

235,000 haulier tests completed as lorry drivers urged to get tested away from border

- 235,000 hauliers now tested following requirements introduced by French government in December
- coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for hauliers available at 37 sites upstream of Kent
- government continues to call on hauliers to make sure they have a negative COVID-19 test before heading to the border

Over 235,000 hauliers have now been tested for coronavirus, meaning that vital goods continue to flow into the UK and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic in Kent is back to normal levels.

Following the [decision by the French government in December to require hauliers to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test to cross the border](#), a number of other European countries put in place similar requirements.

Such requirements had the potential to lead to sustained backlogs of HGVs in Kent and at borders but, thanks to swift government action, traffic has continued to flow freely. NHS Test and Trace staff and Ministry of Defence (MOD) personnel provided rapid lateral flow device testing around the clock to drivers within their cabs at sites across Kent. Ten mobile testing units deployed to the region and offered testing 24 hours a day over the Christmas period in order to test as many drivers as possible, as quickly as possible.

[Video about post-disruption in Kent](#)

The French government has recently changed the testing arrangements facing hauliers looking to travel from the UK into the country. These changes mean that French authorities will now accept testing certificates from Ireland for hauliers using UK ports, and that hauliers who are in the UK for less than 48 hours won't need a test.

However, the UK government is reminding any hauliers who do need a test to get one early in their journey at one of the [37 haulier advice sites](#) set up around the country, ensuring there is no build-up in congestion in Kent or other ports.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

It's really encouraging to see traffic continuing to run smoothly through Kent, and I'd like to thank the haulage industry, the armed forces, motorway service stations and the Kent Resilience Forum for working tirelessly with us to ensure the majority of hauliers cross the border without any issues.

While we are making good progress, it is vital that hauliers keep making use of the various advice sites around the country – where they can get a COVID-19 test before travelling to Kent.

The armed forces played a key role in the testing effort. Testing has now been handed over to civilian testers.

Colonel Ian Adkins, Deputy Commander of the Joint Military Command, South East, said:

We were pleased to support the Department of Transport and partners in the Kent Resilience Forum with COVID-19 testing of hauliers through the Christmas period and into the New Year. The initial backlog of thousands of vehicles was cleared within 3 days with the focus then switching to maintaining a smooth flow of hauliers through Kent. Armed forces personnel conducted over 128,000 tests and helped to deliver logistic and information support before handing over to a civilian testing solution.

Hauliers are also reminded that the [Kent Access Permit](#) is only valid for the 24-hour period stated on the permit – they must enter Kent and cross the border in this period or risk delays as they apply for a new permit.