



**SUPPLY CHAIN SAFETY  
LEADERSHIP GROUP**

**Highways Safety Hub**  
**Raising the Bar 37**  
**Vehicle Road Worthiness**

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## Objective

This Raising the Bar guidance document sets out the roadworthiness requirements for all principal contractors, their contractors and employees working on National Highways contracts. The objective of this document is to raise standards within the industry to ensure safer drivers, safer vehicles, and safer journeys on the strategic road network (SRN). This will be achieved through the implementation of best practice, innovation, and education to ensure vehicles are safe and legal to operate.

Principal contractors and their contractors are not only required to meet their legal obligations around roadworthiness, but to also demonstrate a firm management commitment to review and improve roadworthiness and maintenance systems where defects are found on vehicles and provide assurance that operational needs will not override safety considerations.

A positive, proactive culture together with an understanding of acceptable attitude and behaviours within the workplace towards vehicle roadworthiness and legal compliance will reduce risk associated with vehicles used on the SRN.

## Scope

This Raising the Bar Guidance Document applies to all principal contractors and their contractors to ensure that vehicles used for work purposes on a National Highways contract are safe and legal to be on the road, and that drivers are properly licensed and insured.

Our vision is for safer drivers, safer vehicles, and safer journeys on the SRN. We will achieve this through the implementation of best practice, innovation, education, positive behaviour, and a robust risk management culture.

## Background

Very few organisations can operate without using the roads and around 20 million people are estimated to drive for work in some capacity. At least one third of road traffic injury collisions in Britain involve someone driving for work. The 2019 Department for Transport report on road crash and casualty data in Great Britain shows 88 drivers/riders died in fatal crashes where at least one person was driving or riding for work, including 25 passengers. 440 other road users were also fatally injured in these collisions. The total deaths in collisions involving someone driving/riding for work is 528, more than 2.4 times the figure for other workplace deaths. In total for 2019, there were 38,873 fatal, serious, and slight injuries in collisions involving someone who was driving for work and many more damage only incidents.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act applies to all work activities. It requires employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

- a. their employees
- b. other people at work on their site, including contractors

- c. members of the public who may be affected by their work

Historically the roadworthiness of vans and light commercial vehicles has not always been a priority for all operators. This has unfortunately led to unsafe vehicles travelling on the roads driven by drivers who are not aware of their legal responsibilities. There are proactive steps drivers can take every day to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy and safe to drive via the completion of thorough pre-use walkaround checks. Ensuring the roadworthiness of vehicles will contribute to increasing safety and reducing risk on the roads as well as limiting environmental impact.

This document sets out our approach to ensure all vehicles operated on the SRN are safe and legal, with compliant operators and effective management controls in place.

### Governance Requirements

We will apply a robust governance process that challenges the need to progress between levels in the hierarchy of control and document decisions taken - applying robust leadership off-site and on-site to provide positive support. This information will also be used to learn lessons for future projects.

The following elements are mandatory requirements, and these elements should be applied fully whilst travelling and working on the strategic road network.

Principal contractors must have a robust system in place to ensure compliance from their own workforce and those working on their behalf to ensure that vehicle roadworthiness and safety measures are fit for purpose and being followed correctly.

This will be achieved through vehicle inspections and gate checks.

### Minimum Requirements

Key requirements include:

- a. ensuring the safe management of vehicles
- b. setting standards for operative competence, vehicle safety and maintenance
- c. planning work and preparing suitable and sufficient risk assessments

When selecting suitable contractors, principal contractors should ensure they have sufficient skills and knowledge to do the job safely and without risks to health and safety and this includes work-related road risk. Consideration should be given to including a requirement for potential contractors to demonstrate they are meeting at least the minimum legally required standard for work-related road risk management and vehicle roadworthiness.

The following elements set out the mandatory requirements that must be applied and fully adhered to whilst working on National Highways schemes or projects.

1. Fitness to Drive

There must be a robust approach to ensuring an operative is fit to drive via:

- a. seeking documented confirmation that they are fit and healthy with no conditions that would affect their ability to control and drive a vehicle safely
- b. completing a DVLA check confirming a current and valid driving licence for the vehicle they are being asked to drive
- c. checking details of any penalty points on the driving licence
- d. verifying the operative holds any required specialist qualifications and or training
- e. confirming the operative is not under the influence of alcohol or drugs of any kind, through random drug and alcohol testing

## 2. Induction and Competency

All operatives must receive an induction and training appropriate to the organisation, their role and responsibilities as an operative driving a vehicle and the type of work they are expected to perform and receive vehicle familiarisation training.

LCV operators must have access to the Van Driver Toolkit (VDT) and demonstrate their competency and understanding with regulations, road traffic law and legal requirements around the safe operation of a van or light commercial vehicle through the successful completion of the 3 VDT online e learning modules.

## 3. Maintenance Provision

Projects and schemes must have access to maintenance provisions suitable for the vehicles in use, together with access to trained and competence staff to undertake maintenance and repair activities as required.

