists, allowing you to check any type of machinery or equipment you operate. Carrying out regular pre-use checks enables you to identify minor issues before they become major problems, helping to prevent downtime and minimise safety risks. ●

The **Real Question** for **Fleet Operators** Isn't: "Are **Our Tyres** Being **Checked**?

Tyre-related issues remain one of the most common and most avoidable compliance failures affecting UK fleets. Most drivers and operators don't deliberately neglect tyre maintenance; instead, the risk builds quietly between scheduled services. Here are some key questions to consider when reviewing tyre compliance across your fleet operation.

"We service our vehicles regularly. Why are tyres still such a big risk?"

The problem is that tyre wear doesn't follow the service calendar. It's affected every single day by mileage, load weight, driving style, road conditions and wheel alignment.

A vehicle can pass a scheduled service and still drop below the 1.6mm legal tread depth limit long before its next booking. That gap between services is where the risk sits.

"So what actually happens if one of our vehicles is stopped with illegal tyres?"

At driver level, **it's serious**:

- Up to £2,500 fine per tyre
- Three penalty points per defective tyre
- Possible immediate roadside prohibition

But for fleets, it goes further.

Enforcement officers may look beyond the tyre itself and start asking questions about:

- Your inspection processes
- How often vehicles are checked
- Whether defects are recorded
- How issues are escalated

If illegal tyres show up more than once, it stops looking like driver oversight and starts looking like a systems failure.

And if there's been a collision? Operating on illegal tyres can significantly increase corporate liability exposure.

"We rely on drivers to report problems. Isn't that reasonable?"

Drivers absolutely play a key role, but informal reliance isn't defensible.

If there's no structure, no documentation and no proof checks were completed, you can't demonstrate compliance. Even if drivers are doing the right thing.

A stronger approach includes:

- Clear walkaround check expectations
- Simple, structured reporting processes
- Recorded confirmation that checks have taken place
- Clear escalation if defects aren't resolved

It's less about distrust and more about protection, for the driver and the business.

"Realistically, how often should tyres be checked?"

It depends on usage, but high-mileage vehicles need closer attention.

Best practice for 'at work' vehicles usually includes:

- A regular pre-use walkaround check (ideally recorded digitally)
- A visual tyre inspection as part of that check
- Immediate inspections after impacts (kerbing, potholes, debris strikes)
- Formal tread depth measurements at service intervals

The key is consistency. Occasional checks won't protect you.

"Is tread depth the only thing we should be worried about?"

Not at all.

Uneven wear can indicate tracking or suspension problems. Sidewall cuts, bulges or embedded objects are equally serious. Tyres often reveal deeper mechanical issues.

And remember, tyres are only part of the roadside prohibition picture. Other frequent triggers include:

- Worn brakes
- Faulty lights
- Steering or suspension defects
- Windscreen damage in the driver's line of sight

Tyre compliance shouldn't sit in isolation. It's part of overall vehicle condition governance.

"What about grey fleet drivers using their own vehicles?"

This is where many **organisations feel exposed.**

Even when employees use their own cars for business journeys, the employer still

retains duty of care responsibilities.

You should be able to show that grey fleet vehicles:

- Have valid MOTs
- Are insured for business use
- Are maintained appropriately
- Are roadworthy

Education is crucial, reinforcing that vehicle checks are about safety, not admin. But relying solely on annual declarations isn't enough. Structured verification processes provide far stronger protection.

"Can technology really make a difference?"

Yes, especially in terms of evidence.

Digital tools can provide:

- Defect reporting apps with photo uploads
- Automatic reminders for inspections
- Telematics insight highlighting high-mileage vehicles
- Central dashboards showing compliance status across sites

The real advantage isn't just convenience. It's data integrity. If challenged, you can demonstrate active monitoring rather than reactive problem-solving.

"What does good tyre compliance actually look like?"

It's not complicated, but it is disciplined.

A defensible framework usually includes:

- A clear tyre inspection policy
- Defined driver responsibilities
- Documented walkaround checks
- Scheduled tread depth standards
- Clear escalation processes
- Regular internal audits
- Most importantly, it's applied consistently across all vehicle types and operating locations.

"Why does this get so much attention from regulators?"

Because tyres are visible. They're measurable. And they're directly linked to safety.

For Operator Licence holders in particular, repeated roadside prohibitions can:

- Damage reputation
- Increase insurance scrutiny
- Raise questions about wider compliance systems

From a risk perspective, tyre condition directly affects:

- Driver safety
- Corporate liability
- Operational uptime
- Financial performance

In today's regulatory climate, it's not just about fixing defects. It's about proving you have systems in place to prevent them.

Final Thoughts

Defective tyres and poor vehicle condition remain among the simplest compliance failures, yet they continue to cause enforcement action and operational disruption across fleets.

Improving tyre compliance doesn't require a complex transformation programme. It requires structure, visibility and consistency.

Practical Tyre Inspection Checklist

This checklist can be incorporated into driver walkaround checks or supervisor audits.

Tread Depth

Legal minimum (UK):

- 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the tyre
- Around the entire circumference

How to check:

- Use a calibrated tread depth gauge (not just visual inspection)
- Measure at multiple points across the width
- Check all tyres, including the spare (if carried)

Watch for:

- Uneven wear across inner or outer edges
- Significant difference between tyres on the same axle

Uneven Wear Patterns

Uneven wear can signal mechanical faults.

Look for:

- Excessive inner or outer edge wear (possible tracking issue)
- Flat spots (harsh braking)
- Cupping or scalloping (suspension faults)
- One tyre wearing significantly faster than its pair

These issues may indicate alignment, suspension or load imbalance problems.

Sidewall Condition

Inspect both inner and outer sidewalls where possible.

Check for:

- Cuts or splits
- Bulges or blisters
- Exposed cord
- Cracking (age-related deterioration)
- Embedded debris

Sidewall damage often requires immediate replacement — not monitoring.

Pressure

Incorrect tyre pressure affects:

- Wear rate
- Fuel efficiency
- Braking performance
- Vehicle handling
- Drivers should:
- Check pressures when tyres are cold
- Follow manufacturer specifications
- Report persistent pressure loss

Under-inflation significantly accelerates wear and increases blowout risk.

Foreign Objects

Check for:

- Nails or screws
- Stones embedded in tread
- Debris lodged between twin rear wheels (LCVs)

Even if air loss hasn't occurred yet, objects can lead to sudden failure.

Wheel and Valve Condition

Inspect:

- Cracked or damaged alloy rims
- Loose wheel trims
- Damaged valve stems
- Missing valve caps

These may seem minor but can contribute to pressure loss or long-term wear issues.●

Powering The UK's **Essential Fleets**: How **MFS** is **Helping** to **Keep Critical Services Moving**

Micheldever Fleet Solutions (MFS) and General Tire worked together to develop the General Tire Grabber AT3 tyre for use by National Grid Electricity Distribution

For the engineers maintaining the UK's electricity infrastructure, getting to the job is half the battle.

When National Grid Electricity Distribution's vans struggled to access remote rural substations, the solution required more than just a new tyre.

It demanded a collaborative partnership with a fleet expert which could engineer a solution from scratch. That partner was Micheldever Fleet Solutions (MFS).

As highlighted elsewhere in this issue, tyre safety and compliance remain among the most significant, and avoidable, risks for fleet operators.

However, for essential services and critical fleets, the stakes are even higher. A vehicle off the road isn't just a compliance headache, it is a potential barrier to delivering power, water or emergency response when and where it is needed most.

MFS is uniquely positioned within the market to address these high-stakes challenges. As a UK-wide fleet solutions business covering tyre supply, Service, Maintenance and Repair (SMR) and MOTs, MFS combines the global strength of a top-tier manufacturer with the local agility of a nationwide service network.

The National Grid Solution

After National Grid Electricity Distribution, which serves 20 million customers across the Midlands, South West and South Wales, identified a critical performance gap, it didn't just need a supplier – it needed a product specialist.

The organisation's fleet of vans, essential for carrying the heavy cabling, parts and tools needed for essential engineering work, was struggling with the diverse off-road terrains required to reach remote infrastructure. While 4x4 vehicles offered better traction, they lacked the payload capacity of the vans.

MFS, together with leading tyre brand General Tire, engineered the answer – the General Tire Grabber AT3.

This marked a significant milestone as the first all-terrain tyre suitable for van and camper applications, allowing the National Grid fleet to traverse challenging off-road conditions without sacrificing on-road performance or load capacity.

"Sometimes off-road driving was difficult for our teams, so it was great to work with General Tire and MFS to address this," said Nigel Wright, transport area controller at National Grid Electricity Distribution.

