

HEAVY TALK

Issue 6 September 2006

HTA TO HOLD SECOND JOINT MEETING WITH THE RHA - 14TH SEPTEMBER

A second joint meeting between the HTA Committee and the Road Haulage Association (RHA) has been arranged. Both the HTA and RHA decided that this would be advisable following the outcome of the recent Self-Escorting meeting held with the Highways Agency concerning abnormal loads escorting and the consultation on the Code of Practice for Roadside Weigh testing of abnormal loads.

ESDAL representative Fiona Steele will be giving a short presentation on ESDAL at the joint meeting.

The meeting is to take place on 14th September at Volvo Truck and Bus, Wedgenock Lane, Warwick prior to the HTA Committee and General Meetings. Members will be updated on the outcome of the meeting at the General meeting starting at 6 pm.



*Kings Heavy Haulage recently moved silos (16.1 m high and 6 m diameter) upright.
Photo courtesy of Steven King*

DATES TO REMEMBER:

HTA GENERAL MEETINGS

14th September, 6 pm

Volvo Truck Limited,
Wedgnock Lane, Warwick.

Volvo has kindly consented to the use of their premises.

7th December, 6 pm

West Mercia Constabulary Headquarters,
Hindlip Hall, Worcester.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

The HTA has been recently joined by:

TDR TRANSPORT, DUDLEY,

West Midlands

(contact: Richard Rollinson or Ken Lloyd)

JOHN O'DONOVAN HAULAGE,

County Cork, Ireland

(contact: Sean O'Donovan)



*The world's largest undersea plough (180 tonnes) being moved on Tyneside
Photo courtesy of Tim Wayne, CCS Johnson Ltd*

JOINT HTA AND RHA MEETING BETWEEN HTA & RHA – 11th May 2006 (Self Escorting review)

Both the RHA and HTA Committees found that the joint meeting held on the 11th May was extremely useful. The following points were discussed at the meeting and raised in a letter to Andy Cook of the Highways Agency.

The HTA & RHA are in agreement that AIL escorting should be within a legislative framework. Both representative organisations have, in the absence of any other alternative, supported self-escorting as contained within the Code of Practice ('COP'). Notwithstanding there is considerable concern at the apparent inability of the authorities to enforce the COP.

Both HTA and RHA take the view that it is unacceptable for self-escorters to be permitted to operate unless they do so in accordance with the COP. The COP is currently regarded as industry best practice and is supported by the main industry representatives (HTA, RHA, FTA and CPA) and the Authorities (ACPO, ACPOS, HA and DFT).

The HTA and RHA have a shared concern both as to the anti-competitive effect of 'cowboy' operators

who provide non-compliant escort vehicles as well as the obvious safety implications of such practices.

Whilst there may as yet be no hard evidence of accidents or incidents consequent on non-compliance there is certainly sufficient hard evidence provided by the assortment of non-compliant escort vehicles one regularly sees on the roads.

If a major incident arose where the failure to adhere to the COP was judged to be a contributing factor presumably steps would have to be taken to address the situation. Indeed there might be demand for the provision of self-escorts to be suspended pending inquiry and this would be hugely detrimental to the industry. Against the risk of sounding alarmist the RHA and HTA do not believe they should have to wait for a major incident to occur and the resultant fall-out before the authorities take what we now consider to be appropriate steps.

TRANSPORT NEWS:

ACTION OVER WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE NEEDED

Operators who have not yet put in procedures to deal with the Working Time Directive need to do something about this pretty sharpish.

It appears that VOSA's general amnesty is over. This was recently highlighted at a Public Inquiry when an Operator was criticised by Traffic Commissioner Beverley Bell for having had, at the end of last year, little knowledge of the requirements in relation to the Working Time Directive and having had no records in place.

In adjourning the proceedings until September to give the company one last opportunity to show that it could comply with the law, the Commissioner said that it had 'a mountain to climb and had only a short time to climb it'.

The simple message is please do not ignore the Working Time Directive.

ARE YOU READY FOR DIGITAL TACHOGRAPHS?

All newly registered commercial vehicles specified on O-licences now need to be fitted with digital tachographs. Operators must ensure that their organisation is fully prepared for the additional training and administration that the new system of recording and storage of data requires.

Any driver subject to the EC drivers' hours and tachograph rules needs a Driver Smart Card before

he or she can legally drive a vehicle equipped with a digital tachograph vehicle unit (VU). Operators operating, or intending to operate, vehicles so equipped will also need a digital tachograph Company Smart Card.

The Company Smart Card allows operators to download information from the VU to analyse drivers' hours, as required by the legislation, and to ensure the maintenance of the appropriate records.

One of the easiest ways for operators to download and store data from VUs is electronically onto a computer. So long as it is stored in a format acceptable to VOSA there is no need to keep further printed copies.



*150 tonne towhead being transported from Wick to a beach launching site on the Caithness coast.
Photo courtesy of Tim Wayne, GCS Johnson Ltd*

SELF-ESCORTING MEETING WITH THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY

A meeting to discuss issues on self-escorting that have been raised by the HTA and RHA was held on 27th July. David Collett, Hugh Wilson and Tony Lovell attended on behalf of the HTA. The meeting followed the HTA and RHA joint meeting on 11th May (see further report in this issue) and was considered by all parties to be very constructive.

The current situation regarding Private Escorting was addressed and it was agreed in principle that Private Escorting had been successful and was a net cost benefit to industry. The Police stated that reduction of handover points on slip roads had been virtually eliminated and this was therefore a plus for road safety.

It was pointed out to the HA that a large number of foreign hauliers were not using pilot cars and generally ignoring the Code of Practice (CoP). The HA was confronted, once again, over the Code of Practice's lack of teeth. The HA's response was that there was no time for the necessary legislation to be put in place. We suggested yet again, that there must be some

form of legal framework for escorting requirements. HA's reply was that in essence the common law of "Tort" (i.e. negligence) would apply. However, this was rejected as being too difficult a concept to easily understand and grasp in the context of everyday operations.

The HA was also asked to look again at the need for 'some form of traffic directing ability' not necessarily amounting to full level 2 status. It was also suggested that only escort vehicles fully complying with the CoP should be allowed to have these powers thus eliminating the 'non-conformers'. The HA agreed to take a further look at this.

The HA representatives asked to be allowed to participate in a typical escort journey in order to better understand the issues raised by industry. It was agreed that this was a positive move forward and something industry would be willing to arrange.

Tony Lovell

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS:

The HTA Committee elections took place at the AGM on 11th May.

ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS:

PRESIDENT: The Earl Attlee
CHAIRMAN: David Collett
VICE CHAIRMAN: Rolf van Apeldoorn
SECRETARY: John Dyne
TREASURER: Tony Lovell

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dick Walmsley, Tim Wayne, Tim West,
Hugh Wilson, Eric Crosby, Tony Buckland

ADVERTISEMENTS:

If anyone wishes to advertise in an issue of Heavy Talk, please contact Katharine Narici on 01829 771774 or by e-mail (info@hta.uk.net), for details.

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