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REGULATORY

New push for roadside breathalysers

The government is committing £350,000 for a competition run by PACTS (Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) for companies to submit proposed technologies which will rapidly calculate the amount of ethanol in exhaled breath for use at the roadside. It is hoping to create an incentive for companies to bring to market a mobile 'breathalyser' to calculate the amount of ethanol in a driver's exhaled breath.

Such a device would enable on-the-spot proof of drink driving and ensure those guilty face a swifter justice. The advantage of this form of drink-driving test is that there is no time for a driver who is marginally over the limit to 'sober up' on the way to the second test at the station.

Another advantage of this new tester is that it removes the need for police to spend time and resources taking individuals to the station. This device is expected to be used by the police by summer 2020.

Sorting out smart tachos

From 15 June 2019, smart tachographs are to be made mandatory for new vehicles.

The new 'Annex 1C' compliant tacho aims to reduce administrative processes and digital tachograph tampering. These 'smart tachos' will use a GPS to record the start and end location of the drivers' work, and record every three hours of driving time. In order for operators to use the 1C tachographs, they will need to update their download tools and analysis software.

Also, stopping vehicles to check the tachograph will no longer be necessary. Enforcement officers will be able to use digital devices to check tachos from a distance of up to 190m away.

Information recorded by the tachograph - such as the most recent security breach attempt, whether the driver has a valid card and motion data errors - will be transmitted. Drivers' hours and break times will also be included, to determine if the driver has exceeded daily driving limits.

ULEZ coming in 2019

Despite reactions from trade associations such as the Confederation of Passenger Transport and the Road Haulage Association, mayor of London Sadiq Khan has decided to introduce the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to



central London a year earlier than planned. And unlike the T-charge it replaces, the rules apply at night and weekends.

From 8 April 2019, all buses and coaches over 5t gw, and HGVs over 3.5t, must operate Euro VI-compliant drivetrains to enter the city without charge. If not, operators will be required to pay £100.

From 26 October 2020, Euro III buses and coaches over 5t gw, and HGVs over 3.5t will be charged £300 per day to enter the current LEZ, and Euro IV or V vehicles will be charged £100. A year later, the ULEZ area will be expanded from central London to include the North and South Circular Roads.

Accident investigation trial

The government is aiming to improve road safety by deploying investigation teams that focus on analysing the cause of road collisions by the end of the year. Along with police forces, the RAC Foundation will lead this trial into accident causes. This new approach is supported by £480,000 of public funds.

Leeds City Council proposes clean air zone

In January 2020, buses, HGVs, taxis and diesel private hire vehicles that fail to meet the Euro VI/6 emission standards will be charged £50 per day to enter the Leeds clean air zone, in an attempt to improve air

quality as quickly as possible.

Operators whose vehicles fail to meet the emissions standards will have to decide whether to pay the charge, or pass it on to customers.

The Road Haulage Association recently issued a press release highlighting its concerns for operators. It advocated an 'intelligent, phased approach' to the clean air zone rules to give operators time to upgrade their vehicles.

New rules for learner drivers on motorways

From 4 June 2018, learner drivers may have lessons on the motorway, provided they are supervised by an accredited driving instructor in a dual-controlled car.

The aim of allowing learner drivers to gain experience on the motorway is to ensure that they can use a motorway safely. It has been noted that many newly qualified drivers avoid the motorway after passing their test, and those who do venture on to the motorway often feel scared.

The change is voluntary, and the decision will be left up to the instructor. Driving on the motorway will not become part of the driving test.

The Highway Code is being updated to reflect the change, and driving instructors will be obliged to follow specific rules set out in that document if they wish to take pupils on to the motorway.