

# Enterprise and Learning Committee

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## Trunk Roads And Casualty Reduction - Written evidence by the Freight Transport Association

1. This document sets out the Freight Transport Association's (hereafter referred to as FTA) response to the current inquiry entitled "Trunk Roads and Casualty Reduction" held by the Enterprise and Learning Committee of the National Assembly for Wales. FTA has limited its comments to those which have a direct relevance to logistics and supply chain operations.

### Freight Transport Association

2. FTA represents the logistics and supply chain interests of businesses throughout the United Kingdom. Its membership includes large blue chip multinational companies, major third party logistics providers, own account operators which carry their own goods, and small to medium sized hauliers. FTA has in excess of 14,000 members who between them operate over 200,000 heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) accounting for approximately half the UK fleet. In addition, FTA members consign 90% of freight moved by rail and 70% of goods shipped by sea and air. This unique multi modal mandate enables FTA to speak authoritatively on all aspects of logistics based on the broader transport needs of the economy.

### Background

3. Good progress is being made in road traffic accident reduction in the UK and the Government appears to be on course to meet its targets for reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 40% in 2010 compared to the baseline period of 1994 - 98. It is a source of concern to FTA that the Welsh Transport Statistics 2008 Road Safety chapter does not contain details of the number of HGVs and LGVs involved in accidents on Welsh roads. Such information would enable both industry and Government to make a more effective diagnosis of road safety in Wales. In addition, the frequency of accidents is falling for all road user groups - whether measuring slight accidents or those in which someone is killed or seriously injured. Factors influencing this reduction include vehicle design and safety features, traffic management and road user behaviour.

4. For HGV operators, appropriate road safety policy makes good business sense. Minimising the number of accidents and their severity means costly downtime linked to vehicles and drivers being off the road can be minimised. The Department for Transport's (DfT) publication "Road Casualties Great Britain 2007: Annual Report" (published 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008), reviewed the main trends in road accident casualties. In 2007, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) achieved significant reductions in the rate of serious and fatal accidents, despite an overall increase in traffic for goods vehicles over that time period.

5. In 2007, the rate of accidents involving HGVs where people sustained injuries of all severities was 36 per 100 million vehicle kilometres. This is a reduction of 7.7% from the previous year and a decrease of one third since 1997. The rate of accidents involving LGVs was 21 (per 100 million vehicle kilometres) representing a reduction of 12.5% since 2006 and is half the rate it was 10 years ago. These accident rates are far below the rate for "All Motor Vehicles" in 2007 (see Table 1 below)

**Table 1: Accident rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres**

	1997	2006	2007	% change on 1997	% change on 2006
HGVs	54	39	36	-33%	-7.7%
LGVs	41	24	21	-49%	-12.5%
Cars	93	67	63	-32%	-6.0%
All Motor Vehicles	92	65	62	-33%	-4.6%

6. Due to the size and weight of HGVs, they tend to be involved in more severe accidents. In 2007 the rate of fatal accidents was higher for HGVs (1.6 per 100 million vkm) than for all motor vehicles (0.9 per 100 million vkm). LGVs however had the lowest fatal accident rate of all vehicle types (0.4 per million vkm).

**Table 2. Number of vans and hgvs involved in accidents\***

	<b>Light Goods</b>	<b>Heavy Goods</b>	<b>All motor vehicles</b>
Motorways	1142	2,320	17,707
A roads	6,907	5,676	148,091
B roads	1,713	884	39,794
Other	4,858	1,808	112,417

\*\* accidents of all severities"

7. Latest figures published by Accident Exchange found that non UK registered lorries were the 'at fault' party for one in every 378 traffic accidents, which has risen 10 per cent from March 2008 to the end of February 2009. These findings are based on an analysis of 115,000 incidents and Accident Exchange also estimate that overseas lorries were involved in 9,000 accidents a year. Sideswiping is the biggest cause of foreign vehicle accidents where the vehicles pull out to overtake unaware of vehicles on their blind side, despite the Department for Transport providing 200,000 Fresnel lenses to foreign lorry drivers over the past year.

8. According to the Association of British Insurers, mile for mile, foreign lorries are three time more likely to be involved in collisions than their UK counterparts.

### **Priorities For Logistics Industry And National Assembly For Wales**

9. When considering any further targets for casualty reduction, FTA believes that any future targets should continue to be generic in their application to road users and that professional drivers should not be singled out as a target group in order to deliver an "easy win". The logistics / supply chain sector has made significant improvements in its accident record and the National Assembly for Wales should build on these initiatives through:-

#### **Targeted Enforcement**

10. Enforcement authorities should focus their activities against those operators with the poorest safety record. Companies that have an established culture of safety and compliance should benefit from lighter touch enforcement. VOSA's Operator Compliance Risk Score which has been specifically established for goods vehicle operators, provides a sound basis to separating the compliant operators from the non - compliant. FTA believes that in order to improve trunk road safety in Wales, the enforcement authorities need to focus their approach on the non - compliant operators, both UK and non UK. The introduction of Graduated Fixed Penalties will go some way to achieving a safe trunk road network in Wales.

#### **Safety Best Practice**

11. Early adopters of safety best practice should be encouraged and supported, where appropriate, through vehicle grants. Examples of vehicle safety features which should be encouraged include:-

Electronic vehicle stability control;

Improved vehicle lighting or fitment of reflective tape for enhanced visibility at night; and

Front and rear underrun and sideguards that go beyond legal requirements.

