

Trial of Longer Semi-Trailers

Guidance for applicants How to take
part in the trial

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Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
Telephone 0300 330 3000
Website www.dft.gov.uk

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How will the trial be conducted?

1. The Department is conducting a trial of up to 900 semi-trailers of a maximum length increase of up to 1m (between 13.6 and 14.6 metres), and up to 900 of a maximum length increase of up to 2.05m (between 14.6 and 15.65 metres). The trial will run for a period of up to 10 years, from November 2011 to October 2021. The Department will closely monitor the trial, through an independent body, and review both the impacts of the trial and the trailers on an annual basis.
2. Trailers taking part in the trial will operate under Vehicle Special Orders (VSOs), issued on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport by the Vehicle Certification Agency under Section 44 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Purpose of Trial

3. The purpose of the trial is to gain operational evidence on the safety, manoeuvrability, economy and other characteristics of semi-trailers that exceed, by up to 2.05 metres, the current maximum permitted length of 13.6 metres, by:
 - validating the Department's evidence of the potential costs and benefits of operating longer semi-trailers (as set out in the impact assessment for the consultation, found at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2011-06>), including assessing performance against a benchmark of existing trailer fleet operation;
 - identifying additional costs and benefits not addressed in the impact assessment including impact on infrastructure;
 - verifying the Department's preference for the Level 2 specifications set out in the Technical Requirements for Trials of Longer Articulated Goods Vehicles; and
 - identifying technical and legislative development necessary to ensure advanced active-steer axle technology can be fully assessed and deployed on new trailers.
4. The trial will be monitored and evaluated for the Department for Transport by an independent contractor¹, through four-monthly assessments of the performance of the trailers. The contractor will

¹ The contractor has yet to be appointed, but is expected to be announced in November

evaluate the success of the trial, in terms of whether it is meeting the required objectives, and on any key risks associated with the trial that require action by the Department, including on any safety issues that arise and on whether the number of vehicles engaged in the trial is appropriate.

5. The draft technical specification attached to the Consultation Document proposed two levels of technical compliance: Level 1, which would require vehicles to match the performance of existing articulated lorries (which it is anticipated will need active steering technology on the rear axles of the semi-trailer), or Level 2, which would require vehicles to match the standards (apart from length) applicable to existing articulated lorries.
6. Because active steering is not yet commercially available, the trial will commence for vehicles that comply with all current standards except length under the revised Technical Requirements attached at Annex C (based on the “Level 2” specification from the Consultation Document). When active steer technology, meeting the Consultation Document’s Level 1 requirements, becomes commercially available, the Department and the appointed contractor will work with those wanting to take in part in the trial to include this technology in the trial fleet.

Conditions of Trial

7. The trial is open to any haulage operator or road transport operator (own account or hire and reward) interested in operating articulated heavy goods vehicles with a semi-trailer length between 13.6 metres and 15.65 metres. No Government funding is available to purchase longer semi-trailers under this trial.
8. The trial is also open to leasing companies; however, these companies must identify in advance the operator to whom the semi-trailers will be leased for the period of the trial, and must inform the Department if the operator changes.
9. Any semi-trailer operated under this trial will be permitted to do so under a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) and will be subject to the conditions set out in that Order. Applicants should note that semi-trailers may be subject to verification checks prior to the issue of the VSO. The VSO will be issued only to the specified road transport operator.
10. Participation is at the applicant’s financial risk. While the Department’s intention is that the trial should run for ten years – which should allow time for applicants to recover their investment in the semi-trailers – the trial will be closely monitored to identify any developing trends, and its

duration may be reconsidered in the light of emerging evidence, particularly the safety impacts of the semi-trailers. The Government will not compensate participants if the trial closes within 10 years.

11. In the light of evidence collected in the course of the trial, particularly with regard to safety impacts, the Department may also withdraw certain semi-trailers types with design characteristics from the trial. For example, certain combinations of semi-trailer length and axle configuration.
12. In order to ensure that existing safety and roadworthiness requirements are not compromised, and notwithstanding the fact that vehicles operating under VSOs are not required to undergo annual roadworthiness tests, operators will be asked to sign an undertaking to provide operational information and to ensure that all trailers in their fleets continue to undergo annual testing. A copy of this undertaking is attached at Annex D.
13. As part of the undertaking, operators will also be required to agree to provide a range of data on a four monthly basis to establish the performance and efficiency of the trailers being assessed. In addition, the trial will look at:
 - any information related to overloading of axles;
 - the nature and impact of any incidents or near-misses involving the trailers;
 - the effectiveness of any additional vision / sensor / safety systems fitted to improve detection of vulnerable road users;
 - comparative information on maintenance requirements and durability of components;
 - any particular training needs identified in the course of operation.
14. Applicants should note that failure by the operator to respect the conditions in the undertaking may result in the Secretary of State revoking the VSO.

How to Apply

15. The trial can accommodate only a limited number of trailers: up to 900 of a length between 13.6 and 14.6 metres, and up to 900 of a length between 14.6 and 15.65 metres. In order to ensure that the trial is not dominated by a small number of operators and that all applicants have the opportunity to participate, the Department is inviting Expressions of

Interest (Eol), to include the number of trailers that applicants wish to operate.

16. Expressions of Interest should be submitted on the attached templates for semi-trailers:

- of a maximum length increase of up to 1m (between 13.6 and 14.6 metres) (Annex A); and
- of a maximum length increase of up to 2.05m (between 14.6 and 15.65 metres) (Annex B)

to FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk at the Department for Transport, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR.

