



# AVRO News

*Association of Vehicle Recovery Operators*

Issue 29

December 2015

## Christmas closure

AVRO Head Office will be closed from 5 pm on Wednesday 23rd December 2015, reopening at 9 am on Monday 4th January 2016. The telephones will be diverted during the break, so phone calls and e-mails will be answered.

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## TV Series about the heavy vehicle recovery industry

We have been contacted by Dom Bowles, an executive producer working for IWC, a television production company with offices in London and Glasgow. Their recent credits include 'Location, Location, Location' for Channel 4, 'Lost Kingdoms of Central America' for BBC4, 'Griff Rhys-Jones—Slow Train Through Africa' for ITV 1 and 'Richard Hammond's Jungle Quest' for Sky 1. Before joining IWC, he produced a number of engineering based shows such as 'Scrapheap Challenge' (Channel 4), 'Gadget Man' (Channel 4) and Strippers 'Cars for Cash' (National Geographic).

IWC are currently in discussion with the BBC over a series about the Heavy Vehicle Recovery Industry. They are aiming to film with a number of busy AVRO members who hold the A1 license during the busy winter months Jan—early March. They are currently in discussion with a company in the London area, but would love to talk with other operators around the UK. They stress that the series would by no means be any kind of expose or investigation, merely a chance to show viewers exactly what happens when big vehicles get into trouble.

If any members are interested in finding out more, please contact Dom on 020 7013 4512, 07770 432807 or by email at [dominic.bowles@iwcmedia.co.uk](mailto:dominic.bowles@iwcmedia.co.uk).

## Message from the President

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a Happy Christmas. As we approach the New Year it is a time to consider our resolutions and I think we should all be a bit more resolute in 2016. The industry faces a number of serious pressures with increased costs coming from every direction, but precious little in the way of increased earnings from contracts and statutory removals. You will be aware that the statutory fees were last reviewed in 2008 and it is high time for a further increase, as well as some sanity in terms of the amounts that are taken by the 'middle men'. The introduction of Driver CPC and tachograph changes have also impacted on the sector and further pressures are around the corner in terms of the living wage proposals and compulsory workplace pensions. My resolution is for the industry to be a little less defensive, and a lot more assertive about the need to get proper recompense for the professional job that we do, day and night. AVRO members are the true professionals in the industry, backed by our code of conduct and inspection regime, and we need to continue to work together and present a strong case on behalf of the industry.

I hope you get time to enjoy some peace and good cheer at Christmas with family and friends, and look forward to us all working together to help ensure a prosperous New Year.

Kindest regards,

*Steve*



## Chancellor pledges to 'rebuild Britain' as he targets £10bn budget surplus

Chancellor George Osborne pledged to move from 'rescue' to 'rebuilding' as he presented his combined Autumn Statement and Spending Review to the House of Commons.

Placing the theme of security—both economic and national—at the heart of his speech, the Chancellor set out his aim of making Britain 'the most prosperous and secure of all the major nations of the world', drawing on the latest economic forecasts to suggest that the Government's spending plans are on target to deliver a £10.1bn budget surplus by 2019/20.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has forecast a £27bn improvement in the public finances for the next five years compared to its July predictions, meaning that the Government can borrow £8bn less over the course of this Parliament.

For the current financial year the OBR has predicted economic growth of 2.4%, with borrowing expected to fall from £74.1bn to £73.5bn.

The biggest surprise of the Chancellor's speech concerned the controversial plans to cut £4.4bn in tax credits in order to achieve the promised savings of £12bn per year in welfare spending. While many experts were predicting some transitional measures to soften the impact of the cuts, Mr Osborne unexpectedly announced a complete U-turn on the plans and revealed that taper and threshold rates for working tax credits and child tax credits would remain the same, until tax credits are phased out with the introduction of Universal Credit.

The costs would be offset in part by higher than expected tax receipts and new restrictions to be introduced on housing benefit and pension credit payments. The Chancellor also announced that overall police spending would be protected in line with inflation.

The statement included a number of headline measures for business, including an extension of the doubling of the Small Business Rate Relief for a further year. The Chancellor confirmed plans to abolish uniform business rates, granting new rate-setting powers to local councils, with further details to be unveiled in the Spring Budget. Meanwhile, the new business apprenticeship levy will be set at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's wage bill.

