

Your shout!

Got something you want to get off your chest? Email: jchallen@findlay.co.uk

I am distressed and angry at VOSA and its perceived policy of extracting revenue from the transport industry, under the guise of road safety.

During a roadside vehicle check on a 7.5-tonne Iveco that my garage is responsible for testing, a VOSA employee put a prohibition on the vehicle for a hydraulic brake pipe (that wasn't leaking) rubbing the chassis and a load sensing valve that was apparently seized. When I arrived onsite, I saw the prohibition notice and then had a look under the vehicle, asking my driver to apply the footbrake. The load sense valve worked fine, at which point the VOSA employee said: "I told the driver to tell you to report to me first." His statement implied that I would have rectified the fault. "You are an engineer and can see I have not tampered with this item," I responded.

He then went under the vehicle, saw for himself it was working and in the same condition it was when the truck had been taken off the road by the police. "It was not working when I tested it", he said – to which I replied, "It didn't mend itself. The vehicle was loaded at the time of test, so the valve would have been at its maximum delivery."

When he came out from under the vehicle, he then exclaimed: "You have a problem with VOSA," before telling the driver, "Your man has an attitude problem."

To a point, he is right, as I do have a problem with VOSA's double standards. Many times at the MOT station, when a tester finds a problem that is borderline, they will pass the vehicle and advise the fault. At the roadside, they fail it there and then, without advising it – which, of course, provides more income to VOSA.

The small pipe fault will cost the customer in excess of £450 and me three hours of my time, plus my van miles to and from the site, plus diesel. Who pays for this time and revenue I have lost, because of the inability of a VOSA employee to correctly diagnose a load sense valve?

I would not get far in my business if I treated my customers like this. Vehicle operators have a choice to come to this garage, but hauliers have no choice: VOSA is all they have.

Maybe the real problem lies with the organisational structure. Who is out there to check the checkers?



IRTE

Transport Engineer's regular 'IRTE to IRTE' members' column: focusing on the issues, challenges and concerns that matter to transport engineers and fleet managers