



# PUTTING FLEET MANAGERS IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Nexus is the UK's leading tech-driven business mobility provider, bringing vital support to fleets of all sizes - with unrivalled vehicle choice and service, competitive pricing and sound advice.

Our pioneering, dedicated online system makes light work of HGVs, giving you access to more than 50,000 vehicles from nearly 300 UK locations. For unusual loads or just extra capacity, our range of trucks, from 7.5 tonne up to 18 tonne and above, offers a comprehensive choice of fully maintained carrier solutions.

#### **HIGHLIGHTED**

No. HGV Vehicles on Rent	1000+*
No. HGV Vehicles in Range	50,000
No. HGV Suppliers	300

\*2018 Year to Date



Putting fleet managers in the driving seat, we ensure that vehicles are always where they are needed, when they are needed – leading the shift from ownership to usership. Our Glovebox Guides are part of an alwayson drive to inform logistics and haulage companies. In this one, we outline the issues that efficient HGV fleet operations hinge on – or should be considered to ensure a healthy, valuable operation.







### **DRIVER SHORTAGES**

# The deepening shortage of qualified, experienced HGV drivers shows no sign of abating.

Indeed, it was widely reported recently that the haulage sector needs to install and train some 45,000 new truckers just to fill existing vacancies, with the deficit predicted to grow by 50 a day\*.

As drivers become harder to recruit, firms not only compete with each other for orders, but for top talent too, whilst employers must be able to offer competitive packages, as skilled candidates weigh up the benefits promised by employers offering better terms.

At 55, the average HGV driver is also significantly older than the average UK worker and not enough young learners are replacing the workforce as they retire or leave the profession under other circumstances. Indeed, in 2016, the FTA reported that just two percent of drivers were under 25, compared with ten percent of the general working population (FTA The Driver Shortage Report, October 2016).

With 20,000 more HGV drivers expected to quit by the end of 2018\*, the sector is losing skilled employees at a frightening rate. Not only does this threaten individual logistics companies, but the UK economy as a whole.

While total employment numbers have increased over the last 15 years there has been a significant fall in the proportion of LGV drivers (dropping by 15 per cent from 2001 to 2013, but recovering somewhat since then). The number of LGV drivers in employment increased over the period from Q2 2015 to Q2 2016 (up by 5 per cent), but this was in line with a reduction in general unemployment due to improved economic conditions and is still just below 2007 pre-recession levels.

As such, fleet managers should consider a number of attraction and retention methods – especially those that bring in and develop young entrants. These might include sponsoring new drivers to gain their licences; marketing the sector - and their company in particular - as destinations of choice; reducing the impact of antisocial working hours and shift patterns; golden handshakes and handcuffs; relevant, top-notch training and development; career progression; and stakeholdings, benefits and perks.

\*Senior Traffic Commissioner Beverley Bell's annual report, October 2017







### **ACCELERATED HEALTH & SAFETY**

HGV drivers can be prone to a number of workplace conditions that stem from rising air and noise pollution and the pressure of meeting their schedules as traffic levels mount. These factors can cause illness and extreme tiredness, as well as psychological after effects.

#### **Pollutants**

Professional drivers are exposed to increasing levels of atmospheric pollutants. Despite EU regulations limiting emissions and vehicles becoming generally less polluting, the increase in those on the road and traffic speeds slowing as a result causes pollution. There's only so much that an air filter can remove from a cab's atmosphere and they are generally only effective for long-distances.

HGV drivers can spend a lot of time at transport depots loading and unloading as other lorries have their engines running.

Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide as well as carcinogenic diesel particulates all take a toll on health, contributing to asthma, headaches, coughs, bronchitis, sore eyes and more.

#### **Stress**

There are many stress issues for drivers. They tend to be away from home more than most people, working longer hours and managing unsociable shifts alongside negative feedback from the public and customers for things that are often outside of their control, for example if a delivery is late. Trouble sleeping is commonplace amongst shift workers, especially when shifts are rotated too rapidly for the body to adjust sufficiently.

#### Noise

As noise is usually experienced at the same time as vibration, they can form a dual attack on HGV drivers.

High noise levels over sustained periods can impair hearing or even result in total hearing loss. It is also associated with a number of psychological problems, contributing to or exacerbating the stress caused by traffic and time pressures.

#### Did you know:

With extended exposure, noises that reach 85dB can cause permanent hearing loss? A healthy baseline is 60dB – such as the volume of a typical conversation.







#### **Fatigue**

Fatigue reduces drivers' ability to react quickly. Under pressure to stay on schedule, many drivers will miss meal breaks and rest stops to make up time, which can cause a great deal of health complaints.