Personal tax measures included confirmation that the new single tier State Pension will be set at £155.65 a week from next April. In addition, the Chancellor announced that local councils will be able to increase council tax by up to 2% in order to fund social care.

Other key announcements included a commitment to investing in transport and infrastructure, together with new plans to increase Britain's housing stock.

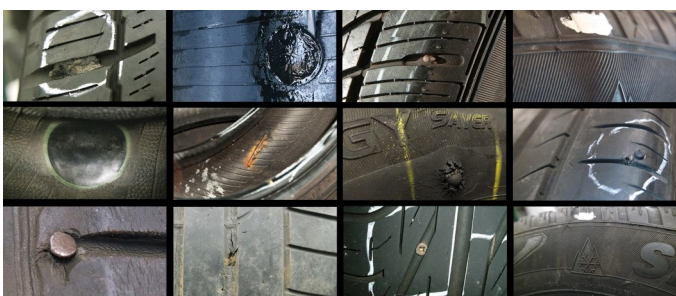
For buy-to-let owners, though, the news was perhaps less welcome, with the announcement of a new 3% stamp duty surcharge for buy-to-let properties and second homes, to take effect from next April.

*Article courtesy of Newby Castleman  
[www.newbycastleman.co.uk](http://www.newbycastleman.co.uk)*



## New website highlights the dangers of buying used tyres—Partworn-tyres.co.uk

TyreSafe has launched a website detailing the dangers, real cost and legal regulations on the sale of part worn tyres—[www.partworn-tyres.co.uk](http://www.partworn-tyres.co.uk). Millions of Britain’s motorists choose to take a risk on their safety and whose of others around them each year by buying used tyres despite the hazards. While the sale of part worns is legal, evidence shows a large proportion being sold are non-compliant with the legal



regulations and far too many are defective and dangerous.

Most recently, an investigation by Brent and Harrow Trading Standards with assistance from TyreSafe resulted in the conviction of eight part worn retailers on numerous counts of failing to mark part-worn tyres correctly and selling substandard tyres.

Visitors to [partworn-tyres.co.uk](http://partworn-tyres.co.uk) will find examples of tyres offered for sale by unscrupulous dealers and discovered during such investigations. The description of the sometimes horrifying faults includes tyres which would have been likely to suffer catastrophic failure on fitment, while unsafe repairs, cuts and objects in the tread are also revealed.

The site also gives guidance on the false economy which part worn tyres represent to the buyer and lays out the regulations and checks which need to have been completed before they can legally be offered for sale.

Stuart Jackson, chairman of TyreSafe, said: “Partworn-tyres.co.uk is TyreSafe’s latest initiative to inform the motorist of the risks they take when buying part worn tyres. Safety should be every driver’s primary concern and used tyres come with no guarantee that they’ll provide that. Even if a used tyre has passed all its regulatory checks—and there’s little evidence many are checked at all—it’ll need replacing much sooner than a new tyre, increasing the long term cost and inconvenience.

“TyreSafe urges motorists considering buying used tyres to reconsider and remember part worn means part safe.”

Partworn-tyres.co.uk has been built specifically to interrupt the purchase process of consumers when they are actively looking to buy part worns and encourage them to reconsider. It is designed to achieve this by ranking highly on search engine results pages when the term ‘part worn tyres’ is entered and then presenting consumers with the proven risks.

Those organisations wishing to support TyreSafe’s activities to raise awareness on part worn tyres can find resources and materials at [tyresafe.org](http://tyresafe.org) and can contact [theteam@tyresafe.org](mailto:theteam@tyresafe.org)

  
**TyreSafe** *Safe tyres save lives*



## Doctors to be told to inform on unfit drivers

New guidelines from the General Medical Council (GMC), the statutory body with which all UK doctors must be registered, are likely to oblige GPs to report patients who are medically unfit to drive to the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), or the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA), the equivalent body in Northern Ireland.

The draft guidelines, which are out to consultation



until February, have been issued in the wake of several high-profile accidents involving commercial vehicles, in which driver health has been identified as a potential contributory factor.

The current rules already allow doctors to inform the DVLA or DVA without consent where a patient has continued to drive without medical advice. But the new guidelines strengthen this position by emphasising that doctors have a duty to report such cases.

