

Press release: 'Smart' safety advice for commercial drivers

In a pioneering move, the government company responsible for the country's motorways and major A roads has joined forces with the Freight Transport Association (FTA) to offer bespoke safety training for drivers who travel on smart motorways.

Aimed at commercial and haulage drivers, the course has been designed to provide practical, relevant training.

The eight hour, single day course covers the past, present and future of smart motorways, the different signals on the network, driver behaviour and the role of traffic officers.

A key aspect of the course is that it now integrates into the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC), the standard qualification for which all professional bus, coach and lorry drivers must complete 35 hours of training every five years.

Senior Partnership Manager at Highways England, Wayne Carey said:

Hauliers are among the most frequent users of smart motorways so we want to ensure we are providing as much support as we can to ensure those journeys are as safe as possible.

Smart motorways reduce congestion, improve journey time reliability and add much needed capacity to some of the most congested sections of motorway and we are delighted with the take up to date of this course.

We urge any haulier who wants to sharpen up their skills to sign up.

Pertemps, one of the leading training providers has agreed to offer the training, and Müller is one of the first organisations to take it on.

Jen Cowie, Logistic Support and Development Manager at Müller said:

It's essential that our drivers are fully equipped to deal with their surroundings. We are delighted to be working with Highways England on this training, from concept to delivery, and we continue to work together closely, which not only benefits the business, but the overall road network.

National Trainer Manager at Pertemps Driver Training, Andy Smart said:

It is clear to us that smart motorways are the future in the UK and their use has undoubtedly reduced congestion and improved safety on some of the busiest roads.

As an employer of over 7000 drivers nationwide we are actively working with and supporting Highways England to promote the benefits of smart motorways within the haulage industry.

Malcolm Bingham, Head of Road Network Management Policy at the Freight Transport Association (FTA) said:

FTA is conscious that hauliers would appreciate more advice about driving on smart motorways. That is why FTA has worked in partnership with Highways England to produce the training module which is now approved for use on the Driver CPC course programme.

This is the right way forward – providing drivers with true guidance on how to use the network and not adding confusion about which parts of the road they can use and when. That has been borne out by driver feedback on the pilot courses we have run.

It also demonstrates the need to respect the Red X signs set up when there is a problem on the network and provides assurance that these lanes are vital tool in keeping drivers safe in emergency situations.

Any company which wishes to enrol their drivers on the training should email: SPTC_Driver_Education_Course@highwaysengland.co.uk

Highways England's call to hauliers comes alongside a number of other initiatives related to commercial vehicle safety launched at this year's Commercial Vehicle Show.

One of these is the commercial vehicle incident prevention programme, which focuses on safer people and aims to reduce the number of commercial vehicle related incidents.

As part of this comes the use of virtual reality to reduce the risk of commercial vehicle drivers being involved in incidents as they travel up and down the country.

Other examples include:

- a joint initiative with police using HGV cabs to target dangerously driven vehicles (one of the cabs with police representatives will be at the Show);
- the installation of sophisticated tyre/vehicle measurement (tyre pressure, tyre tread depth, vehicle weight, axles heat) technology at key locations;
- initiatives with the Health & Safety Executive and the police to improve load security; and interventions to reduce diesel spillages which damage the carriageway and cause long delays.
- development of truck stop apps in Polish and Romanian (they can also be seen at the Commercial Vehicle Show).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.