

**Date:** 16 November 2022

**Item:** Direct Vision Standard and Safety Permit Scheme for Heavy Goods Vehicles

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## **This paper will be considered in public**

### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 In September 2016, the Mayor announced plans to introduce the world's first Direct Vision Standard (DVS) for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) designed to reduce the danger posed by HGVs to cyclists and pedestrians.
- 1.2 TfL's Freight and Servicing Action Plan and Vision Zero Action Plan include a commitment to introduce DVS and the HGV Safety Standard Permit Scheme by 2020, and to further tighten safety standards from 2024.
- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to inform the Panel on the outcomes of the introduction of the first phase of the DVS scheme which was launched in October 2019 and to update on progress being made to develop and implement Phase 2 of the DVS and HGV safety permit scheme.

### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the paper.**

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 HGVs are involved in a disproportionate number of fatal collisions involving people walking and cycling. Between 2015 and 2017, HGVs were involved in 63 per cent of cyclist deaths and 25 per cent of pedestrian deaths, yet they made up just five per cent of traffic on London's roads network.
- 3.2 To tackle this issue, the Mayor committed to launch the world's first DVS for HGVs over 12 tonnes operating in Greater London.
- 3.3 Restrictions in the HGV driver's field of vision, or 'blind spots', are a significant contributory factor in collisions between HGVs and vulnerable road users (VRUs). DVS seeks to improve drivers' direct vision through the cab windows of HGVs and prevent collisions caused by limited visibility. The amount of vision which can be seen from the cab is associated with a star rating from zero to five, with 'zero star' being the lowest and 'five stars' the highest. Figure 1 shows a picture of a zero star rated vehicle and a five star rated vehicle.

## **Graphic shows sight lines from a zero star rated HGV cab and a five star HGV cab**

- 3.4 To operate HGVs over 12 tonnes in Greater London, operators must apply and obtain a Safety Permit by demonstrating the star rating of the vehicle, which can be obtained from the manufacturer.
- 3.5 Those HGVs which do not meet the minimum DVS rating (currently one star) must provide evidence that they have met the Safe System requirements, which is a condition of the Safety Permit.
- 3.6 Current Safe Systems requirements include fitting safety interventions such as side cameras, audible warning systems and side-underrun protection to improve indirect vision, warn other road users and minimise the impact of a hazard.
- 3.7 The DVS and HGV safety permit scheme was launched in October 2019 and the scheme's enforcement began on 1 March 2021. Operating an HGV without a valid Safety Permit or in breach of its conditions may result in a penalty charge notice of up to £550 (reduced to £275 if paid within 14 days). Enforcement of the scheme was delayed to allow the freight industry sufficient time to overcome supply chain issues and additional demands placed on the industry, caused by the coronavirus pandemic.
- 3.8 The 2019 Freight and Servicing Action Plan commits TfL to raise the minimum direct vision threshold from one-star to three-stars from October 2024 to ensure any developments in technology are considered. A consultation on any changes to the Safe System will be held in advance of any changes.
- 3.9 In January 2022 TfL commissioned Loughborough University to undertake a review of the existing Safe System and make recommendations for further safety improvements. The updated Safe System, referred to as 'Progressive Safe System' will apply to all HGVs more than 12 tonnes that are rated zero, one or two-stars.
- 3.10 This review has recently been completed by Loughborough University and has highlighted the need for further safety improvements as a result of advancements in technology. A consultation with industry on the Progressive Safe System is planned between February and March 2023.
- 3.11 The details of the Progressive Safe System will be published in Summer 2023 and applied to zero, one and two-stars rated vehicles from October 2024.

## **4 Outcome of the first year of DVS enforcement and its wider impacts**

4.1 During the first year of enforcement of the DVS and HGV safety permit scheme enforcement from 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2022 we saw the following:

- (a) a total of 191,769 Safety Permits were issued – the majority of these, 112,259, were to 'zero star' vehicles and 4,768 to 'five star' vehicles;
- (b) average daily compliance with the scheme was very high, with more than 94 per cent of HGVs in London operating with a Safety Permit and hauliers reporting that they are building DVS requirements into future purchasing decisions;
- (c) the number of fatal collisions involving an HGV where vision was cited as a contributory factor has fallen compared to previous years (six in 2021, compared to eight in 2020 and nine in 2019), although this needs to be considered in the context of the pandemic. The overall number of serious injuries involving HGVs has also fell from 48 in 2017 to 17 in 2021; and
- (d) 'zero star' rated vehicles accounted for four of the six fatal collisions in 2021 where vision was cited as a contributory factor. This indicates that direct vision offers benefits over other Safe System equipment, which further points to the need to further raise the minimum direct vision threshold to 'three-stars'.

4.2 Early indications are that the DVS and HGV Safety Permit scheme is having an impact on collisions where sight is a causation factor.

4.3 The scheme has been recognised by the EU as best practice and EU regulation 2019/2144, which came into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 following TfL's and others lobbying on regulatory change, requires all 27 member states to consider direct vision from HGV cab windows as a tool to reduce fatalities.

4.4 The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has also cited DVS as a best practice example for how countries across Europe can reduce road deaths.

## **5 Progress being made to implement the Progressive Safe System and raise DVS standards from October 2024**

5.1 As technology has evolved since 2019, we commissioned a review of the Safe System requirements, undertaken by Loughborough University between January and September 2022.

5.2 The findings of this review, which included a series of industry workshops, are informing our current proposals for the PSS requirements for October 2024.

5.3 PSS proposals are currently being finalised and will be subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment, followed by a stakeholder consultation in early 2023. We will report on that consultation in the spring with final details of the PSS expected to be published by summer 2023. Subject to consultation, the new PSS, along with

raising the minimum rating requirement from 'one star' to 'three stars', will take effect from October 2024.

- 5.4 As mentioned below TfL operates and enforces the DVS Scheme under a delegation from London Councils Transport and Environment Committee (TEC). We will submit a request to the TEC at its meeting on 8 December 2022 for permission to undertake a consultation on the proposed PSS measures. TfL will report back to the TEC on the outcome of the consultation and what measures are recommended by it should form the PSS, which the TEC will have to approve.
- 5.5 We are currently in the process of discussing operational and technical requirements to ensure our ability to deliver Phase 2 of the scheme, which until September 2022 did not have confirmed funding.

## **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The DVS is operated by TfL under a delegation from the and is established under a traffic regulation order (TRO) that applies across Greater London for which the TEC is the traffic authority. That TRO establishes the legal requirement for HGVs over 12 tonnes (subject to certain exceptions) to obtain a Safety Permit to operate in London. A policy statement approved by the TEC under the TRO imposes a requirement that all HGVs that are rated as zero star under the DVS system must fit Safe System additional safety measures (subject to certain exceptions and relaxations), and that from October 2024 all HGVs that are rated between zero and two stars (inclusive) must fit the PSS measures. The requirement to fit these additional safety measures is a requirement of conditions attached to the Safety Permit. TEC's approval must be sought for TfL to consult stakeholders on proposed PSS measures. TfL will report back to it to obtain approval to the necessary changes to the Policy Statement and Safety Permit conditions to implement the PSS.

### **List of appendices to this report:**

None

### **List of Background Papers:**

June 2021, TfL: [DVS one year on report](#)

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