“If you conclude that a patient’s refusal to give consent [for you to disclose relevant information to the DVLA or DVA] leaves others exposed to a risk of death or serious harm, you should contact the DVLA or DVA immediately and disclose any relevant medical information, in confidence, to the medical

adviser,” the draft GMC guidelines state.

“Before contacting the DVLA or DVA, you should try to inform the patient of your decision to disclose personal information. You should then inform the patient in writing once you have done so.”

Drivers themselves are legally obliged to report any medical conditions to the DVLA, with potential fines of up to £1,000 should they fail to do so. But critics of the status quo point out that, particularly for those who drive professionally for a living, there are potentially strong financial disincentives for doing so.

Niall Dickson, chief executive of the General Medical Council, said: “This is difficult territory—most patients will do the sensible thing but the truth is that a few will not and may not have the insight to realise that they are a risk to others...”

“Confidentiality is not absolute and doctors can play an important part in keeping the wider public safe if a patient is not safe to drive... We are clear that doctors carrying out their duty will not face any sanction—and this new guidance makes clear that we will support those who are faced with these difficult decisions.”

The Freight Transport Association (FTA), which has been the calling for fleet operators to get access to medical decisions which indicate a lack of fitness to drive, called the move “a step in the right direction” - but said more needed to be done.

Ian Gallagher, FTA’s lead on DVLA, said: “We’re in a ridiculous situation that the employer is completely reliant on the individual to notify them that they have a medical condition. In some cases it’s the employer’s own checks that actually highlight that entitlement has been suspended or revoked on medical grounds.

“Employers have no right to access medical records. Patients can even veto doctors’ letters if they don’t





agree with what's been written."

He continued: "FTA believes that GPs should seriously consider the draft guidance and put what's written into practice and notify DVLA if they know patients are driving against their advice, but, this doesn't go far enough. We need a process that involves the employers that provides access to necessary medical information, which could ultimately save lives."

The road safety charity Brake welcomed the move, meanwhile, saying it had "long called for greater clarity from the GMC."

Gary Rae, director of communications and campaigns for Brake, said: "This is a positive move by the GMC, which will clarify the responsibilities and duties of both doctor and patient. We do recognise that, previously, doctors have been in a difficult position regarding confidentiality of their patients but the guidance makes it clear that this confidentiality is not absolute."

He added: "I would appeal to all drivers to ensure that they do declare any medical conditions that could prevent them from driving safely to the

DVLA/DVA. If they fail to do so, they will pose a continuing risk to themselves and other road users.

FTA said its chief executive, David Wells, had recently attended a meeting to discuss access to medical records with transport minister Lord Ahmad.

"I urged the department to consider ways to speed up the process for employers to have better access to medical information so they can manage the risk to all road users appropriately," Mr Wells said. "The industry takes this seriously and needs appropriate tools to manage drivers while respecting individuals' privacy and data."

*Article courtesy of Transport Operator  
[www.transportoperator.co.uk](http://www.transportoperator.co.uk)*



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## The new code of practice

The Vehicle Identity Check scheme came to an end on 26 October - and it's already no longer possible to make an appointment for a VIC check with the DVLA.

That seems like good news. No more delays for buyers while they wait for inspections. No need for the inconvenience of having to take vehicles to VIC centres for checking. No more risk of buyers being put off by the costs of inspections and log book applications - or of these costs being reflected in the price they're willing to pay.

At the same time, we now know that the ABI code of conduct will also be changed - although not yet. The

current A - D categories are to be replaced by three new ones. There will be categories called "breaker", "structural damage" and "non-structural damage".

What does this mean for insurers? Inevitably some work to change systems and contracts to reflect the new categories. But in the long run it should make things simpler. And the change is unlikely to be implemented until November 2016 or even later - so there's time to get ready.



## Vehicle safety recalls: November 2015

These are the vehicles, parts or accessories recalled by manufacturers for a safety reason during November 2015.

