



Road Haulage Association Ltd

European Commission
Directorate-General for Energy and Transport
Unit E1 "Land Transport Policy"
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

22 February 2010

Dear Sir

Re: EU Digital Tachograph Consultation

The Road Haulage Association is the main representative body for companies whose business is providing haulage and related services. Our 9,500 members operate 100,000 lorries and include owner-drivers, small and medium-sized fleets and large multi-depot operators. Our members pride themselves on providing an essential service in a manner that is efficient, flexible, responsive and recognised as probably the safest in Europe.

Please accept this letter as the response from the Road Haulage Association to the questions 1 – 18 detailed in this consultation paper.

1. Functionality is paramount between manufacturers; any flexibility needs be carefully balanced to maintain similarity in core functionality. This is essential to minimise training cost and achieve a consistent and legal operation by drivers.
2. We have concerns that obtaining agreement between member states to the specification of various ITS standards would be hard to achieve based on the track record of such integration to date, which could lead to a highly fragmented policy across Europe if adopted without complete co-operation by member states. We believe the instrument should therefore be retained as a means of obtaining driver hours and records.
3. Remote downloading of the digital tachograph should be encouraged as an important tool to reduce the administrative burden of operators. However this option should not be mandated it is for organisations to establish if this type of facility is suitable for their individual operation.
4. The current achievable download speed of information are unacceptable, the technology is available to significantly increase current speeds.

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5. It would be necessary to reach agreement across member states on the interpretation of any such solution. The RHA would not support the suggestion that authorities could have remote access to data recorded on digital tachographs for enforcement purposes. On the grounds of data privacy issues and importantly the serious lack of harmonised enforcement of driving and rest time under Regulation 561/2006/EC.
6. We believe the current level of security to be adequate and recommend that the Commission maintain its proportionate level of countering current and future threats as outlined in the Commission decision 1266/2009/EC. We see no benefit in the reference to utilise a “European GPS System” as a means of reducing fraudulent activity.
7. It would be practical we believe to use the tachograph (fitted to all vehicles in excess of 3.5tonnes) to record all work via the tachograph whether the in or out of scope of the EU regulations.
8. The new generation of recording equipment should be fully compatible with existing equipment as outlined in option 2. Compatibility would be desirable from all download tools, mechanical and other interfaces. Software should be developed with the capability of reading data from all generations of digital tachographs.
9. Retrofitment of new digital tachographs should not be mandatory; operators must be allowed to see a full return on the investments made with their existing equipment. In the event of failure it should be possible to replace equipment with an identical unit because new equipment is unlikely to be compatible with older generation vehicles. The question of type approval is not an issue to be considered at this time we believe the full development of this equipment is somewhat off.
10. The RHA are of the opinion this should be a decision for the equipment and vehicle manufacturers – but they would support the proposal on the grounds that they have a clear interest in the provision of equipment manufactured on the basis of real life trials and as such their assistance and support would be considered in any field trials undertaken.
11. We are of the opinion Option 1 meets requirements currently.
12. We are of the opinion Option 1 should be maintained, whilst not perfect it does provide at EU level a good balance between varying requirements.
13. EU rules do not prevent road transport operators from becoming authorised workshops. National guidelines are in place to ensure there will be no conflict of interest in such cases. If companies satisfy laid down procedure that should be sufficient.
14. The whole concept of moving to digital tachographs was the opportunity to move away from a mechanical and paper based system. This has failed to materialise due to certain member states requirements that could not be recorded electronically. Records produced by the tachograph or entered by the driver must be sufficient going forward – it must be possible for driver’s cards to record all information via the tachograph unit. In short drivers and operators should be able to produce evidence of compliance by use of electronic means. Our comments concerning GPS can be read in our response to question 6.
15. The major vulnerability of the current system is the possibility that drivers could obtain two cards issued by different authorities. It appears prudent that issuing authorities are required to exchange data between themselves with regard to card issues.
16. Clearly there is a need for guidance and warnings to be issued to drivers as the interpretation of driving rules become increasingly arduous. The current system needs to work smarter; it needs to reflect current legislation on driving time – calculating driving/other work accurately. This would be a positive upgrade for existing equipment but not a retrofit.

17. The need to consider the availability of a speed trace for the complete driving cycle to provide a useful management tool for operators. Serious consideration to be given to the need to incorporate a printer in future tachograph units – electronic date should be all that is necessary. The need to record actual times as opposed to the current practice of “rounding”. Increased down load speeds and the use of easily understood pictograms.

The driver card capacity needs to be addressed, dependant up on the operation it there is an opportunity to overwrite the card without warning, which should be addressed either by increased capacity or audible warnings.

18. Whatever system is introduced to monitor and control drivers hours will be a fruitless exercise unless harmonisation and additional effort is made to enforce 561/2006/EC across all member states.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Engley', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ray Engley
Head of Technical Services

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