"They have provided us with a solution that is good news for us and our customers as it will ensure greater operational responsiveness and efficiency."

This collaboration is a prime example of how MFS moves beyond simple tyre supply to deliver bespoke engineering solutions for the unique demands of essential service fleets.

A Unique Market Position

What exactly enabled MFS to solve a problem which had vexed one of the UK's largest utility fleet operators? The answer lies in its unique structure and market position.

MFS is part of Micheldever Tyre Services, one of the UK's largest independent wholesaler, distributor and retailers of tyres.

Acquired by Sumitomo Rubber Industries (SRI) in 2017, the sixth-largest tyre manufacturer globally, the group benefits from direct ownership and manufacturing expertise.

This isn't just a distribution agreement, it's a direct pipeline to global R&D, with MFS holding exclusive distribution rights for brands manufactured by SRI for the European market, including Falken and Sumitomo.

This global manufacturing heritage is matched by unparalleled UK market dominance. As one of the UK's largest independent wholesalers, the group sells more than 6.5 million tyres annually, commanding more than 20 per cent of the UK market share. This scale provides MFS with buying power and stock availability that is simply unmatched.

With more than 1.3 million tyres in stock at any given time, spread across 16 UK distribution centres, MFS can offer a truly multi-brand, multi-fitment solution.

Whether a fleet requires budget, mid-range, or premium tyres, including 4x4 brands such as General Tire and BFGoodrich to a host of other leading manufacturers, MFS can supply tyres for many vehicles including cars, vans, 4x4s, HGVs, Unimogs, motorcycles and electric vehicles.

From Tyres to SMR and MOT

The most significant differentiator for MFS is its ability to offer a genuinely integrated fleet solution. This extends far beyond tyres to encompass the full spectrum of vehicle maintenance.

Through its nationwide retail division, Protyre Autocare, the group operates184 fast-fit and mechanical centres across the country, with Protyre the UK's most trusted garage network, independently verified by 195,000 customers on Trustpilot.

These are not just tyre fitting bays, they are fully equipped mechanical garages where experts fit more than two million tyres each year and offer extensive SMR and MOT capability.

This includes 125 MOT stations, 95 full mechanical servicing centres and 22 tier-three centres equipped for ADAS calibration, a critical requirement for modern fleet safety.

This integrated model means fleet managers can consolidate their tyre and vehicle maintenance needs with a single, trusted partner. Whether it's routine servicing, complex diagnostics or ensuring a vehicle is compliant with the latest safety standards, MFS provides a seamless solution.

Resilience in Action: The 24/7/365 Network

For critical fleets, downtime is not an option. MFS has built its operational model around this principle, creating a support network that is as resilient as the essential services it serves. The numbers are impressive:

- More than 300 primary fitting partner locations, supported by a further 1,800 reserve locations across the UK and Northern Ireland
- More than 1,200 mobile fitting vehicles, with more than 600 dedicated to out-of-hours response and 500-plus specifically for HGV support
- A dedicated 24/7/365 emergency response and operations centre ensuring that no matter when or where a fleet hits trouble, help is never far away

This infrastructure, combined with the logistical expertise of a team that has been serving the UK market since 1972, ensures MFS can deliver a modular-driven solution tailored to the precise needs of any business.

From simple individual tyre supply to fully managed fleet contracts with rigorous compliance reporting, MFS builds a solution that fits.

Delivering uptime for commercial fleets

While the demands of essential service fleets are uniquely critical, the principles of maximum uptime, cost control and robust compliance are universal across the commercial sector.

Whether it's a major utilities contractor with a mixed portfolio of vans, a logistics operator running a national fleet which includes HGVs or a local business relying on a handful of vehicles, tyre-related downtime hits the bottom line just as hard.

MFS translates its expertise honed on critical fleets into tangible benefits for every commercial customer.

The same 24/7/365 emergency response infrastructure, the same 1,200-plus mobile fitting units and the same nationwide network are available to ensure a blown tyre on a delivery van doesn't escalate into a missed customer deadline.

By minimising vehicle off-road time, MFS helps commercial fleets protect their service levels and their reputation.

Furthermore, the group's unique position as both a manufacturer-owned distributor and a leading retailer provides commercial fleets with an unrivalled commercial advantage.

The ability to supply customers with every major brand across budget, mid-range and premium sectors, combined with the buying power achieved by moving more than 6.5 million tyres annually, allows MFS to construct highly-competitive and transparent pricing models.

This is complemented by detailed management information and compliance reporting, giving fleet managers complete visibility and control over their tyre-related expenditure, meaning MFS is not just a supplier for commercial fleet operators but a strategic partner in driving efficiency and financial performance.

MFS: The Partner for Extraordinary Fleets

Proving you have robust systems in place is just as important as fixing defects. MFS provides those systems.

By combining global manufacturing strength, unrivalled UK distribution, a nationwide retail and fitting network and true product expertise, Micheldever Fleet Solutions stands alone in its ability to support the country's most demanding fleets.●

VRA Backs New **Industry-Wide Vehicle Data Deletion** Initiative

An industry-wide initiative to strengthen data deletion practices in the used car and van sector is being backed by the Vehicle Remarketing Association (VRA).

The new Data Deletion and Privacy Protection Certificate has been launched by the National Association of Motor Auctions (NAMA) and developed with input from auction operators, compliance experts, and technology providers.

It addresses areas including data deletion procedures, auditability and reporting, operational workflows, and GDPR-aligned governance.

Jonathan Butler, VRA legal counsel and partner at Geldards explained: "Legal analysis and regulatory expectations make clear organisations handling vehicles – including rental, leasing, fleet and remarketing businesses – become data controllers for personal data stored in a vehicle once it returns to their possession.

"Failing to delete this data before the vehicle is passed to another user may constitute unlawful processing and a personal data breach, potentially contravening several articles of UK GDPR.

"The new NAMA certificate provides the means for the automotive industry to take decisive action to protect consumer privacy as connected vehicle features continue to expand the volume of personal data stored in modern vehicles."

VRA member Privacy4Cars has been named the first approved supplier under the initiative, following assessment of its data-deletion platform. The company met key requirements, ensuring that personally identifiable information and other sensitive data are removed from vehicles in a consistent and verifiable manner prior to resale.

Philip Nothard, VRA chair, said: *"As cars and vans incorporate more and more digital technology, the responsible management of the personal data stored in them is becoming an increasingly acute issue.*

"From navigation histories and call logs to synced contacts and messages, modern vehicles routinely store sensitive information – and when those vehicles are returned, resold, or remarketed, that data frequently remains.

"For all of those reasons, this NAMA initiative is timely and welcome. At the VRA, we are pleased to offer our support and are sure that it will also quickly find popularity among our members."

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Under UK GDPR, any organisation that determines the purposes and means of processing personal data becomes a data controller. When a rental, leasing, fleet, or remarketing business regains possession of a vehicle, it assumes control over the data stored within it.

Continuing to store or disclose that data without a lawful basis risks breaching:

- **Article 5(1)(a)** – lawfulness, fairness, transparency
- **Article 5(1)(c)** – data minimisation
- **Article 5(1)(f)** and Article 32 – security of processing

Passing a vehicle to another user without erasing the data may amount to unlawful processing and a personal data breach.

The ICO has the power to impose significant penalties for breaches of UK GDPR, with fines reaching up to £17.5 million or 4% of global annual turnover – and reinforces this expectation.

Controllers must implement appropriate technical and organisational measures. Relying on customers or staff to remember to delete data is not compliant. Such an approach is not objective, repeatable, or auditable – and cannot reliably prevent unauthorised disclosure.

About the VRA

The Vehicle Remarketing Association was established in 2010 by senior executives from companies involved in all aspects of remarketing used cars which between them handle, sell, inspect, transport or manage more than 1.5 million used vehicles every year.●

Dale Eynon to Lead **Newly Created Government Affairs** and **Policy Function** at **AFP**

Acting as an advocate for the AFP, in this new role, Dale Enyon will manage relationships and communications with politicians, civil servants, and other decision makers and influencers.

A well-known and widely respected figure in the fleet sector, Dale spent 20 years working at the Environment Agency, part of the Department for Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (Defra), rising to director of Defra Group Fleet Services before becoming an independent consultantlast year.

Paul Hollick, chair at the AFP, said: *"We live in an era when government policy has a direct impact on fleet operations at almost every level on a daily basis. This is especially true of net zero emissions but also includes areas as diverse as road safety and taxation.*

"While the AFP already speaks regularly to the government and has good relationships with several key contacts, now seems very much like the moment to move our activities up a gear and ensure that our opinions are clearly heard by the right people at the right time.

"Dale's appointment will be central to making that happen. He has the ideal combination of fleet industry and Westminster experience to campaign for our ideas and concerns in a dynamic and effective manner."

