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Who's in charge of truck safety standards?

As FORS accreditation and the CLOCS standard - initially driven by Transport for London - gain ground well beyond the capital and construction, operators may wonder who's in charge?

Is it the DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) and the traffic commissioners, policing and enforcing the law of the land as it pertains to transport? Or is it those who draw up contracts for their supply chains, and increasingly insist on additional terms?

Cries of 'unfair' and 'yet more bureaucracy' are among the clarion calls of the naysayers. Others are more specific. They wonder why the statutory regulations for truck safety and operator compliance (currently following EU directives and, post Brexit, likely to continue unchanged under UK law), are being at least partially usurped.

The plain fact is that legislation moves at one pace, while popular opinion, and those elected to represent it, may move at another. With appalling images of cyclists and other vulnerable road users killed or maimed by HGVs on city streets, it's no great surprise that people power has twisted powerful arms. Some would say rightly.

And indeed, such a movement is not without precedent from within transport, too. The irtec technician licensing scheme and, for that matter, the IRTE's Workshop Accreditation each emerged out of the industry's own demand for national standards to test competency and compliance among workshops and their people.

Why? Because, in the end, it is operators who carry the O licence can when maintenance is found wanting, not those offering the service. So, while neither is a legal requirement - although each is now acknowledged by DVSA and the traffic commissioners - both are increasingly cited by fleet managers in their terms of business.

Sometimes it behoves us to ride the tide and proactively embrace it, rather than, Canute like, perversely resisting the inevitable.

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