RoadPeace information

supporting crash victims reducing road danger

helpline: 0845 4500 355

Shakespeare Business Centre
245a Coldharbour Lane
London SW9 8RR

info@roadpeace.org
www.roadpeace.org
Tel: 020 7733 1603

Reducing cyclist and pedestrian deaths in HGV collisions

Update for Coroners

The purpose of this information sheet is to update the Coroner, and others working within the criminal justice system such as Collision Investigators, on the crucial role of the latest safety technology for lorries in reducing the likelihood of collisions between HGVs and other road users.

It is official government policy to increase cycling and walking. But in urban areas both cyclists and pedestrians are fatally vulnerable to lorries, particularly at junctions. Blindspots are often an important contributory factor in a collision and subsequent fatality. With the vehicle and mirror designs previously available, these proved hard to eliminate. But there are now technologies, available at low cost, which greatly reduce the risk of this type of collision.

Aren't these deaths just isolated incidents?

During the years 2002-2009 in London, there were 189 fatalities involving HGVs. Only 5% (9) of these involved the driver, the rest were outside the vehicle: 79 (42%) pedestrians, 52 (28%) cyclists and 49 (26%) other road users, such as motorcyclists. HGVs over 7.5 tonnes account for around 2% of journeys in London, but 12% of total fatalities and 45% of cyclist fatalities.

What types of safety technology are available?

A new report commissioned by Transport for London provides a comprehensive analysis of the technology available[i]. It identifies four basic types: two that provide warnings to those outside the vehicle and two that alert the driver inside.

Type	External (for cyclist/pedestrian)	Additional features		Cost inc. fitting
A	Visual warning	Can be used in combinations with type C and D equipment (typically D)		£200
B	Audible warning			£100-£185
	In-cab (for driver)			
C	Camera systems - single or multiple	Hard Drive, Recording downloadable	GPS - speed/location	£850-£3,000
D	Ultra sonic Sensor - buzzer/LED	Linked to indicator	Speed activated	£200-£400

Source: BCS HGV Technology Trial (2011), Table 2, p.18

Each can vary in its sophistication and may have additional features. Commonly, they are triggered in particular circumstances: for instance, an external system (type B) that gives a short repeated warning whenever the left turn signal is in operation at below 10mph; or an in-cab system (type D) that combines a visual display and buzzer which vary in intensity according to the proximity of the object/person detected by its bumper-mounted sensors. Different types of systems can be combined to further reduce the risk of a collision. More sophisticated total systems combine sensors and cameras, providing a continuous nearside and rear view.

A survey of drivers and managers was conducted as part of the TfL study. 91% felt that blind spot technology would reduce the number of incidents; all thought that their companies would benefit if drivers used blind spot equipment and all thought that it should be standard on new vehicles.

What can be done?

If it is appropriate to do so on hearing the evidence at the inquest, we are encouraging the Coroner to use the provisions of Rule 43 to promote the installation of appropriate technologies, such as camera and sensor systems, on HGVs by fleet operators to protect other road users.

Other initiatives that seek to prevent these terrible deaths, such as regular license checks and driver and cyclist training, all have a role to play in reducing lorry danger. However, RoadPeace believes that the road user that poses the most risk is the one best placed to manage that risk.

Further information

FORS (Freight Operator Recognition Scheme), funded by Transport for London, can provide fleet operators with information and advice on choosing and installing an appropriate system, including discounts on equipment. More detail can be obtained from the FORS website or from the Transport for London *HGV cycle safety technology Procurement Guide*[ii].

Greater detail on the technology, its performance and attitudes of operators can be found in the Barclays Cycle Superhighways: HGV Technology Trial Project Report (September 2011).

---

[i] http://www.tfl.gov.uk/microsites/freight/documents/publications/bcs-hgv-technology-trial-060911.pdf

[ii] http://www.tfl.gov.uk/microsites/freight/documents/publications/hgv-cycle-safety-procurement-guide.pdf

With thanks for the support of Cemex UK in producing this briefing sheet. Cemex UK have been working to reduce lorry danger in the urban environment through a programme of fitting additional safety technology to its vehicles, and driver and cyclist awareness training.

RoadPeace is an independent national charity, providing practical information, emotional support, and advocacy to those affected by road crashes, as well as campaigning for justice for road crash victims and for road danger reduction. RoadPeace Chair Cynthia Barlow has been campaigning on reducing lorry danger since the death of her daughter in 2000 in a collision with a lorry.