Dale said: *"The AFP has become established as the leading voice of the fleet sector since its formation in 2020. My job will very much be to act as a bridge between its members and Westminster, and I'm looking forward to promoting their needs at the highest level.*

"As widely recognised, the influence of the government on how fleets operate is probably more acute today than ever before. There is an absolute need to keep abreast of the latest thinking of those creating policies and to make our thoughts heard."

***Dale Enyon**, Government Affairs & Policy Lead, AFP*

Initial activity planned by Dale includes an inaugural AFP parliamentary event at the House of Commons followed by a reception to launch the latest version of the organisation's annual Tax and Regulation Manifesto.

He will also liaise extensively with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, represent the AFP at parliamentary select committees and All-Party Parliamentary Groups, and coordinate with the Treasury on taxation issues.

Dale said: *"The aim for 2026 is to build a lobbying structure that telegraphs fleet industry concerns to the government to take in account when constructing policy, while securing advocates who recognise the importance of our sector to both the requirements of businesses and the delivery of public services right across the UK.*

"The bottom line is that we want to make a real difference to future government decisions affecting fleets.".●

Your **Fleet** is "**100% Compliant**." That's **Probably** the **Problem**

Could operators be at risk because of misplaced confidence? Many fleets celebrate "100% compliance," but assuming **reporting equals oversight** can **hide blind spots** and **regulatory risks**, leaving vehicles, drivers, and businesses **vulnerable**.

It's a reassuring phrase to hear from fleet operators: "We're fully compliant."

Dashboards are green. Preventative Maintenance Inspections (PMIs) are automated. Drivers complete digital walkarounds. Telematics systems track everything that moves. Reports are emailed. KPIs are met.

On the surface, it's impressive. There's certainly no shortage of systems.

But here's the uncomfortable question:

Could operators be at risk because of misplaced confidence?

The Dangerous Comfort of Green Dashboards

Under the UK operator licensing regime, overseen by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and the Traffic Commissioners, operators are required to exercise continuous and effective **control**.

Control does not mean software ownership.

It does not mean automated reporting.

Yet many fleets have quietly shifted from managing risk to monitoring metrics.

A green dashboard is comforting. It suggests order. Discipline. Oversight.

But dashboards don't inspect tyres.

They don't challenge rushed drivers.

They don't question missed defects.

They record inputs.

And if your dashboard is always green, that in itself should prompt scrutiny.

When Visibility Becomes Liability

Here is the shift taking place in UK enforcement:

If your system can see the risk, regulators assume you can too.

Telematics shows repeated speeding.

Harsh braking trends upward.

Vehicles miss inspections.

Minor defects reappear — again and again.

If that data exists and nothing changes, it is no longer ignorance.

It is knowledge without intervention.

And in a Public Inquiry, knowledge carries weight.

Digital records are increasingly requested during investigations — not just maintenance schedules, but exception reports, escalation processes and evidence of follow-up action.

Owning the data is not protection.

Proving you acted on it is.

The Five Risks No One Wants to Talk About

1. Configuration Complacency

Telematics thresholds set too high to avoid "noise."

Driver alerts disabled because they were inconvenient.

Walkaround apps configured in ways that allow defects to be skipped.

Systems are powerful, but only if configured correctly.

When was the last time yours was independently audited?

2. Automation Without Oversight

PMIs scheduled automatically. Excellent.

But who verifies attendance?

Who checks the quality of rectification?

Who investigates missed inspections?

Automation should reduce administration, not responsibility.

3. Integration Illusion

Your defect reporting app doesn't sync with your maintenance provider.

Your telematics system doesn't inform HR processes.

Fuel data isn't reconciled against mileage.

Each platform appears compliant in isolation.

Together, they create blind spots.

And regulators look for patterns. Gaps create patterns.

4. The 20-Second Walkaround

Digital walkarounds completed in under 30 seconds.

Technically compliant.

Practically meaningless.

A digital signature does not equal a meaningful inspection. It proves a process was completed, not that it was taken seriously.

If an incident occurs, that record becomes evidence of what you tolerated.

5. The Audit Trail Problem

Every operator should consider this scenario:

If called before a Traffic Commissioner tomorrow, could you demonstrate:

Who reviews exception reports?

How often?

What actions were taken?

How those actions were recorded?

What changed as a result?

If the answer is, "The system logs that," you may not have effective control.

You have passive recording.

The Cultural Shift We Should Be Discussing

Somewhere along the line, fleet compliance shifted from:

"Are we safe?"

to

"Is it logged?"

That shift is subtle — but profound.

Compliance is behavioural.

It requires challenge.

It requires intervention.

It requires leadership scrutiny.

Digital tools are essential. But they are not management.

The Compliance Integrity Test

If you genuinely want to stress-test your fleet governance, ask:

When did we last audit our telematics configuration?

Who reviews exception reports weekly — by name?

Can drivers bypass digital safeguards?

Do we reconcile defect reporting with maintenance outcomes?

Is compliance discussed at board level — or delegated downward?

If those questions create discomfort, that is not weakness.

It is insight.

Because the fleets most at risk are not the obviously non-compliant ones.

They are the confident ones.

The ones who believe digital equals controlled.

The ones who assume reports equal oversight.

The ones who trust green dashboards without probing beneath them.

The greatest risk in modern fleet compliance is not a lack of systems.

It is believing the systems are doing the managing for you.

They aren't.

You still are.

And the more data we collect, the greater the expectation that we understand it — and act on it.●

Pictured: Representatives from Cardiff Capital Region, Welsh Government, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Ricardo and Hyppo and the trial hydrogen refuse collection vehicle.

Wales Unveils its **First Trial** With **Hydrogen Refuse** vehicles

In late February, Wales unveiled its first comparative demonstration of hydrogen and electric refuse collection vehicles (RCVs), marking a major milestone in the nation's ambition to accelerate cleaner, greener transport solutions.

The trials will be delivered in partnership with Ricardo, Hyppo, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. Welsh Government's Climate Innovation scheme and Circular Economy are supporting this important feasibility and demonstrator work to the value of over £420,000. This demonstration is part of a whole systems "challenge" which brings both zero-emission technologies together side by side for the first time, marking a significant step towards cleaner, more sustainable fleet operations across the country.

The showcase event brought together public sector leaders, industry specialists and local authorities to see both vehicles in action side-by-side. The trial is designed to gather real-world operational data, compare performance and inform

future investment in zero-emission fleet technologies across Wales.

Delivered by the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), one of the UK's city regions, bringing together ten local authorities across South East Wales, the project represents a significant step towards decarbonising heavy-duty vehicles and reducing emissions in communities across South East Wales. Mike Brough, CCR's Strategic Director for Regional Growth said:

This trial is exactly the kind of innovation CCR exists to champion. Heavy-duty fleets are one of the hardest sectors to decarbonise and by bringing hydrogen and electric technologies together in a real-world environment, we're helping local authorities make informed, future-proof decisions. It's exciting, genuinely groundbreaking work and a fantastic example of regional collaboration driving practical climate action."

Throughout the trial, engineers and fleet managers will examine energy usage, range, operational performance and suitability for different terrains and routes. Insights from the trial will help shape the next phase of zero-emission fleet planning across Wales.

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, who hopes to visit the trials over the coming weeks, said:

"Our investment in this project, in a hard-to-decarbonise sector, represents an important development for climate innovation in Wales. Demonstrator trials like that kicking off today show how innovative, ambitious and forward thinking our public services can be in tackling climate change and shaping our choices to 2030 and beyond. By testing hydrogen and electric vehicles side by side, Wales is gathering the evidence needed to make smart, sustainable decisions to mitigate global warming. It is inspiring to see such partnership in action and it underlines our shared commitment to a greener, cleaner, more skilled Wales which is better for everyone."

Cllr Amanda McConnell, CCBC Cabinet Member for Climate Change said: "We very much welcome the announcement of this exciting pilot project, which reflects our ambition to deliver a cleaner and greener waste collection service for our residents in the future. The trial of these new vehicles represents an important milestone in our commitment to sustainability and is another example of the way we are embracing new technology and driving innovation in order to reduce our carbon footprint."

Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Investment, Cllr Andrew Morgan OBE, added: *"We're pleased to be part of this innovative new trial which could set the course for the future and transformation of fleet services in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Wales. It's vitally important that we continue to future-proof our fleet and look at all the ways we can reduce our carbon footprint."*●

Essex Police Partners with First Charge to Power Electric Vehicles at Basildon Depot

Pictured: (l-r) Jason Tyrrell, A/Head of Fleet; Andy Gwilliam, Head of Product at First Bus; Sgt Harriet Clarke; and Martin Fitzjohn, Strategic Commercial Solutions Manager for Seven Forces.