DVSA reference number	Make and model	Issue
R/2015/192	Jeep: Wrangler, Cherokee & Dodge Viper	Unintended vehicle movement
R/2015/194	Toyota: Proace	Engine may stall or fail to start and/or fuel may leak
R/2015/196	Mercedes-Benz: S-Class Coupe	Front seat belts may not perform as intended
R/2015/208	Mercedes-Benz: GLA, CLA & SLK	Engine may fail
R/2015/209	Mercedes-Benz: GLA & SLK	Engine may fail
R/2015/210	Mercedes-Benz: GLA, CLA, SLK, A-Class, B-Class, C-Class & E-Class	Engine may fail
R/2015/211	Mercedes-Benz: S-Class Hybrid	Combustion engine may fail to start
R/2015/212	Porsche: Macan S & Macan Turbo	Fuel may leak
R/2015/216	Scania Truck: Trucks in the Public & Special Segments with Specified Disc Brakes	Brakes may fail
R/2015/220	Mitsubishi: Outlander PHEV (Plug in Hybrid Electric Vehicle)	Fuel may leak
R/2015/221	Maserati: Granturismo & Grancabrio	Right hand door may open unexpectedly
R/2015/223	Volvo Bus: B11R, B13R, B8R (3) & B11R (3)	Collision avoidance warning light may not illuminate
RM/2015/035	Ducati: Multistrada 1200 & Multistrada 1200S	Side stand may fail
RM/2015/036	Kawasaki: SC300AE/AF & SC300BE/BF	Engine may stall



Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency



## Prices from Fuelmate



### W/C 15th December

Esso	: 85.41 ppl Excl VAT
BP Bunker	: 85.29 ppl Excl VAT
Shell	: 86.01 ppl Excl VAT
Texaco	: 85.11 ppl Excl VAT
UK Fuels	: 84.80 ppl Excl VAT
Keyfuels	: 85.57 ppl Excl VAT

### W/C 7th December

Esso	: 87.41 ppl Excl VAT
BP Bunker	: 87.29 ppl Excl VAT
Shell	: 88.00 ppl Excl VAT
Texaco	: 87.08 ppl Excl VAT
UK Fuels	: 86.47 ppl Excl VAT
Keyfuels	: 87.30 ppl Excl VAT

For further details, or to obtain a fuel card please contact:

Tracey Easton

T: 01482 387777

F: 01482 338591

E: [tracey.easton@fuelmate.co.uk](mailto:tracey.easton@fuelmate.co.uk)

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## Bollington insurance picks up Insurance Times commercial lines broker of the year

Bollington Insurance is celebrating after being crowned the Insurance Times Commercial Lines Broker of the Year, collecting the nationally-recognised award at a prestigious event on 1st December at Battersea Evolution, London.

North-west based broker Bollington - with offices in Adlington (near Macclesfield), Altrincham and Bollington, and with 215 staff across the UK - was also shortlisted for two other awards: Broker Innovation of the Year and Brand Campaign of the Year.

The Insurance Times Awards - this year hosted by popular comedian David Walliams - bring together the biggest names in insurance broking from across the UK alongside household names in insurance, in celebration of the achievements of the industry. These include the likes of AXA, Ageas, RSA, LV, Aviva, Allianz and Zurich.

The Commercial Lines Broker of the Year award recognises the broker who 'sets the standard for

others in the market to follow,' with judges considering business growth, innovation and adaptation to challenging market conditions as part of their assessment.

Bollington is no stranger to recent success, having picked up two British Insurance Awards last year (including Insurance Broker of the Year), and the 2014 Insurance Times Brand Campaign of the Year award.

Chris Patterson, Group Managing Director of Bollington, said: "This award recognises the tremendous efforts of our staff. They have really pushed the company forward over the last couple of years, delivering excellent service to our loyal clients.

"We feel great pride as a company that we have maintained our independence, allowing us to grow and innovate with a range of products and services that few brokers can match, during a period where mergers and acquisitions amongst other insurance brokers have accelerated.

"There is a real sense of achievement and excitement within Bollington at the moment and we look forward to 2016 with confidence."



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## Workplace conflict: resolving staff disputes

From daily office politics to serious and long-lasting grievances, conflict between staff can drain time, morale and productivity from your business. Here are some tips for resolving employee disputes before they become unmanageable.

Dealing with conflicts between employees is a frequent headache for business owners—and it can cost real time and money. One recent study by employment research company CPP found that, on average, each employee spends 2.1 hours every week either involved in a disagreement themselves or trying to manage a conflict between co-workers. That's equivalent to each employee losing one working day a month to workplace disputes.