Many drivers will be on the road between midnight and 8am. The likelihood of having an accident is twice that of between 8am and midnight. Driving between 3am and 6am increases the risk of falling asleep at the wheel by a factor of more than 70! Studies have shown that as many as 28% of lorry drivers have actually fallen asleep at the wheel and 60% have almost fallen asleep.



#### Mental Wellbeing

Shift work, antisocial hours and the difficulties of working away from home may be linked to depression, low mood and other issues of mental wellbeing.

#### **Dehvdration**

HGV drivers are especially susceptible to dehydration. Many don't drink enough water because they don't want to stop for toilet breaks and in-cab air conditioning sucks moisture from the body and atmosphere.

Research has shown that even being mildly dehydrated causes the same errors in judgement and performance as being over the legal drink limit (Loughborough University driver dehydration study, April 2015).





#### Benefits for all

Not only are there compelling ethical reasons for ensuring that you're doing all you can to help drivers counter these risks, there are sound commercial imperatives too. With the shortage of experienced drivers deepening, avoidable absences can have an extremely costly impact on firms. Missed deliveries, sickness payments and the expense of drafting in agency cover all hit the bottom line and can damage customer relationships and company reputations.

Investment in colleague wellness programmes, healthy lifestyle training and ongoing internal communications that advise of risks, how to prevent and minimise these and repair their effects is likely to be a very sound one.





The number of HGV drivers fell from 315,000 to 302,000 between 2016 and 2017 (FTA Logistics Report 2018), as FTA members' reported difficulties in recruiting rose from 43% to 76% between 2012 and 2016 (FTA The Driver Shortage Report, October 2016)

Meanwhile, the difficulties placed on drivers pursuing a healthy lifestyle make for higher than average rates of obesity and obesity-related conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, with significantly reduced life expectancy compared to other occupations (Loughborough University-led study, December 2017).





#### Injury

Unsurprisingly, professional drivers have a heightened risk of being injured behind the wheel and their chances of causing injury to pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists is increased simply because of the amount of time they spend on the road. When there are time pressures, there's the tendency to make choices that aren't necessarily the safest ones.

Did you know that HGVs were nearly seven times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes on minor roads than other vehicles in 2016 - despite comprising only about five per cent of total traffic volumes - and almost three times more likely on motorways (Department of Transport figures, 2016)

Collisions can lead to much paperwork for employers and can widen skill gaps if a driver is banned from the road. There is also reputational damage generated by such incidents, which, if serious or frequent, can be incalculable.

Providing regular refresher training, safety awareness sessions or even advanced driving courses for your people could well reduce long-term fleet costs and forestall further staff shortages. There are many accredited providers and the Fleet Transport Association offers a wide range of training packages to support the logistics industry.



#### Accidents will happen

While preventative measures, coupled with improved driver health and wellbeing, will reduce accidents caused by error, concentration lapses, dangerous driving, illness, physical impairments and fatigue, they cannot eliminate them entirely.







## WHEN ACCIDENTS DO STRIKE, NEXUS CAN HELP.

Those behind the wheel must know what to do, as acting correctly and quickly can be vital.

### 01.

The driver should check they are safe and unhurt and that any third parties are too.

### 02.

#### They must then follow HGV insurance claim steps:

- i) Exchange details with the other party, securing their name, the name of the vehicle's owner and the vehicle's registration number
- **ii)** Get any other useful contact information, such as witnesses
- iii) Record the details of the accident as fully as possible, as soon as possible. The HGV insurance broker must be informed and the more details that can be provided, the better

### Ideally, the following information should be provided:

- Photos of the vehicles involved and the scene of the accident
- A completed accident report form (ARF) with a diagram of the scene of the accident detailing the positioning of the vehicles (the form is provided in the glovebox of the vehicle)
- If the vehicle belongs to a business, the company name, contact name, phone number, and insurance details should be provided

### 03

If the driver is injured or somebody else is, or appears to be, they should call the emergency services immediately. This is hugely important and should be done as soon as it is safe to do so. Giving the exact accident location will make it easier and quicker to find.

### 04.

Unless there is further danger and risk to life, never move a person who has been injured. Collisions can cause trauma to the brain and spine that can be worsened by doing so. Waiting for an ambulance and paramedics to arrive is always the best course of action.