Essex Police has partnered with First Charge, the third-party electric vehicle charging initiative from First Bus, to support the continued rollout of electric vehicles.

Through the partnership, Essex Police is using high-power charging infrastructure at First Bus's Basildon depot to support its growing electric fleet, which this year will increase to 50 electric vehicles. The force expects this to increase the number of electric vehicles in its fleet, as part of its longer-term ambition to decarbonise a fleet of just under 800 vehicles.

Essex Police began transitioning vehicles to electric in 2022, initially using the public charging network. As the electric fleet has expanded, access to reliable, high-capacity charging has become critical to operational delivery. Charging vehicles at First Bus's Basildon depot provides secure, high-power infrastructure to support the continued rollout of electric vehicles while reducing reliance on public charging provision.

The partnership comes as police forces and other emergency services work towards government targets to transition to zero-emission vehicles, including the 2035 deadline for the phase-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans. For organisations with large, operationally critical fleets, the cost of installing new charging infrastructure, alongside securing sufficient grid capacity, can present significant financial and practical challenges.

Jason Tyrrell, Acting Head of Fleet at Essex Police, said: *"We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our fleet while continuing to catch criminals and keep people safe across Essex.*

"Moving to electric vehicles is a key part of that journey, but access to suitable charging infrastructure is essential. Working with First Bus through First Charge allows us to support the expansion of our electric fleet using existing, high-power infrastructure, while maintaining the operational resilience our service requires."

Andy Gwilliam, Head of Product at First Charge, said: *"We're pleased to welcome Essex Police as a First Charge customer at our Basildon depot.*

"Using First Charge can be significantly more cost-effective than relying solely on public charging, particularly for fleets that need regular, high-power charging. It also helps free up public charge points for members of the public, reducing pressure on local charging infrastructure while ensuring critical public services have the access they need.

"First Charge is about making better use of existing electric charging infrastructure to support organisations as they transition their fleets to zero-emission vehicles. With a growing network of electric depots across the UK, we're able to provide access to high-power charging in locations where public provision is limited."

First Charge was launched to support the wider adoption of electric vehicles by opening up First Bus's electric depot charging infrastructure to third-party users, including commercial fleets and public-sector organisations. The initiative now operates across a growing national network of electric bus depots, helping organisations access reliable, high-power charging without the need for immediate, large-scale infrastructure investment.

Andy Gwilliam concludes: *"This partnership with Essex Police demonstrates how shared charging infrastructure can support the decarbonisation of essential public services while enabling organisations to transition their fleets at a pace that is both operationally and financially sustainable.*

"We look forward to working with more public- and private-sector organisations to help remove some of the practical barriers to fleet electrification."

First Charge has an established partnership with Police Scotland, where their electric vehicles have been charging at First Bus's Aberdeen and Caledonia depots since 2022. First Charge is continuing to expand its work with emergency services in the East of England, with Norfolk Police expected to begin charging electric vehicles at First Bus's Roundtree Way depot in Norwich in the coming months.●

East Riding Refuse Trucks Equipped with **Life-Saving Defibrillators** in **UK First**

All refuse collection lorries operated by East Riding of Yorkshire Council are now equipped with life-saving defibrillators in what is believed to be a UK first.

The council has installed automated external defibrillators (AEDs) across its entire fleet of 72 bin lorries so crews can respond to medical emergencies while working in communities across the East Riding. The number will rise to more than 80 vehicles as the authority rolls out weekly brown bin food waste collections, which began in February.

The initiative is designed to improve access to defibrillators in rural and remote areas, where emergency response times may be longer. Bin lorries travel thousands of miles each week and regularly visit neighbourhoods where public access to defibrillators may be limited.

Automated External Defibrillators are portable devices used during sudden cardiac arrest to deliver an electric shock to the heart and restore a normal rhythm. They are designed for public use in emergencies while waiting for an ambulance and have been shown to significantly improve survival rates.

The £60,000 project has been funded through a Government grant aimed at improving road safety and reducing casualties. The council worked with Beverley-based first aid provider Act Fast First Aid to supply the equipment. The company is also providing specialist training for bin crews in CPR and defibrillator use. Council officers are also in discussions with Yorkshire Ambulance Service about the possibility of real-time tracking of refuse vehicles. This would allow the nearest lorry carrying a defibrillator to be located quickly if emergency services or community responders require one.

Two of the council's road safety vehicles have also been fitted with defibrillators as part of the initiative.

Councillor Paul West, cabinet member for environment and transport, said the scheme shows the council's commitment to protecting residents and supporting local communities.

"Our bin lorries travel thousands of miles every week and reach some of the most rural and remote parts of the East Riding," he said. "They are ideally placed to carry these life-saving devices in case they are needed."

Refuse collection driver Andrew Fowler said the initiative would be particularly valuable in rural areas where defibrillators are less common.

"There are still places we go to that don't have defibrillators nearby," he said. *"We are out everywhere and everyone can see us, so it's an added extra to what we do. Hopefully we never have to use them, but if we do, we will be able to help."*

Drivers employed by the council already receive annual first aid training including CPR. Under the new scheme, all bin crews will receive additional training as well.

The defibrillators will be inspected and maintained as part of routine vehicle safety checks.

The initiative also supports the council's commitment to the Vision Zero road safety principle, which aims to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the road network.●

Council Unveils **New 60-van Fleet** to Boost **Housing Services**

Pictured: Cllr Bill Hartnett (R) and Interim Housing Property Services Manager Andrew Rainbow (L) with the first tranche of the new vehicles alongside frontline staff (L-R) Callum Wilkins, Adam Darby, Pete Morris, and Lee Footit, accompanied by Startin's Darren Phillips and Lee O'Connell.

A fleet of new service vehicles will start being delivered the grand total of one mile to Redditch Borough Council's Housing Property Services this month.

It'll take just three minutes for the 60 new vehicles to complete the short trip across Arrow Valley Country Park to the council's Crossgate Road operations headquarters, after a £1.9m fleet replacement contract was won by nearby Startin Group.

The new council-branded vans are set to become a familiar sight across Redditch as the authority's plumbers, electricians, and other staff start using them to serve tenants across over 5,500 properties in the borough.

Half of the new vehicles will come into service this year and the rest next year, under a planned replacement programme to deliver improved long-term reliability and value for money. With many of the vehicles they will replace being over a decade old, the move will reduce growing reliability issues that have resulted in avoidable delays and disruption for tenants.

Redditch Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr Bill Hartnett, said: *"This investment supports our wider commitment to continually improving services for our tenants, and we're delighted to have been able to use a local business for what we need. These vehicles will enable housing property services teams to more efficiently support customers for years to come.*

"Redditch Borough Council always prefers to shop local but this gives a new meaning to local. Being local can actually help you win council business, because it can count for you in the official procurement processes. I urge local suppliers to keep a close eye on our procurement channels for contract opportunities, and consider joining the frameworks that supply our sector too."

The council awarded the contract to Startin Group, which is headquartered in Redditch, via the Crown Commercial Service public sector supply framework.

Lee O'Connell, Startin Group's head of group fleet, said the council agreement is an early validation of the group's investment. *"Supplying Redditch Borough Council is exactly the kind of work the new Startin Fleet Hub and compound was built for. Public sector fleets need dependable delivery, clear communication and vehicles prepared to a consistent standard. This facility gives us the control and capacity to do that properly."*

Redditch Borough Council's social housing functions are not funded by council tax. They are funded by the low social rents paid by tenants - plus some extra Government funding from time to time.●

Kent Set for 10,000 New on Street **Electric Vehicle Chargers**

A new long-term partnership will see thousands of electric vehicle charge points installed on residential streets across Kent as part of a major countywide infrastructure programme.

Urban Fox, a joint venture between Balfour Beatty Investments and Urban Electric Networks, has secured a 20-year agreement with Kent County Council to deliver a large-scale rollout of on-street electric vehicle (EV) chargers.

Under the programme, up to 10,000 charge points will be installed, with priority given to neighbourhoods where residents lack access to private driveways or off-street parking. The scheme forms part of the council's wider transport modernisation plans and its ambition to support lower-carbon travel across the county.

Urban Fox will work in collaboration with county, district and borough authorities to identify suitable sites, using discreet on-street charging solutions designed

to blend into residential areas while maintaining pavement accessibility.

The joint venture was created to expand access to public EV infrastructure, combining Urban Electric Networks' charging technology expertise with Balfour Beatty's experience in funding and delivering major infrastructure projects within local communities.

Ion Appuhamy, Managing Director of Balfour Beatty Investments, said the partnership reflects a shared commitment to making EV charging more accessible.