For managers and business-owners, handling staff whose working relationship has broken down can be stressful and time-consuming, so it is always best to try to solve the problem as soon as possible. Here are some simple steps to take if you're faced with a workplace dispute.

### Pre-empt problems with clear company guidelines

Many conflicts arise in grey areas, such as arguments about people's place in the chain of command, or which responsibilities fall within which job descriptions. Clear, written company guidelines—along with a staff handbook detailing behavioural expectations, dress codes and so on—will help pre-empt problems and can enable swift resolutions by providing an authoritative source to refer to.

### Acknowledge problems and be proactive

It can be tempting to try to pretend an ongoing conflict between employees isn't happening, but even minor disputes can escalate when allowed to fester—ending up in accusations of workplace bullying or, in worst case scenarios, legal tribunals. It is usually fairly obvious when colleagues are clashing. Acting quickly can minimise the effect on your workplace.

### Hold a meeting in confidence

Rather than tackling a confrontation publicly, hold a private meeting with the relevant parties, either

separately or both together as appropriate. You should spend the best part of the meeting listening and allowing your staff to present their side of the story. In many cases, the mere act of airing a grievance provides its own solution, and employees will clear up misunderstandings or find a way of working around a problem themselves.

You should also take care to be even-handed in such meetings, and discuss solutions in terms of what's best for the team and the business, rather than making it about the individual.

### Resolve specific problems with specific solutions

There is always a danger that employees who don't see eye to eye will just generally complain about each other's personalities and traits. When trying to resolve a problem, it's best to avoid character-based discussion and instead focus on specific instances, offering practical guidance about how you expect staff to behave in those circumstances.

When you have reached a conclusion, ensure that all parties accept it and agree to move on accordingly.

### Take legal advice in serious cases

Most disputes can be resolved informally—which is usually the best way of doing things and certainly the least expensive. However, in more serious cases there can be no option but to follow formal proceedings. Document instances of disputes boiling over, aggressive emails and so on, and if necessary take professional advice. Even bringing in professional mediators could be a better and less costly solution than arbitration—which could be bad news for all parties, not least your business.

Conflicts are inevitable in any organisation, but there are steps you can take to minimise the effect on your business. Acting promptly and carefully can ensure you resolve disputes before they get out of control.

*Article courtesy of Newby Castleman  
www.newbycastleman.co.uk*

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## **Proposed DVSA powers to improve road safety, believes LICENCECHECK managing director Richard Brown**

Proposed powers to allow the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to prevent unlicensed or improperly licensed drivers from driving a vehicle rather than having to call upon the police, would help improve road safety, according to Richard Brown, managing director of LICENCECHECK.

Currently, when DVSA needs to prohibit a vehicle because the driver doesn't have the appropriate driver licence, the police must be contacted to take action.

Proposed in a Department for Transport consultation on 'Motoring services strategy', DVSA is seeking approval for its staff to have the power to demand a licence is produced and seize a vehicle.

Richard commented: "Cutting out a layer of policing for this common issue will mean a swifter resolution, ensuring drivers will not be on the road that do not have the correct licence entitlement.

"It is clear that police resourcing is increasingly under pressure, and allowing the DVSA to take on responsibility themselves for this important licensing issue will make UK roads a safer place."

Such a move would complement an initiative currently being implemented by the DVSA which allows it to focus resources on non-compliant operators through a recognition enforcement scheme, which helps the industry police itself. In order to highlight non-compliant serial offenders, larger operators will be encouraged to use Application Development Interfaces (APIs) to link their fleet management systems to various agencies to automatically exchange operational data demonstrating good practice.

"While these proposed changes are primarily driven by cost savings," said Richard, "they are certainly one way of addressing the unlicensed vocational driver issue. For larger goods vehicles and passenger vehicles, another positive action would be to make Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) and tacho card information available to operators as part of the driving licence check."

In a recent survey by LICENCECHECK, there was universal support for detailed CPC data to be made available to operators as part of the driving licence checking process. "Ensuring that unlicensed drivers never leave a depot in the first place by making their licence entitlement and other qualification information available from a single source would seem to tick a number of consultation boxes," added Richard.

*Article courtesy of Torque Agency Group  
[www.torqueagencygroup.com](http://www.torqueagencygroup.com)*

# torque