#### **Road Safety Education**

12. Education aimed at raising safety consciousness and initiatives to modify behaviour should be targeted at vulnerable groups and situations where the risk of accidents is high should be the main targets. Issues of particular relevance to HGVs include:-

Cyclists and how to behave around goods vehicles (e.g. positioning at red traffic lights, anticipating HGV manoeuvres at left hand turns, being seen at night / in times where visibility is poor, etc ....); Appendix 1 provides details of best practice employed by Cemex UK Ltd in relation to HGVs and cyclists which is being rolled out to other operators.

Inclusion of "awareness of trucks" in the Highway Code and how motorists should manoeuvre and position themselves on the road with HGVs in mind (e.g. awareness of HGV cut - ins at roundabouts and rear view limitations for goods vehicles, etc ....);

Additional information to be included in the driving test on motorway / trunk road driving. This could include incorporation of a safe practice for overtaking lorries (i.e. don't sit alongside lorries travelling at the same speed and either stay behind in the mirror's view or overtake in a safe manner); and

The EU's Driver CPC qualification is an ongoing training programme requiring professional drivers to undertake 35 hours of training over 5 years. A key element to the Driver CPC syllabus is road safety.

### **Industry Initiatives**

13. The logistics industry is fully aware that it too has a role to play in casualty reduction and has already taken steps to address this issue:-

Use of "Well Driven?" as a code of practice for professional drivers and a mechanism for other motorists to feedback positive and negative experiences of HGV driving;

Development of industry accident benchmarking initiatives as a mechanism for individual companies to identify opportunities for improvement and report performance in a consistent way as a corporate social responsibility indicator;

Use of accident monitoring / accident records used as a KPI in driver reward;

Incorporation into wider workplace transport safety policies and procedures; and

Awareness raising by the industry for other road users - such as "If you can't see my mirrors then I can't see you" stickers on the rear of HGVs.

### **Infrastructure Improvements**

14. FTA understands that there is in place a Trunk Road Forward Programme in order to improve the overall road transport infrastructure in Wales. FTA believes that the programme could be "speeded up" in order to reduce the number of accidents currently occurring on Trunk Roads in Wales. As part of this process, the Welsh Assembly Government should give consideration to the introduction of "crawler lanes" on steep, uphill climbs to allow the safe overtaking of HGVs.

15. Linked to this, EU drivers' hours rules require that drivers stop for regular rest breaks and not drive for more than 4.5 hours at any one stretch on the grounds of road safety. In recent years, a number of dedicated truck parking areas and laybys used regularly by trucks have closed. Reduced availability of driver facilities have impacted upon operations with operators experiencing difficulty with adhering to legally required drivers' hours rules on breaks when drivers have nowhere to stop and take the required breaks.

16. FTA believes that the National Assembly for Wales should develop a coherent strategy for driver facilities and that the responsible highways authority provides regularly spaced facilities for HGV drivers on major freight routes (e.g. A55).

### **Conclusion**

17. Statistically, the UK has the best safety record in Europe, and British registered HGVs are the safest vehicles on our roads. However, FTA maintains that the safety of all road users is of paramount importance and that the logistics industry has a key role to play in ensuring that the UK remains at the forefront in terms of road safety. The National Assembly for Wales also has a key role to play in ensuring that not only is the status quo maintained in terms of its road safety record, but that the priorities outlined above are taken forward and implemented in a positive manner so that further improvements can be made.

### **Appendix 1 - Cemex UK Ltd Case Study**

Every year in this country, over 15,000 cyclists have been involved in road accidents, including 2,300 who are seriously injured or killed. These numbers are only the ones which are reported. In relation to these accidents, further analysis shows that:-

90% occur in urban areas;

75% happen at, or near, a road junction;

80% occur in daylight;

80% of cyclist casualties are male;

Approximately one third of the cyclists killed or injured are children; and

Around three quarters of cyclists killed have major head injuries

Following a number of incidents that involved Cemex vehicles and cyclists, resulting in 4 fatalities and 6 serious injuries between 1991 and 2004, a major safety initiative was launched. Investigations were undertaken into the driver's field of vision on vehicles operated by the company. The research showed that there was a particular risk of incidents at road junctions, where cyclists are on the nearside of vehicles turning left. The initiative that was developed on the back of these findings had many facets to improve not only the safety specification of haulage vehicles, but also the awareness of drivers and cyclists to potential risk.

An early initiative implemented by Cemex was to fit all vehicles with reversing beepers to warn pedestrians and construction site staff that the vehicle is making a reverse manoeuvre. In addition, all vehicles were fitted with reversing cameras to work as an aid for the driver when making such manoeuvres. Following this, additional nearside mirrors have been fitted to all truckmixers, cement tankers and tipper vehicles owned by Cemex or operated by contractors in company livery within the UK. This initiative is now being rolled out across

Cemex Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia and will encompass in excess of 5,000 vehicles. Publicity campaigns are also being developed to encourage other operators contracted to Cemex in the UK to fit such mirrors.

Cemex are also developing further initiatives. Nearside cyclist warning signs are being fitted to the rear nearside corner of all haulage vehicles warning cyclists of the danger of passing along the inside of vehicles. These signs have now been adopted by several other organisations within the construction and building materials sector. Additional "Caution! Keep Clear" signs have been fitted to the nearside of cement mixer vehicles operating in London.

Truckmixers and tippers operating in London have also been fitted with proximity sensors on the nearside. These are operational when the left turn indicator is activated and give a verbal warning to cyclists should they attempt to pass on the nearside and an audible alarm will sound in the cab for the driver.

Cemex has also entered into partnership with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) in producing a film entitled "Cyclists and Lorries" along with an associated factsheet. Company open days have also been held with employees and members of the public invited to sit in the cab to get the "driver's view".