He said the initiative would help remove barriers for residents without home charging options, while accelerating the transition to cleaner transport.

Oli Freeling-Wilkinson, Chief Executive of Urban Fox, described the agreement as a significant milestone, adding that the rollout would focus on delivering at scale while remaining responsive to community needs.

Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways at Kent County Council, said the project would provide practical support for residents by ensuring reliable and affordable charging facilities within walking distance of their homes. He added that the programme would be delivered without additional cost to council taxpayers.

More than 700 suggested charging locations have already been submitted by residents, and these sites will now be reviewed as the first phase of installations gets underway.●

Bellrock Group Begins **Rollout** of **Ford Transit Custom Plug-in Hybrid Vans** as Part of **Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy**

Bellrock Group has taken delivery of the first tranche of Ford Transit Custom plug-in hybrid vans, marking a significant step in the company's transition to a lower-carbon fleet.

Working in partnership with Alphabet (GB) Limited, Bellrock is replacing 88 diesel vehicles with plug-in hybrid (PHEV) models as part of its wider sustainability strategy and ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040.

Through a consultative fleet management approach, Alphabet worked closely with Bellrock to identify the most suitable vehicle solution. The Ford Transit Custom PHEV was selected to ensure operational requirements, including payload capacity, were met, while supporting the company's environmental goals.

The rollout has been designed to maximise efficiency and minimise downtime, with several key elements incorporated into the programme:

- Recyclable vinyl vehicle wrapping
- Reusable modular racking systems
- A fully managed, end-to-end delivery process
- Streamlined vehicle fit-out and deployment

Focus on Operational Efficiency

By consolidating vehicle supply, livery and racking under a single point of contact, the partnership has simplified implementation and accelerated deployment across Bellrock's operations.

A spokesperson for Bellrock said:

"We've been working closely with Alphabet to support both our operational needs and our sustainability ambitions. Having a single, coordinated approach to vehicle supply, branding and racking has helped us streamline the rollout and reduce downtime.

"Our partnership has enabled us to navigate challenges around vehicle availability and deployment, while also improving overall fleet efficiency as we continue our journey towards becoming a low-carbon fleet operator."

The project has been delivered in collaboration with supplier partners Mediafleet and Modul-System UK Ltd, supporting a coordinated and efficient transition to the new hybrid fleet.●

Pictured: Cllr Lynda Hodgkins, HBBC and Tom Rose, SFS with two vehicles from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's new food waste collection fleet

Bread Pitt, **Peels on Wheels** & **Friends** Ready to **Collect Food Waste**!

A fleet of nine dedicated food waste collection vehicles has arrived at Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC), ready to carry out a new weekly food waste recycling collection service, which started this month.

The vehicles, all Isuzu N75 7.5T trucks fitted with a Hillend Engineering MICRO L body and binlift, are being provided by the council's long-standing fleet and workshop partner, Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS), which has worked with the council for more than 20 years.

Each truck proudly features its own name on the front, following a council-run competition that invited residents to suggest names for the new fleet.

The new service is being fully funded by the Government, following new regulations introducing mandatory food waste collections across the UK. All residents in the borough will receive a weekly food waste collection, taking place on the same day as their usual waste and recycling collections. Collected food waste will be converted into renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions and diverting waste from landfill.

In March 2025, HBBC signed an eight-year agreement with SFS covering the supply and maintenance of the council's fleet, as well as management of its workshop facility. As part of the contract, SFS delivered 22 vehicles in September 2025, including refuse collection vehicles, bulky waste trucks and sweepers.

Lynda Hodgkins, Executive Member for Clean Neighbourhood Services, said:

"We are excited to offer this new service to residents. Recycling food waste is a simple change that makes a big difference — reducing harmful emissions, generating green energy, and keeping bins cleaner and fresher. The service is free, easy to use, and will help make our borough cleaner and greener."

Caroline Roffey, Assistant Director, Street Scene Services, said: *"I would like to thank everyone at Specialist Fleet Services for their work providing us with these food waste collection vehicles.*

"These vehicles are out and about on roads across the borough, with the winning names from our vehicle naming competition proudly printed on them."

Bob Sweetland, Managing Director at SFS, said:

"We are delighted to provide a fleet of dedicated food waste collection vehicles to support this new recycling service at Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, helping to contribute to its carbon reduction targets."

SFS has been delivering fleet and workshop management solutions to local authorities for over 30 years. The company operates its own specialist short-term hire division, CTS Hire, and a network of 15 workshops across the UK — nine of which are based at council depots — with plans for continued expansion.●

For more information about **Specialist Fleet Services** *tel: 01604 234601; email info@sfs.co.uk; visit:* **www.sfs.co.uk**

Virgin Media O2 Adds 101 Electric Vans to Engineering Fleet

Virgin Media O2 has expanded its transition to zero-emission vehicles with the addition of 101 electric Renault Master vans to its UK engineering fleet.

The new vans will support the company's field engineers responsible for maintaining and upgrading broadband infrastructure across the country. Supplied via fleet partner Ayvens and delivered through Lookers, the rollout forms part of Virgin Media O2's wider strategy to reduce the environmental impact of its operational fleet.

Configured as mobile workspaces, the vans have been adapted to meet the needs of engineers working in the field. Each vehicle features specialist racking, a workbench and additional lighting, alongside a power inverter that allows engineers to run tools directly from the vehicle. Solar panels, ladder loaders and a key-out safety system have also been fitted.

The vehicles are expected to cover around 13,000 miles per year during a typical five-year fleet cycle, supporting daily maintenance and repair work across both urban and rural areas.

Based on the L2H2 version of the electric Master, the vans offer a balance between load capacity and manoeuvrability. The layout provides sufficient internal working space while remaining practical for use in residential streets and tighter locations.

Power comes from an 87kWh battery paired with a 143hp electric motor, delivering up to 285 miles of WLTP driving range. Fast charging allows the vehicle to recover roughly 140 miles of range in around 30 minutes, helping minimise downtime during operational shifts.

The deployment forms part of Virgin Media O2's broader sustainability programme, which aims to achieve net-zero carbon emissions across its operations by 2040.

As fleets increasingly look to electrify service and engineering vehicles, models such as the electric Master are being adopted for their combination of range, charging capability and suitability for specialist conversions.●

HVO: A Practical Route to Decarbonising Diesel Fleets

Decarbonising fleet operations is no longer simply a desirable ambition for most organisations. It is now driven by legislation, corporate policy and growing expectations around environmental responsibility. As a result, fleet strategies increasingly place sustainability at the centre of operational planning.

Picture created for illustation purposes only

Electric vehicles (EVs) have become a viable solution for many fleets, including those with diverse assets and complex operational requirements. However, for some operators, particularly those running heavy-duty vehicles, full electrification is not always practical or cost-effective..

In these situations, many organisations have turned to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as an alternative to conventional diesel. Adoption has been especially notable among local authorities, emergency services and infrastructure providers operating large diesel fleets.

The appeal of HVO lies in its simplicity as a transitional fuel. However, while uptake is growing, there are still practical considerations around adoption, cost and implementation.

What is HVO?

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is a renewable diesel produced from vegetable oils, used cooking oil and other lipid-based feedstocks. Unlike first-generation biodiesels, HVO is created through a hydrotreatment process that removes oxygen and impurities, producing a high-quality and stable fuel.

This process results in a more consistent and reliable product that avoids many of the issues historically associated with earlier biodiesel fuels, such as fatty deposits in fuel systems.

In most cases, HVO can be used as a direct replacement for fossil diesel.

The headline benefit: emissions reduction

The main advantage of HVO is its significant emissions benefit. When used as a fuel, it can deliver up to a 90% reduction in net CO_2 emissions compared with standard diesel.

This reduction is achieved because the carbon released during combustion was previously absorbed by the plants used as feedstock during their growth cycle. While additional emissions arise from feedstock transport, processing and distribution, the overall lifecycle carbon footprint remains substantially lower than that of fossil-derived diesel.

In addition to CO_2 reductions, HVO also offers improvements in local air quality. Compared with conventional diesel it can deliver:

- Up to 20% lower NOx emissions
- Up to 80% fewer particulate emissions

For fleets operating in urban environments, these reductions can contribute meaningfully to improved air quality and reduced exposure to pollutants for both the public and vehicle operators.

A True "Drop-in" Fuel

One of the reasons HVO is gaining momentum is that it can typically be used as a drop-in replacement for diesel. Most modern diesel engines require no modification to operate on HVO, provided the engine meets commonly used emissions standards that the majority of fleets already comply with.

This means fleets can reduce emissions across existing assets without replacing vehicles or investing in new drivetrain technology.

