

**The BAA:** The British Aggregates Association is the representative trade body for the UK's independent quarry industry. We have over seventy member companies who collectively operate some three hundred sites. Our members are also engaged in ready-mix concrete, asphalt and recycling operations. The UK quarry and recycling industry delivers over 200 million tonnes of aggregates every year by road, this equates to some 10 million fully laden lorry movements.

**LGV CPC:** Although the quarry and recycling sectors were among the first to flag up shortages in haulage contractors and drivers, this has now spread to most other industries. We even see headlines that there might not be enough trucks to deliver Christmas.

The blame for the current situation can be laid squarely at the door of the regulators. Of all the red tape we have had to suffer, the Working Time Directive and the Large Goods Vehicle Driver Certificate of Professional Competence are in a class of their own. Despite many complaints, the Dept. for Transport has so far refused to acknowledge any problem. However, their inaction could leave them with blood on their hands. There is compelling evidence that a number of serious and fatal accidents have already been caused by truck drivers who would not have been allowed behind the wheel in normal circumstances.

The CPC scheme looks set to dwarf the earlier exodus of experienced drivers caused by the Working Time Directive in 2005. Not only did this reduce the earning capacity of our top drivers to the point they found other jobs, it also wiped out the owner drivers who might have gone on to employ others. Owner driving was the traditional route into the haulage business and we have famous names such as Eddie Stobart as an example. We have therefore suffered a collapse in the number of responsible haulage operators along with a huge fall in the availability of experienced drivers. The consequent vacuum has been filled by foreign drivers, unscrupulous operators and lower grade drivers with little experience.

Industry having to wait for deliveries is a problem and delayed Christmas goods annoying, however any increase in road accidents is plainly unacceptable. This is not so much a case of 'something must be done,' this time something needs to be undone, and quickly. Two Scottish cyclists were mown down in Cornwall just 40 miles into their 960 mile Land's End to John O'Groats charity ride. The young truck driver was short of sleep and had been texting repeatedly at the wheel. A twenty year old girl was killed and her fiancé seriously injured when their car was struck by a truck driver watching an online dating site. A motoring correspondent was pronounced dead at the scene when a truck ploughed into the rear of his car on an M25 slip road. The above drivers were convicted and two were jailed. No doubt all three had a worthless piece of paper certifying that they were 'professionally competent.' Unfortunately, this is only the tip of the iceberg as court cases can take a year or more to come to court and many more cases are already in the pipeline. Starving industry of transport is crazy. However, allowing many thousands of inexperienced truck drivers, some who cannot even speak our language to drive 44 tonne trucks alongside private cars, bikes and pedestrians is positively criminal.

Time and time again we were told how this would improve driving standards and safety. Both the RHA and the FTA welcomed it with open arms and have even profited by organising CPC courses themselves. It was also manna from heaven for the burgeoning training industry that has sprung up on the back of burgeoning health and safety legislation. Unfortunately, the trainers are overstretched and many are unqualified. Ratified CPC certificates are also available on the black market.

Truck and bus driver CPC has followed a well-trodden health and safety path; The EU issues a well-intentioned Directive, our government carries out a perfunctory consultation, trade associations meekly acquiesce or, as in this instance, jump on the band-wagon, the people at the coal face are either ignored or treated with disdain and the process becomes unstoppable. It is of course virtually impossible to argue against legislation to 'save lives.'

Unfortunately, there have been so many episodes like this that most people now simply shrug their shoulders in defeat. They feel powerless against the might of a civil service skilled in using the EU as an excuse of last resort, even when confronted with damning evidence. However, this one is different – very different! Almost all of us will encounter HGVs whilst going about our daily business and any accident that involves a truck with a car, pedestrian or bicycle can be very serious indeed. DfT are now risking all of our lives with their head-in-the-sand attitude.

CPC training might once have been a thought a good idea but it now looks little short of idiotic. It will of course be defended to the hilt by the DfT and the army of 'instructors' who have jumped onto the gravy train but it is worse than useless on any analysis. Drivers complain that CPC courses are simply box ticking exercises with few qualified instructors. Drivers are required to complete five seven hour modules but can repeat the same module five times. Foreign drivers have passed without understanding a word that was said and others whilst fast asleep. Responsible operators have always trained their staff to improve vehicle safety as well as their public profile. Drivers used to be proud to be known as 'knights of the road.' However, what has now been forced upon them is an insult to their intelligence and the older ones especially are packing in. Accident statistics already suggest that driver CPC is having an adverse effect on road safety. The HGV accident rate, which had been in steady decline, is now rising again since the introduction of the CPC. By the time accident statistics for the post September 2014 cut-off feed through it could be too late for many innocent motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Not only are trucks an essential part of our industry, their drivers are often our first point of contact with customers and we rely on competent and considerate drivers to maintain good neighbour relations. Fleet operators are best placed to decide on a driver's capabilities and they should be left to get on with it. The ill-conceived driver CPC scheme has restricted their ability to select only high quality drivers, with predictable results.

The best way to achieve a safe and cost effective haulage fleet is to get rid of the CPC requirement and trust professional operators to run their businesses properly. In the 1930's the road transport industry was heavily restricted to protect the nationalised rail industry. It was only after road haulage was finally de-regulated in 1968 that it was able to service industry properly. LGV CPC has backfired, it is almost certainly killing innocent people and strangling the economy. It must be scrapped or postponed in line with other EU countries.

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