

ATF fees will be cut by 3.5%

ANNUAL TEST fees at authorised testing facilities (ATFs) are set to fall this autumn, according to the DVSA.

In a long-anticipated announcement, DVSA confirmed ATF test fees will be cut by an average of 3.5% from 1 October.

The changes will also see an average increase of 18.5% for tests undertaken at DVSA sites, along with a 1% increase in all operator licensing fees.

A consultation into planned fee changes closed more than a year ago and originally proposed a reduction in ATF test fees of between 1% and 3%.

The DVSA also consulted on a general 1% increase for all test fees, but this will not be implemented.

Chief executive Alastair Peoples said: "By realigning fees we are now making [ATFs] more cost effective.

"With no general fee increases since 2009, and reduced theory test fees starting in October, we are demonstrating our commitment to minimising costs for all our customers."

Steve Smith, president of the ATF Operators Association, said the reduction was a "step in the right direction", but added that it could have been a larger reduction to offset the extra costs to customers since ATFs were introduced.

"If you consider how much the ATFs have saved [the DVSA], 3.5% is a drop in the ocean."

IMPRESSIVE RESULTS:

Penrith-based bulk haulier John Beaty Transport has taken delivery of its first Renault Range T460 mid-lift 6x2s. The trucks, supplied by Renault Trucks dealership Border Trucks, are the first Euro-6 Renaults in the firm's 30-strong bulk tipper and blower fleet. MD Stuart Beaty said: "I am noticing how light they are and they are delivering a 29.5-tonne payload to boot. The fuel consumption has also been impressive, delivering up to 8.5mpg."



BAA begs MP McLoughlin to suspend Driver CPC

By **Chris Druce**

THE BRITISH Aggregates Association (BAA) has written to the secretary of state for transport demanding he suspend the "ill-considered and unnecessary" Driver CPC ahead of its 10 September deadline.

In the letter to Patrick McLoughlin MP, BAA chairman and ex-haulier Robert Durward wrote: "I wish to complain in the strongest possible terms about the ongoing damage that is being inflicted on the transport sector by ill-considered and unnecessary legislation.

"The negative effects on the wider economy are going to be significant unless your department takes immediate action."

The BAA has 70 members that operate more than 300 sites supplying the ready-mix concrete, asphalt and recycling sectors. Durward, who owns Cloburn Quarry in Lanarkshire (pictured), claims his members are reliant on road transport to move their goods and are already struggling to find drivers.

With predictions that some older drivers will retire this September rather than complete their Driver CPC training, he believes the situation is critical. "This has got to get worse after the Driver CPC comes into force," he told *CM*. "Many quarries now have a waiting list for deliveries, which is unprecedented."

Durward, who ultimately wants the Driver CPC "kicked into the

long grass", added: "CPC training might have been thought to be a good idea when the economy was booming but it now looks little short of idiotic."

He continued: "We are not against training but it has to be targeted and the sort of thing drivers aspire to," adding that the current process was a box-ticking exercise. "While many drivers may not be academic, they take pride in their job and they have been grossly insulted [by the Driver CPC]. They have been told to sit in a classroom and be taught by someone that's often [not] qualified."

Durward's comments came as the DVSA claimed the Driver CPC deadline was set to be achieved, with 564,000 (June: 515,513) professional drivers (HGV and PSV) having completed their 35 hours of training as of July, and close to 800,000 engaged in the process. "Evidence suggests that the majority of drivers will have completed their periodic training by the 10 September deadline," a DVSA press release issued this week claimed, despite the agency conceding in May that it didn't know exactly how many professional HGV drivers would need to complete the process.