Although the strongest case for HVO is often among heavy diesel vehicles – such as refuse collection vehicles, highways maintenance trucks or specialist plant – any diesel vehicle with access to depot fuelling can benefit.

However, before transitioning to HVO there are several practical considerations.

Checking vehicle compatibility

While HVO is compatible with most modern diesel engines, fleet managers should always confirm suitability with the vehicle manufacturer.

Manufacturers can verify whether the engine is approved for HVO use and advise on any operational considerations, such as fuel filter changes or calibration adjustments. Taking this step helps ensure that vehicle warranties remain valid and that manufacturer support is not affected.

Infrastructure and Availability

In the UK, HVO is not widely available through standard retail fuel stations. As a result, its use is currently best suited to depot-based fleets with bulk fuel storage. or organisations such as local authorities, emergency services and major contractors – which typically already operate depot fuelling infrastructure – switching to HVO can often be carried out with minimal operational disruption.

Making the Business Case

The biggest barrier to HVO adoption remains cost. HVO typically carries a 10–15% price premium over standard diesel for bulk fleet buyers, meaning many organisations must plan for an increase in fuel expenditure when making the switch.

For example, the annual fuel budget of a medium-sized local authority can easily run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. An increase of this scale therefore requires a clear and robust business case.

The strongest argument is usually linked to organisational Net Zero targets. Fleet

operations often represent a major share of an organisation's operational emissions, meaning that switching to HVO can significantly accelerate progress towards carbon reduction goals.

Because HVO can be implemented quickly across an entire diesel fleet, it allows fleet departments to deliver measurable emissions reductions without waiting for the gradual replacement of vehicles.

In many organisations, this can enable fleet teams to meet or even exceed internal sustainability targets while supporting wider corporate climate commitments.

Comparing HVO with Electrification

There is considerable momentum towards fleet electrification, and a growing number of heavy-duty electric vehicles, including electric refuse collection vehicles, are entering the market. However, these vehicles often come with significantly higher upfront costs and require substantial investment in depot charging infrastructure. For organisations that purchase vehicles outright rather than through leasing arrangements, this level of investment may not yet be feasible.

HVO therefore provides a practical interim solution. While it does not eliminate tailpipe emissions entirely, it delivers substantial carbon reductions without the capital expenditure associated with full electrification. For many fleets, it represents a realistic and effective pathway for reducing emissions in the medium term.

While not a long-term substitute for zero-emission transport, HVO allows fleet operators to make meaningful progress today. For organisations running heavy-duty or specialist vehicles where electrification remains challenging, it offers a way to achieve measurable sustainability gains without disrupting operations. As the transition to zero-emission fleets continues, solutions such as HVO can play a vital bridging role, helping fleet managers cut carbon now while preparing for the technologies that will define the future of road transport.●

An Example of **HVO** Being **Utilised**

Council Moves to **Low-Carbon Fuel** as Part of **Fleet Decarbonisation Drive**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is set to begin transitioning its vehicle fleet away from traditional diesel in a move designed to significantly cut carbon emissions and support long term climate goals.

The Council plans to introduce Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), across its existing fleet. When blended with diesel, HVO can reduce annual carbon emissions by almost 2,500 tonnes, offering an immediate step towards lower carbon operations without requiring vehicle or infrastructure modifications.

The proposal to transition the fleet's primary fuel source was agreed in principle at a meeting of the Council's Sustainability and Environment Committee in mid February, with final approval due to be considered by full Council in March.

The move forms part of broader preparations for the 2035 requirement under the Vehicle Emissions Trading Schemes VETS, which mandates that all new vehicles produce zero emissions. While the Council currently operates one fully electric vehicle within its 195 strong fleet, that number is expected to rise to 17 zero emission light vehicles by the end of June. Plans are also being developed to ensure all vehicles under 3.5 tonnes are carbon neutral by 2035.

Council Chairperson Councillor Philip Campbell described the introduction of HVO and zero emission vehicles as a significant milestone.

He said the transition represents a practical and impactful step towards a low carbon, climate resilient future, adding that the scale of potential emissions reductions should not be underestimated.

The Council is currently consulting on its draft Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, which commits the organisation to achieving net zero by 2050. This includes plans to fully decarbonise its entire fleet including heavy goods vehicles over the coming decades.

A 2022 feasibility study examining the adoption of alternative fuel vehicles by local authorities in the East Border Region identified HVO as an important transitional fuel on the pathway to net zero, helping bridge the gap while electric and other zero emission technologies continue to scale.●

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils Take Delivery of Second Electric Waste Vehicle

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have taken delivery of their second electric waste collection and street cleansing vehicle, producing 70% fewer carbon emissions than its diesel predecessor. The move supports the councils' ambitions to reduce emissions and move towards net zero.

The new IVECO eDaily caged tipper was delivered earlier this month to the Culham depot of the councils' waste contractor, Biffa, and is now in use across both districts. Crews are using it for street cleansing, emptying litter bins, collecting waste from litter picks, and clearing fly-tipped rubbish.

Replacing a diesel tipper that covered around 33,000 miles per year, the electric vehicle is expected to save more than 13 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent annually, a 70% reduction compared with the previous truck. The tipper also features a dedicated tools compartment, keeping street cleansing equipment separate from waste. Like most EVs, it is quieter than diesel vehicles.

Pictured: Councillors Sue Cooper and Anne-Marie Simpson with the new EV tipper truck

Cllr Sue Cooper, South Oxfordshire District Council cabinet member for Environment, said:

"Switching to electric vehicles is challenging given the size of our districts and long rural collection routes. This new vehicle continues our progress towards net zero, benefiting both residents and the environment."

Cllr Dr Robert Clegg, Vale of White Horse District Council cabinet member for Environmental Services, Climate Action, and Nature Recovery, added:

"It's fantastic to add another electric vehicle to our waste and street cleansing fleet. Our electric food waste truck, in service for 18 months, has already saved carbon emissions on every mile compared with its diesel counterpart."

Since November 2024, the councils have introduced an electric food waste truck and replaced smaller diesel vans used by the parks and public toilet teams with electric equivalents. In February 2026, two more EVs were added for the toilet cleaning team, further expanding the councils' sustainable fleet.●

Dumfries and Galloway Council Invests in Specialist Fleet to Boost Roads Maintenance

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Roads Service has upgraded its operational fleet with two gully cleaning units and four street sweepers, significantly enhancing maintenance capabilities across the region.

The investment responds directly to feedback from Roads Service teams, who identified modern gully-cleaning and road-sweeping equipment as a top priority to improve day-to-day operations and maintain the council's 7,000 km road network.

The new gully cleaners feature corrosion-resistant tanks, powerful hydraulic vacuum systems, and flexible booms, allowing crews to clear gullies safely from the carriageway. High-capacity jetting systems efficiently remove blockages, particularly in rural areas where clogged gullies increase flood risk.

The street sweepers offer larger hopper capacity, improved suction, fuel efficiency, and durable low-wear components, reducing maintenance costs. Water-saving technology cuts consumption by up to 20%, supporting both environmental and operational efficiency, while their robust design suits the region's mix of urban and rural routes.

Training for Roads Service staff is underway, with deployment scheduled for the week commencing 23 March.

Cllr Andy Ferguson, Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, said:

"Our Roads Service teams work tirelessly to maintain one of Scotland's largest road networks. Upgraded vehicles were a top priority, and I'm delighted we can provide equipment to keep routes clear, safe, and well maintained year-round."

Cllr Tony Berretti, Vice-Chair, added:

"This investment equips our teams to deliver the high-quality service our communities expect. The new gully tankers and sweepers will help tackle flood risk, improve cleanliness, and support efficient maintenance across the region."●

Hummingbird Insurance Partners with **Essential Fleet Manager** to Deliver Expert **Fleet Insurance** Insights

Hummingbird Insurance has partnered with Essential Fleet Group to launch a new regular column in Essential Fleet Manager magazine, providing practical tips and expert insights on fleet insurance and risk management.

As fleet operators face increasing challenges – from rising repair costs and advancing vehicle technology to the transition to electric vehicles – the partnership aims to provide fleet managers with clear, practical guidance to help them navigate an evolving risk landscape.

The new series will see Hummingbird Insurance share commentary and advice on the topics that matter most to fleet professionals, helping readers better understand how insurance trends, risk management strategies and operational decisions can impact their fleets.

Topics will include the key factors driving fleet insurance premiums, lessons from common claims, the growing role of telematics and driver data, and the insurance considerations surrounding the transition to electric vehicles. The column will also explore how driver behaviour, fleet management practices and wider industry trends are shaping the future of fleet insurance across the UK.

