

Working To Save Lives



28 September, 2018

Mr John Dunne,
Director,
Federation of Transport Operators,
Embassy Office Park,
Kill,
Co Kildare.

Dear Mr Dunne,

Thank you for your letter of 14 September 2018 addressed to the RSA Chairperson regarding recent media coverage on the outcome of inspections of buses which referenced material released by the Road Safety Authority in response to a Freedom of Information request.

The figures released (copy of which are set out in table below for your information) represent all passenger vehicles inspected by RSA Enforcement Officers at roadside checks. They are not reflective of 'private' buses nor of buses specifically involved in 'school transport'. While we are sure many operators do have exemplary compliance records in respect of the road safety of buses and statistics indicate that bus collisions are relatively rare, the RSA and Garda Síochána enforcement strategy is designed to improve compliance and reduce traffic related deaths and injuries on our roads. I am sure that I can count on your support in that regard. The recent media coverage has raised the profile of school bus safety and has resulted in important public discussion on this issue.

The RSA employs a strategy of targeting those operators thought to be most at risk of non-compliance both at the roadside and when conducting inspections at operator premises. Therefore, the figures quoted in the media are not indicative of the compliance of the national bus fleet but are rather our enforcement findings and any communications issued by RSA have been appropriately qualified in that respect. That being said, it is vital that all bus operators continuously monitor their maintenance arrangements and take a proactive rather than a reactive approach in respect of the maintenance of their buses. The obligation to maintain and operate bus vehicles safely applies to all operators irrespective as to the ownership status of the entity concerned. The RSA has no comment to offer on any competition issues between State or private operators.

You are already aware that the RSA has implemented a risk rating system for heavy commercial vehicle (HCV) operators. This risk rating system, which is called CVORI (Commercial Vehicle Operator risk Indicator) is used as a guide to assist the RSA in directing its limited enforcement resources more effectively and efficiently at those Operators who may have a higher likelihood of being non-compliant and therefore pose a greater risk to road safety. Any information contained in an operators risk rating is not evidence of, or

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relevant to, any other purpose. There are a number of various factors which contribute to the calculation of an operators risk rating and the comment that an Amber Risk Rating designation *'is applied regardless of the satisfactory and complete evidence certification of roadworthiness'* is erroneous. An amber risk rating is not assigned to an operator based on the absence of a roadside check.

A HCV operator can access their own risk rating via their RSA online portal, it is personal to them as an operator and is only used by the RSA for the purposes set out in the current legal framework which relates only to the use of risk ratings in terms of frequency of inspections and to assist in targeting of enforcement.

The RSA website at www.cvrt.ie provides information about the risk rating system. I would encourage you to review the material on the website and to revert to us if you require any clarification on the system. Our Head of Enforcement, Kathleen Callanan whom you have already met, will meet with you if necessary to address any further queries. She can be contacted via email kcallanan@rsa.ie

As regards the classification of defects found during inspections, the RSA categorises vehicle defects according to Directive EU 2014/47/EU. Following a roadside or premises inspection, it is normal practice that the Enforcement Officer explains the findings to operators or their drivers. Inspection findings are based on evidence found on the day and recorded as such. If a driver or operator disagrees or misunderstands the level of severity applied then this should be discussed with the Enforcement Officer in the first instance and emailed to enforcement@rsa.ie if discussions are unsatisfactory.

The most common dangerous defects detected for the period in question were in the following areas 1. Tyres; 2. Brake lights; 3. Steering linkage. The most common major defects detected for the period in question were in the following areas: 1. Tyres; 2. Fire Extinguisher; 3. Doors and door catches. It is the RSA view that many of these defects detected by Enforcement Officers at roadside inspections could be avoided by operators having appropriate preventative maintenance systems in place and undertaking effective daily walk-around checks.

Yours sincerely,

Moyagh Murdock
CEO