

Government opens further COVID-19 testing locations for hauliers heading to France

- 10 new testing centres for HGV drivers open across country, with more to open over course of week, as Army is deployed to offer support
- additional support for haulage firms to establish their own testing centres at depots, with kits provided free of charge
- HGVs using Dover and Eurotunnel will get fast-tracked past queues if they get tested before arriving in Kent
- hauliers urged to ensure all correct documentation, including Kent Access Permits, in order before arriving in Kent to ensure they can cross the channel

The government is taking further steps to help hauliers get tested before they travel to Kent or any port heading to France, in an effort to reduce disruption for drivers as they carry goods across the Channel.

The Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, today (2 January 2020) announced the creation of 10 new testing locations across the country, with a further 10 opening tomorrow (3 January 2020), and more being added this week.

In addition, to help hauliers cross the Channel as quickly as possible, the government is offering to help any business to set up a testing centre at its own premises to ensure trucks heading for France depart 'COVID ready'.

The Department of Health and Social Care will support this, including the provision of testing kits entirely free of charge, and any business able to take advantage of this offer is urged to so to avoid the risk of delays waiting for tests either in Kent or at the public sites.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

As a result of the heroic efforts of hundreds of military and civilian personnel who have worked hard over the past 10 days, we have made incredible progress in clearing the queues of drivers left stranded as a result of the French government's actions.

If we are to keep traffic flowing in Kent, it is essential drivers are tested before they travel down to the area and that they have a [Kent Access Permit](#) before heading to the border, and these new testing centres both at service stations and inside businesses, will help reduce delays.

Tests will be available at the [information advice sites](#) the government has set up for hauliers around the country, originally to provide advice about

the requirements for travelling to the continent after leaving the EU. Now military personnel will be at 10 of these sites to provide COVID testing for haulage drivers, providing a negative result in the required 72-hour window before arriving in Kent, fast-tracking their access to the ports.

Lateral flow devices are being used to test hauliers that provide results within the hour and provide the necessary negative test result to allow them to continue on their journey into France. The Armed Forces are experienced in using these devices having used them for mass testing in Liverpool, Merthyr Tydfil and Medway.

As well as delivering testing, staff at the sites can also provide guidance on new border processes after EU transition and check whether drivers have all the right paperwork.

Significant progress has been made in ensuring over 25,500 lorries have crossed the Channel since the French government introduced unprecedented restrictions due to the new coronavirus variant.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey said:

The Armed Forces are once again demonstrating their flexibility, redeploying to new testing sites to ensure quicker access and minimal disruption on the approaches to Dover and the Eurotunnel.

As we saw throughout the festive period the Armed Forces are dedicated to help keeping the country moving, healthy and secure in 2021.