

HGV Compatibility – Report to GRRF

A second informal meeting between Industry and the Governments of UK, NL and D was held in Paris on 7 December 2001 to continue discussion on the subject of HGV compatibility and the TRL research report presented by the UK.

At the previous meeting Industry had expressed a view that all discussions should be restricted to tractors for semi trailers and semi trailers only. The motor industry now agrees that tow vehicles and full trailers should be included in the scope of the discussions.

The representatives from the motor industry again raised the points that the UK report dealt with conventional pneumatic braking systems but new technologies have evolved and introduced EBS, disc brakes and coupling force control. All of which have raised different question for the compatibility of towing vehicles and trailers.

During the discussions no agreement was reached on whether the points raised by the UK research were a maintenance problem or a safety issue. The motor vehicle manufacturers admitted that they have problems with/ complaints from 5% of their customers. CLCCR representing the trailer manufacturers reported that 29% of their customers had raised problems or made complaints. The UK maintained its position that these were safety issues because although the vehicle may be within the compatibility bands, the increase in stopping distances caused concern and the service life of the brake linings was dramatically reduced.

The expert from the CLCCR presented data from 43 vehicles, covering 9 motor vehicle manufacturers, which demonstrated that new motor vehicles were not complying with the compatibility corridors at the point of manufacture. It was pointed out by the representative of the brake component manufacturers that the vehicle used in the UK research, when considered by TRL to be a “good set-up”, was also above the compatibility corridor.

OICA, CLCCR and CLEPA accepted that problems existed but were in agreement, although they gave different reasons for this, that a change to the compatibility bands would not resolve them. With current pneumatic valves, without the benefit of EBS, the full width of the bands was needed to ensure that the vehicles complied in the laden and unladen conditions. They agreed that a practical method to help to resolve the problems would be by the introduction of an in-service check during the annual test to measure brake performance in the 1.5/2.0 bar pressure region.

The motor industry representatives expressed a view that before a solution could be found the problems/complaints, specific to each type of braking system, had to be clearly identified. All the Industry representative organisations agreed to work together to establish the depth of the problems and make proposals for consideration that may resolve the issues.

A proposal which had already been prepared by CLCCR to introduce an amendment to Regulation 13 requiring the on-set of braking to occur within the prescribed limits was discussed. CLCCR considered this to be the most practical and effective way to address the

problems. However it did not gain support from the motor manufacturers because of the difficulty and inaccuracy in measuring the performance of conventional technology valves at very low air pressure. The representatives of the motor vehicle and the brake component manufacturers repeated the point made at the previous meeting that with conventional valve technology and the variation in vehicle types the narrowing of the compatibility bands was not a viable way of resolving the existing problems. The German national expert made a revision to this proposal but no firm conclusion was made.

The informal group believes that there are issues that need addressing on which progress and agreement could be made. Support by WP.29 of the formation of a formal Ad-hoc Working Group to pursue Compatibility issues, including the UK proposal to restrict the corridors in the working area, would enhance the status of the group and attract representatives from other Governments. A provisional date for a further meeting was set for Wednesday 22nd May 2002 at the offices of OICA, subject to the approval of GRRF.