## 4. Maintenance Activity

Maintenance activity (for both vehicles, trailers, and associated equipment) must be pre-planned and undertaken as per the manufacturer's schedule.

## 5. Pre-use Walkaround Checks and Defect Reporting

Those responsible for the condition of vehicles must receive suitable and appropriate training and instruction regarding the defect reporting process and their responsibilities regarding safe vehicle operation.

All vehicles used for work purposes must be confirmed as roadworthy via the user completing pre-use walk around checks which are carried out at shift commencement or when the driver is changed and before a vehicle or trailer is used. Checks must be able to be carried out in a suitable, safe, and well-lit area.

Refer to Appendix 2 *Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency Van Driver Walkaround Check document for minimum items to be checked.*

Refer to Appendix 3 *British Tyre Manufacturers Association Guide to Tyre Management and Maintenance on Light Commercial Vehicles for guidance on tyre management and maintenance.*

Evidence of completed vehicle pre-use walk around checks must be held digitally and be easily accessible when requested. Checks must be completed electronically using devices like tablets or smartphones, which can be given to the driver or allocated to the vehicle. Where practicable, confirmation of the completion of the walkaround check should incorporate 'nil' reporting confirming a daily check has been carried out and no defects found.

The details recorded on a defect report should include:

- a. vehicle registration or identification mark
- b. date
- c. details of the defects or symptoms
- d. the reporter's name
- e. Confirmation of vehicle out of service Y/N

An internal procedure must be in place to ensure that un-roadworthy vehicles are promptly removed from service, with someone with sufficient authority responsible for taking vehicles off the road.

Rectification work must be carried out before the vehicle is permitted for use on the strategic road network. Records must be maintained and contain details of any rectification work carried out before the vehicle is suitable to return into service.

## 6. Maintenance Records

Records relating to vehicle safety inspections, defects, rectification work and maintenance must be retained by the vehicle owner for a minimum of 15 months.

## 7. Quality Assurance

All projects/schemes must demonstrate high standards of fleet and driver compliance through audits and or industry standard accreditations in addition to any regulatory requirements. They must hold, achieve, and maintain, one or more of the following accreditations within 6 months of commencement of works on behalf of National Highways schemes or projects:

- a. The Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) Bronze level
- b. The Logistics UK Van Excellence scheme – for van and light commercial vehicle operators only
- c. An annual transport compliance audit by a reputable independent road transport organisation for example, Logistics UK, Road Haulage Association, Chartered institute of Transport and Logistics, Lloyd Morgan Group

## Guidance – Applying the Hierarchy of Controls

### Overview

**The following guidance is written with the expectation that it represents best practice and as such must be followed unless a better local solution has been devised to meet the overall objective.**

The guidance follows the Hierarchy of Controls and assumes that we will first eliminate the hazard posed by unroadworthy vehicles by designing and planning to avoid it. Where this is not possible, we will seek to isolate it through the introduction of effective recruitment, training and instruction with good quality maintenance practices and skills with supervision and effective management solutions and only when this is shown to not be possible, will we rely on engineering controls and enforcement.

### Transportation Hierarchy

The hierarchy below sets out the approach for compliance with the Supply Chain Safety Leadership Group (SCSLG) Common Intent Document on Vehicle Roadworthiness as well as to standardise a common framework.

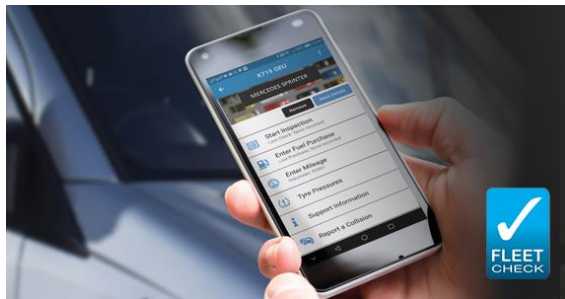
Hierarchy	Description	Risk Control Measures
Eliminate	Eliminate the risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Minimum compliance requirements implemented</li> <li>➤ Digital pre-use walkaround check app in use</li> <li>➤ All vehicles used remain roadworthy</li> <li>➤ Vehicles have a current and valid MOT certificate (as required)</li> <li>➤ Vehicles have current and valid motor vehicle insurance cover</li> <li>➤ Compliance standards met through audits and or industry standard accreditations</li> <li>➤ Operator understanding of regulations, road traffic law and legal requirements</li> <li>➤ Users complete 3 online e learning VDT modules</li> <li>➤ Users receive an induction and training suitable to their role and responsibilities as a driver of a vehicle</li> <li>➤ Pre-plan and undertake maintenance activity as per the manufacturer's schedule</li> <li>➤ Implement a robust system in use whereby drivers can promptly report any defects</li> <li>➤ High standards of fleet and driver compliance by evidencing audits and or industry standard accreditations in addition to any regulatory requirements</li> </ul>