Ben Peters, Co-Founder at Hummingbird Insurance, said:

"Fleet operators are working in an increasingly complex environment, with new technology, rising costs and regulatory pressures all playing a role. Our partnership with Essential Fleet Manager gives us the opportunity to share practical insights that help fleet managers better understand insurance, reduce risk and ultimately run safer, more cost-effective operations."

Deborah Cheadle, Editor of Essential Fleet Manager, added:

"Insurance is a vital part of fleet management, yet it's an area where many operators would welcome clearer insight. Partnering with Hummingbird Insurance allows us to bring expert knowledge directly to our readers and help them better understand the factors shaping the fleet insurance market."

The new column will appear in upcoming issues of Essential Fleet Manager, beginning with the April edition, and will provide regular updates and guidance on the latest developments in fleet insurance and risk management.●

Fleet Operators can subscribe free to the digital issue of Essential Fleet Manager Magazine by visiting: **https://myessentialfleet.co.uk/essential-fleet-manager-magazine/**

To find out more about Hummingbird Insurance visit: **https://hisltd.uk/**

Early 2026 Updates to **Heavy Vehicle Testing**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has rolled out key changes to the UK heavy vehicle testing regime in early 2026, improving safety, efficiency, and access to critical documentation. Staying ahead ensures smoother operations and compliance.

ADAS Visual Checks — From 2 February 2026

As Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) become standard, DVSA inspectors now perform visual checks on sensors, cameras, and warning indicators. While these checks don't currently affect test results, they provide insight into system condition and may influence future testing. Fleet managers should maintain vehicles to pass inspections.

Safer PSV Door Testing — Active From 5 January 2026

A new PSV door resistance testing tool standardises assessments and reduces injury risk when checking buses and coaches. This ensures safer, more consistent testing outcomes.

PG10 Prohibition Clearance Notices Now Digital

From 2 February 2026, PG10 notices are emailed to addresses registered on the Vehicle Operator Licensing (VOL) system, enabling faster delivery and reducing lost paperwork. Fleet managers must keep VOL contact details current.

Plating Certificates Available Online — From 13 February 2026

Plating certificates—covering vehicle weights and axle configurations—can now be downloaded via the GOV.UK MOT history service, eliminating postal delays and replacement fees.

Implications for Fleet Management

These updates modernise heavy vehicle testing while maintaining road safety. Digital notices, online certificates, and early ADAS monitoring give fleet managers better control over compliance, documentation, and vehicle safety.

Action Points for Fleet Operators

- Update VOL emails for PG10 notices.
- Prepare vehicles for ADAS visual checks.
- Access plating certificates online to maintain accurate records.

These early 2026 changes support smarter, safer, and more efficient fleet operations — helping operators stay compliant and protect vehicles on the road.●

£23.1m Fleet Boost to Deliver 160 New Ambulances and Response Vehicles Across Wales

A £23.1 million funding package from the Welsh Government will see a major refresh of frontline ambulance vehicles across Wales, with 160 new additions set to join the national fleet.

The investment will allow the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust to continue its fleet renewal programme, replacing older vehicles with modern alternatives designed to improve reliability, safety and environmental performance.

The order includes 50 emergency ambulances, 40 rapid response cars, 67 patient transport service vehicles and three specialist units for the Trust's Hazardous Area Response Team (HART). Once deployed, the vehicles will operate across Wales' 8,000 square miles, supporting both emergency and non-emergency care.

All new additions meet the latest emissions standards, aligning with national targets to cut carbon output and improve air quality. The Trust has already introduced hybrid and fully electric vehicles into parts of its fleet, alongside expanding its EV charging infrastructure. Solar panels have also been installed at a number of sites as part of a broader sustainability strategy.

Alongside investing in vehicles, the ambulance service is piloting new technology to enhance patient outcomes. Drone-delivered defibrillators are currently being trialled to reach people in remote and rural communities faster. Video consultations are also being used to assess certain patients remotely, while artificial intelligence tools are being explored to assist 999 call handlers in prioritising demand.

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care Jeremy Miles said the funding would strengthen emergency response capability nationwide.

He said the upgrade would ensure the service has dependable, modern vehicles ready to respond when people dial 999, while also contributing to Wales' wider environmental commitments through lower-emission transport.

Chris Turley, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources at the Trust, said replacing ageing vehicles would improve operational resilience and provide a better working environment for crews.

He added that, as a national service operating across urban centres and remote rural areas, the Trust remains focused on building a greener, more sustainable fleet while maintaining high standards of patient care.●

New Minibuses for School Transport

A fleet of new minibuses is transporting pupils to and from our Additional Support Needs schools.

The 18 new buses, supplied by Mellor, each provide space for up to 32 passengers or eight wheelchair users.

A number of new features including an innovative 'Sky View' windscreen, curved entrance step and forward-positioned door, ensure the buses provide a safe and inclusive experience for passengers.

Councillor Helen Loughran, Convener of the Environment and Climate Change Committee, met the team of mechanics who maintain the council's fleet of buses, vans, cars and lorries.

"The new minibuses are the latest investment in the council fleet, which is vital in delivering many local services, including school transport, waste and recycling, health and social care," Councillor Loughran said. *"We have more than 700 vehicles and our dedicated team of mechanics work around the clock to ensure they are all working effectively. The team includes apprentices who are learning on the job and gaining the skills and knowledge for their future careers."* ●

Bott Ltd Officially **Opens Exeter Vehicle Conversion** Centre

Bott Ltd has officially opened its Vehicle Conversion Centre in Exeter, boosting regional capability and accessibility for South West businesses.

The centre was launched on 17th February at Sowton Industrial Estate, welcoming local dignitaries, members of the Bott Group Management Team, customers, and staff. Guests toured the facility, met the Exeter-based team, and saw first-hand the design, engineering, and quality standards that define bott vehicle conversions.

Local Expertise, National Standards

The Exeter centre enhances bott's UK coverage by bringing high standards and quality assurance closer to South West customers. Serving businesses of all sizes, from single vehicles to full fleets, it provides locally accessible, expert-led, end-to-end conversions; including van racking and storage solutions, electrical integration, and custom fleet branding.

Benefits for South West customers include shorter lead times, reduced fleet movements to lower emissions, and dedicated regional support, with all conversions meeting manufacturer approval and ISO standards for safety and quality.

Nick Smith, CEO of bott UK, said: *"Our Exeter Vehicle Conversion Centre is more than a new facility - it's a centre of excellence for the South West. It brings bott's expertise directly to our customers, enabling closer collaboration, faster turnaround times, and vehicle conversions that set the standard from day one."*

Tim Cutler, Regional General Manager, added: "*The opening of the Exeter Vehicle Conversion Centre is an exciting milestone. We look forward to welcoming customers, sharing our expertise, and turning their vehicle concepts into practical, fully equipped solutions right here in the South West."*

The Exeter team is now fully operational and ready to support local businesses with high-quality, tailored vehicle conversions.●

Discover what our new Exeter conversion centre can do for your fleet – call 01392 824967 to speak to the Exeter team today, or email v-sales@bott.com

Home Fix Scotland Accelerates **EV Transition** with **Major Fleet Renewal** in **Partnership** with **Ayvens**

Home Fix Scotland (HFS), part of the River Clyde Homes (RCH) Group, has overhauled its entire light commercial vehicle (LCV) fleet in a major renewal programme delivered in partnership with leading sustainable mobility specialist Ayvens. The project marks a significant step in HFS's drive towards lower-emission operations, with a target to transition 20–25% of its van fleet to hybrid or fully electric models within five years.

The organisation operates a 78-strong van fleet supporting housing repairs, maintenance and construction activity across Scotland. HFS turned to Ayvens to help reduce operating costs, minimise downtime, and build a robust roadmap towards more sustainable fleet operations in line with the company's *'Road to Zero'* strategy.

Following a full fleet review and electric van appraisal by Ayvens, the partners developed a modernised multi-trade van specification to support HFS's diverse operational teams. As part of the project, Ayvens also led a complete redesign of the fleet's livery, delivering a refreshed and more contemporary identity in collaboration with HFS's internal brand team and livery partner Pulse.

The new vehicles feature improved fuel efficiency, hybrid systems, enhanced racking and storage, advanced navigation technology, and the modernised branding. Based on annual usage of 15,000 miles, each upgraded LCV is expected to deliver around £500 in annual fuel savings, while also cutting emissions and improving day-to-day usability for frontline teams.

Terry Appleyard, Ayvens' dedicated LCV Account Manager, provided ongoing specialist support throughout the process, while Account Manager Stewart Ballantyne continues to manage the long-term relationship and recently renegotiated the renewed agreement.