### 05.

It is vital to ensure that no other injuries are going to occur as a result of the accident:

- Other drivers should be warned of the danger with hazard lights
- **ii)** Anybody crossing the road to help should be stopped unless it is safe to do so
- iii) All nearby vehicle engines must be turned off and nobody should smoke to prevent the ignition of leaking oil
- iv) Drivers of hazardous substances must all be briefed and trained – with refresher courses – in what to do following a collision







### CHANGE IS COMING

Scientific and technical breakthroughs mean that all fleets are on the threshold of radical changes to how they operate over the next few years – with fuelling and refuelling and in-travel comms at the forefront of the seismic shifts ahead.

Nexus has always kept fleet managers abreast of breakthroughs, trends and predicted changes so they can best capitalise on the opportunities these present.

#### Refuelling

The way fleets fuel and refuel their HGVs is going to change. The only question is how quickly alternative energy advances will usher in a new norm.

Last year, BMW launched Europe's first 40-tonne electric truck. Initially used to take parts between German locations, it runs for 62 miles on a full battery charge and can be fully recharged in three hours. Even more exciting is the Highways England report about the possibility of 'charge as you drive' technology, which would mean that HGVs and other vehicles could charge up on the move.

According to a feasibility study carried out by Transport Research Laboratory, this would be done by installing underground charging infrastructure under major highways, allowing 'dynamic wireless power transfer' to 'refuel' electric vehicles as they travel.

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### SMART ROADS JUST GOT SMARTER

According to the European Commission, smart roads and connected vehicles are set to reduce costs and boost driver safety via early warnings of slow or stationary traffic, roadworks and other hazards ahead. They will also advise of sudden braking or erratic nearby driving, as well as approaching emergency vehicles.

Haulage companies are likely to reap the greatest rewards from the improvements, with the Commission anticipating a 3:1 benefit-to-cost ratio. This makes it very important to keep track of the wireless networks that will support the advances, so firms can 'plug in' to their advantages when choosing which vehicles to use as soon as they come online.

Drivers on the M25 around London have already found that a road that changes its speed limit in response to traffic conditions reduces congestion overall. For much of the day, signs over the motorway at crunch points, such as the junctions for the M4 and Heathrow Airport, move the speed limit up and down between 40mph and 70mph.

Speed cameras have led to emissions falling by up to eight percent and the number of traffic-stalling shockwaves dropping nearly a third, reducing delays and late deliveries.

The FTA believes that a growth of smart motorways will give the freight industry a massive boost. With the cost of idling put at £1 a minute there will be huge savings on such roads, helping traffic to flow freely and as a result far fewer HGVS getting stuck (FTA Educating drivers on smart motorways is key, September 2016).

Vehicle-to-everything (V2X) technology lets the data used to manage roads make the final jump to the cabin. Not only will road signs talk to vehicles, the vehicles will talk to each other.

This should make lane changing and merging onto motorways much safer. Small changes in apparent speed are today the key way to signal whether a vehicle on the main carriageway is moving to let another join. With vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication, each can send messages saying, 'go ahead, I won't close that gap'.

The V2V messages can also act as a backup warning of a vehicle's presence on the road when other sensors provide inconclusive data. Trials have seen the signals used by vehicles to announce their presence to others out of the direct line of sight. This means that those moving towards a junction surrounded by buildings and other obstructions can anticipate whether hidden vehicles are likely to cross their path.

Meanwhile, cyclists and pedestrians could start wearing transponders to signal their presence wirelessly around blind spots – reducing the potential for accidents further.







### TALKING TECH

# Making cars talk to each other is the relatively easy part.

A major obstacle to a world where vehicles communicate with everything else on the road is a lack of reliable, high-speed radio communications. Less than half of the UK's road network has 4G coverage, frustrating wireless access in vehicular environments (WAVE) and data exchange between high-speed vehicles and between them and the roadside infrastructure.

However, the motor industry has innovated by borrowing and trialling technology from the 802.11 Wi-Fi standards. Operating at close to 6GHz, 801.11p transmissions have a short range of just over 200m, which could well provide a stop-gap solution while we await the nationwide 4G rollout.

Indeed, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), considers it good enough to warn HGVs and cars when others intend to change lanes or suddenly hit the brakes ahead.

Any launch of 801.11p is likely to present great advantages for fleet managers, as it will create a far safer, smoother driving experience, with lowered emissions and costs.



The fact that both very human and ultra-hightech influences shape HGV operations – and will continue to do so in tandem for the foreseeable future - brings reassurance and challenges. Each presents a set of benefits and problems to the process and it is vital that fleet managers are as adept at HR techniques and reading demographic trends as they are at understanding digital and scientific breakthroughs to ensure competitive advantage.





# To find out more about how Nexus can help your HGV fleet and drivers, get in touch on:

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