Isolate	Isolate the risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintenance provisions available undertaking maintenance and repair activities</li> <li>➤ Defect and quarantining (Vehicle Off Road) process in place until rectification repairs undertaken</li> <li>➤ Vehicle inspections and gate checks completed</li> </ul>
Minimise	Minimise the risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Users aware of minimum roadworthiness standards required</li> <li>➤ Only roadworthy vehicles used on SRN</li> <li>➤ Procedures in place to manage breakdowns/offences in connection with roadworthiness</li> </ul>

#### 4. Transportation Hierarchy Examples

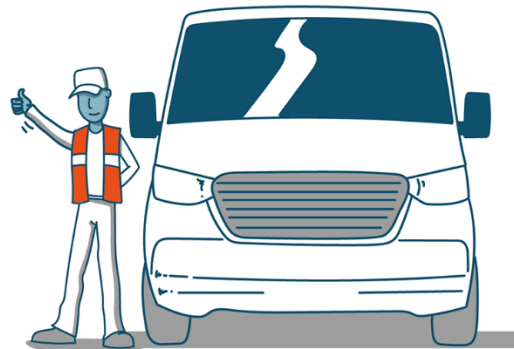
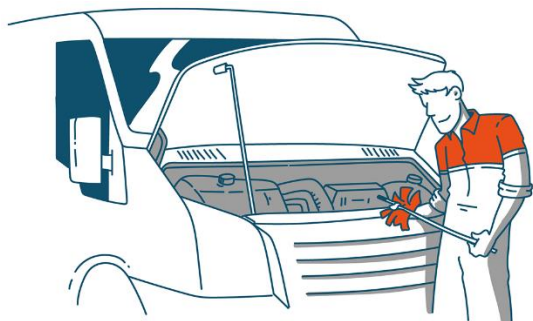
The hierarchy below sets out the approach for selection and use of roadworthy vehicles for load transportation on the Strategic Road Network: -

**Eliminate**





**Minimise**



**Mitigation**



## People Requirements

All vehicle users working on a National Highways scheme or project must have:

- Confirmed they hold a current and valid driving licence for the vehicles being asked to drive
- Confirmed they hold any required specialist qualifications and or training
- Received an induction and appropriate training regarding the defect reporting process and their responsibilities regarding safe vehicle operation
- Familiarised themselves with vehicle operation

All vehicle users must:

- Follow training provided to in relation to vehicle roadworthiness across the strategic road network
- Ensure road transport safety is upheld through application of National Highways and principal contractor policy and procedures
- Complete and record vehicle pre use walkaround inspections
- Ensure risk assessments and work plans are followed and works cease if there are any changes or unaccounted risks
- Report any near misses whilst operating on the strategic road network

## Emergency Arrangements

### Incident Response

In the event of a DVSA/police stop, fine/fixed penalty notice, conviction, or prohibition in relation to vehicle roadworthiness, details must be reported to the Highways England Project Manager or Sponsor and investigated in accordance with their potential severity. All vehicle roadworthiness incidents must be logged onto Highways England incident reporting system in line with the requirements contained within GG128.

## References

The requirements associated with Plant and Vehicle Specifications, Transport and Logistic Planning, loading, and unloading of materials, plant and equipment are covered by separate Raising the Bar Documents

- Appendix 1 Flow Chart to Ensuring Fleet Compliance and Vehicle Roadworthiness
- Appendix 2 DVSA Van Driver Daily Walkaround Check
- RTB 01 – Plant and Equipment
- RTB 20 - Transport and Logistics
- RTB 25 – Loading and Unloading Vehicles
- RTB 35 - Loading and Unloading Mobile Plant

## Further Industry Guidance

Operatives and drivers of any vehicle are bound by law to ensure the vehicle they are driving is safe, legal, and roadworthy. This will ensure that there is no likelihood of danger, injury or nuisance to any person travelling on the strategic road network.

The Highway Code states drivers of vehicles must ensure their vehicle complies with the full requirements of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations and Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations. A vehicle must be roadworthy to travel on our roads and it is the driver's responsibility to ensure this. Roadworthy means a vehicle is in a suitable operating condition and meeting accepted standards for safe driving on the road, or in other words, it is 'fit to be used on the road'.

The user of a vehicle holds the responsibility to ensure that the vehicles they use are roadworthy. It is an offence to use an unroadworthy vehicle on the road. The term 'user' of a vehicle applies to the driver and the person paying the driver to act for them. It is not enough to rely on a maintenance system alone, because this cannot ensure that vehicles are roadworthy. To ensure best practice, there should be a combination of effective recruitment, training and instruction with good quality maintenance practices and skills with supervision and effective management of the system.

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the police have powers to carry out spot checks and issue fines to any user in charge of a vehicle that is found not to be roadworthy. The driver of the vehicle can be fined up to £2,500, be banned from driving and get 3 penalty points for driving a vehicle in a dangerous condition. 66% of vans stopped at the roadside by the DVSA have a serious mechanical defect.

Industry guidance for vehicle roadworthiness and adequate maintenance systems can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-safe>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/van-drivers-daily-walkaround-check>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

<https://btmauk.com/tyres-and-road-safety/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-maintaining-roadworthiness>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/factsheets/vehicle.htm>