Derek Ferguson, Managing Director, Home Fix Scotland, commented:

"We are incredibly excited about the arrival of our new vans. This investment reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring our teams have the best possible resources. The responsive, agile and solutions-focused support from Ayvens has been invaluable, simplifying processes, strengthening the smooth and efficient operation of our fleet, and helping us prepare for a more

sustainable, future-focused approach. Our upgraded fleet enhances service delivery today while setting us firmly on the path towards achieving our long-term environmental goals."

Terry Appleyard, Ayvens' dedicated LCV Account Manager, who provided ongoing specialist support throughout the process, added:

"This project with Home Fix Scotland is a strong example of how data-driven fleet assessment and practical, trades-focused vehicle design can accelerate the shift to electric. Our team worked closely with HFS to create a future-proof specification and a realistic transition plan that supports operational demands today while building confidence in low-emission technology for tomorrow. We are proud to support HFS as they take meaningful steps towards a more efficient and sustainable fleet."●

NGED Drives One of The **UK's Largest EV Contract Hire** Transitions

Vehicle emissions are being slashed by National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) as it completes one of the largest transitions to EV contract hire cars in the UK.

NGED has partnered with global leasing specialists Ayvens to make the switch from an employee car ownership scheme involving 1,000 vehicles.

The move will save 4,474 tonnes of CO2 emissions annually for the country's largest distribution network operator, which covers the South West, the Midlands and South Wales.

Chris Mayell, NGED's Head of Fleet, said: *"Reducing our carbon footprint and working towards net zero targets is a priority for us, and electrifying our fleet allows us to eliminate tailpipe emissions across 1,000 company cars.*

"Ayvens have been a critical partner in this achievement, ensuring the changeover has been timely and efficient, supporting us in waving early termination fees and engaging with our drivers."

Chris Black, Commercial Director of Ayvens said: *"Transitioning 1,000 vehicles from ownership to contract hire EVs requires careful planning around funding structures, vehicle selection, and driver engagement. Our consultancy team worked with NGED to design a solution that met their operational needs while delivering significant carbon savings. This is exactly the kind of fleet decarbonisation challenge we're set up to support - using data-led insights to help organisations make the switch to zero-emission fleets without compromising on performance.*

"NGED should be applauded for its net zero strategy and aligning with their organisational goals and stakeholder expectations to lower carbon emissions. We recognise them as a forerunner in environmental sustainability, ensuring that we live and operate in a world that offers all the quality of life we have now for generations to come."

Pictured: L-R: Chris Mayell, NGED Head of Fleet and Christopher Rushton, Ayvens Client Relationship Manager

NGED employees participating in the company car scheme typically each drive 17,000 miles a year. They have a wide range of EVs to use, including popular models by Tesla, Polestar, and BMW, which can be leased for two, three or four years.

NGED is also supporting its EV drivers by creating one of the largest privately-owned charging networks in the UK.

It offers more than 500 charging points across its regions and has recently installed 176 rapid EV charger bays at 84 primary substation sites, plus 13 additional bays at strategic office locations.

This means its EV drivers are no more than 10 miles from an NGED-owned and operated EV charging point.●

To find out more visit: **www.ayvens.com/en-gb/**

CPD Begins Work on **Off-Grid Vehicle Conversion** Workshop

CPD Bodies has begun building work on an off-grid commercial vehicle conversion facility at its headquarters in Stockton-on-Tees.

When complete, the new facility will run primarily on onsite solar generation supported by battery storage, forming a self-sufficient energy ecosystem designed to cut operational carbon emissions by an estimated 62% in its first year.

In addition, CPD Bodies is positioning itself not only as a vehicle conversion specialist, but as a renewable-powered manufacturing partner for the next generation of UK fleets.

Alongside the off-grid facility, the firm has secured certified green electricity for all remaining workshops from 2026 onwards and is introducing site-wide solar installations across its Teesside manufacturing campus.

The new facility is expected to open in the middle of May, with customers, suppliers, industry press and OEM partners invited to a series of launch events at the company's expanded visitor and training centre.

CPD Bodies said the workshop will slash emissions while supporting electric van conversions aligned with the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate.

Supported by a six-figure investment, the project marks a major step in the firm's commitment to operate completely on green energy by the end of 2026.

Cathal Doocey, founder and managing director, said: *"This is not about future ambition, it's about action.*

"Construction being underway demonstrates our belief that sustainable manufacturing must be commercially viable and regionally rooted.

"We are investing here in the North East to create a facility that supports green jobs, strengthens our customers' supply chain credentials and reduces our environmental impact in measurable terms."●

SIXT Unveils Drive+ to **Boost Fleet Safety**, **Control** and **Efficiency**

SIXT van & truck has expanded its fleet management offering with the launch of Drive+, a telematics platform designed to help businesses improve operational control, strengthen safety standards and manage long-term vehicle hire more effectively.

Now available across the company's long-term rental fleet, Drive+ is powered by technology from Geotab and provides operators with live access to vehicle data through a single dashboard.

The system delivers real-time information on vehicle location, usage patterns and performance, giving fleet managers clearer insight into day-to-day operations. Rather than overwhelming users with raw data, the platform presents actionable intelligence to support better decisions around vehicle utilisation, driver behaviour and efficiency.

By improving visibility, SIXT says businesses can reduce downtime, control costs and strengthen compliance processes.

Drive+ also records driver behaviour metrics and risk indicators, helping demonstrate safer driving practices and potentially supporting discussions with insurers around premiums and policy terms.

Yvonne Gabler said the platform was developed with simplicity and measurable value in mind.

"Our goal was to offer a telematics solution that provides meaningful insight without adding complexity," she said.

"Working with Geotab allows us to combine established technology with the service-led approach our customers expect. Drive+ gives fleet operators the information they need to run safer, more efficient operations and evidence responsible driving behaviour."

The platform is structured across three service levels. Drive+ Core provides essential fleet visibility, including journey tracking and utilisation data. Drive+ Safe adds tools to monitor and improve driver performance, supporting duty-of-care responsibilities and risk management. The top-tier Drive+ Smart package integrates vehicle health monitoring, energy insights and utilisation data to help maximise uptime, efficiency and sustainability planning.

SIXT van & truck says the tiered approach enables businesses to adopt telematics gradually, with flexibility to scale as fleet requirements evolve.

Gabler added: *"Drive+ has been designed to simplify fleet oversight, equipping businesses with tools to protect their workforce,*●

Rock Compliance Targets and **Fleet Safety** and **Insurance Improvements** with **SureCam** Video Telematics

Rock Compliance, a water and air hygiene specialist, has continued to show its tech-led approach to all things compliance by equipping its nationwide engineering fleet with forward-facing cameras from SureCam to protect drivers, improve road safety and control insurance costs. Since its installation across 200 vans at the end of last year, the vehicle telematics solution has already helped reduce the number of high-risk driving events and at-fault insurance claims.

"We have already seen a marked improvement in fleet safety following the roll-out of the SureCam dashcams, which is directly contributing to cost and time savings, while ensuring our drivers and other road users get home safely," explains Lewis Evans, Fleet & Warehouse Manager at Rock Compliance. "*The camera solution is going to make a huge difference to our fleet operation moving forward, providing the tools needed to minimise risk and boost performance.*"

The adoption of the video telematics solution formed part of a comprehensive fleet renewal programme. Following a period of rapid expansion and the company's acquisition by UK technical services provider Andwis, Rock Compliance took the decision to replace its entire 200-strong van fleet. Partnering with Enterprise, the company had the dashcams pre-installed on all new vehicles prior to delivery to avoid operational disruption. SureCam was selected after a successful trial proved the quality and reliability of the camera system and online platform.

Rock Compliance has already used video evidence to defend against false claims and target areas of driver improvement. In one incident, the company was able to prove liability when a third party tried to claim non-fault having swerved into one of its vans and written it off. The video telematics' platform is also allowing Rock Compliance to swiftly investigate, and often disprove, incoming complaints, saving a significant amount of management time and avoiding unwarranted compensation and insurance claims.

"Our goal is to use the insight provided by the video telematics to improve driver behaviour and create a positive safety culture through better-informed engagement and training. We are working closely with the SureCam team to ensure we are making the most of the monitoring and reporting capabilities, which will underpin our safety strategy moving forward. Following the initial success of the technology, we are also in the process of installing dashcams across our car fleet," adds Lewis Evans.

Sam Footer, Strategic Partnership Director of SureCam commented: *"By taking a partnership approach we work seamlessly with end-user fleets, leasing companies and other technology specialists to develop hassle-free video telematics solutions that deliver measurable return on investment. This has enabled us to integrate our industry-leading hardware and software with Rock Compliance's operational processes, so they can benefit from clear results from day one."*●

For more information vist:
https://surecam.com/en-gb/

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