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MOVING ON

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The newsletter for HGV and PSV operators

A clear view of overloading

During the last six months we have been involved in a trial to investigate the viability of linking automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and weigh-in-motion sensors (WIMS) technology for enforcement purposes.

This trial was the first of its kind within the UK and involved the Highways Agency (HA), VOSA, the Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG) and the Department for Transport.

The trial was designed to gauge the equipment's usefulness in allowing us to identify overloading offenders more easily. We hoped to achieve more effective use of VOSA's resources and, at the same time, reduce the burden on compliant operators by focusing mainly on potential offenders. There are also knock-on effects for the HA in the shape of reduced abnormal carriageway erosion and incident-related congestion.

How accurate is the equipment?

One of the trial's main objectives was to focus on the equipment's accuracy, both in its ability to identify correctly vehicles' registered numbers and its ability to weigh those vehicles within acceptable enforcement tolerances. When vehicle test results were analysed and compared with dynamic axle weighbridge readings, we found extremely high accuracy levels, unsurpassed by any other weigh-in-motion equipment used by VOSA:

- Of the 271 vehicles identified by the equipment as being overloaded during organised road checks, **all** were overweight and 204 were overweight to the extent that they were prohibited.

These figures provide conclusive proof that this ANPR/WIMS installation gives VOSA enough targeting capability to ensure that a significant percentage of vehicles selected for weighing are actually



overloaded. In addition to this, 52 drivers were prohibited for instances of serious drivers' hours breaches, and 44 prohibitions were issued for various mechanical defects.

Effective vehicle weight enforcement

Early analysis of the ANPR/WIMS equipment trial results undoubtedly shows that the combined technology provides VOSA with a highly effective targeting tool for vehicle weight enforcement. There is a vast difference between the levels of effectiveness in the trial weighing and those from the most recent period of pre-ANPR/WIMS implementation. The

project's leader, Gordon Macdonald, said: "These results prove conclusively that combined ANPR and WIMS installations provide a stunningly effective targeting tool. We have now identified four further strategically located sites for installation over the next year or so."

VOSA

Vehicle & Operator Services Agency