17. Please note that Expressions of Interest need not be for immediate introduction; companies who anticipate that they may wish to introduce longer semi-trailers into their operations at a future date may submit an Eol at this stage, indicating the likely number of vehicles and expected start of operations.

18. The closing date for Eols is 2 December 2011. The Eol should include:

- Name of applicant company and individual contact details;
- Nature of business (e.g. Owner operator; vehicle leasing company, 3PL etc);
- Purpose for which trailers will be used (e.g. Trunking operations, general haulage, etc);

For fleet operators:

- Number of semi-trailers in current fleet;
- Number of trailers for which VSO sought;

For leasing companies:

- Number of VSOs required;
- Number of trailers currently leased to each operator

For all applicants:

- Dimensions of trailers sought (e.g. single deck 14.6 metre; high cube 15.65 metre; double deck 15 metre...);
- Timeframe over which the trailers are expected to be brought into operation;

- Indication of whether applicant would be interested in trialling active steering technology when this becomes available;
- Where relevant, identification of operators to whom trailers will be supplied, or of haulage provider who will be operating the trailers.

Allocation Process

19. The Department will review the Expressions of Interest to ensure the fair distribution of the available allocation over the period of the trial, to ensure that provision remains for the potential introduction of trailers using active steer technology, and to minimise the risk of any company gaining an undue competitive advantage.
20. The Department reserves the right to cap the number of trailers allocated to individual applicants, for example on the basis of the size of the existing fleet. The Department is refining its approach to allocation and will publish updated guidance in due course. This will not affect the information being asked for as part of the initial call for Expressions of Interest.
21. The Department anticipates a further call for Expressions of Interest at a later date and therefore reserves the right not to allocate the full quota of trailers at the outset.
22. Applicants will be advised early in January 2012 of the outcome of their application and will be asked to enter into the undertaking with the Department. Once this has been received and acknowledged, applicants can apply to the Vehicles Certification Agency for the VSO.
23. Applicants should note that VSOs will be allocated only following the submission of an Expression of Interest and signature by the relevant operator of the undertaking.

This guidance may be updated prior to and during the course of the trial, in order to provide greater clarity for potential applicants.

A.1

TRIAL OF LONGER SEMI-TRAILERS

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE

SEMI-TRAILERS OF A MAXIMUM LENGTH INCREASE OF UP TO 1M (BETWEEN 13.6 AND 14.6 METRES)

Company name and address:	
Individual contact details:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Nature of business (e.g. Owner operator, vehicle leasing company, 3PL, etc)	
Number of longer semi-trailers for which VSO sought	
(For owner operators) Current number of standard semi-trailers in your fleet	
(For leasing companies) Identity of operators to whom vehicles will be leased	
Number of trailers currently leased to each operator	
Number of Vehicle Special Orders (VSOs) required – NB VSOs will be issued only to specified hauliers	
Dimensions of trailers sought (e.g. single deck 14.6 metre; high cube 14.6 metre; double deck 14 metre, etc)	

Timeframe over which the trailers are expected to be brought into operation	
Purpose for which trailers will be used (eg trunking; general haulage)	
Are you interested in trialling active steering technology when this becomes available?	
Where relevant, identification of operators to whom trailers will be supplied, or of haulage provider who will be operating the trailers	

PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk BY 2 DECEMBER 2011.

B.1

TRIAL OF LONGER SEMI-TRAILERS

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE

SEMI-TRAILERS OF A MAXIMUM LENGTH INCREASE OF UP TO 2.05M (BETWEEN 14.6 AND 15.65 METRES)

Company name and address:	
Individual contact details:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Nature of business (e.g. Owner operator, vehicle leasing company, 3PL, etc)	
Number of longer semi-trailers for which VSO sought	
(For owner operators) Current number of standard semi-trailers in your fleet	
(For leasing companies) Identity of operators to whom vehicles will be leased	
Number of trailers currently leased to each operator	
Number of Vehicle Special Orders (VSOs) required – NB VSOs will be issued only to specified hauliers	
Dimensions of trailers sought (e.g. single deck 15 metre; high cube 15.65 metre; double deck 15 metre, etc)	

Timeframe over which the trailers are expected to be brought into operation	
Purpose for which trailers will be used (eg trunking; general haulage)	
Are you interested in trialling active steering technology when this becomes available?	
Where relevant, identification of operators to whom trailers will be supplied, or of haulage provider who will be operating the trailers	

PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk BY 2 DECEMBER 2011.

C.1

Technical Requirements for Trials of Longer Articulated Goods Vehicles

The technical requirements that shall apply to the trials on roads of longer articulated vehicles for general haulage are as follows:

1. The overall length shall not exceed 18.55m
2. The longitudinal distance from the axis of the king pin to the rear of the semi-trailer shall not exceed 14.05m
3. No point in the semi-trailer forward of the transverse plane passing through the axis of the king pin shall be more than 2.04m from the axis of the king pin
4. The maximum distance measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of the semi-trailer from the foremost point of the loading area to the rear of the trailer shall not exceed 15.65m
5. The semi trailer shall be equipped with 3 axles
6. Any semi-trailer equipped with axles that employ a steering arrangement shall be constructed such that the steering system is locked in the straight ahead position at speeds exceeding 31 mph or be designed in such a way that locking was unnecessary
7. Any semi-trailer equipped with a steering arrangement shall satisfy the relevant technical provisions of UN ECE Regulation 79.01
8. Any semi-trailer equipped with a steering arrangement controlled by a complex electronic system shall satisfy the technical provisions of Directive 72/245/EEC as amended by Directive 2006/28/EC and the special requirements of Annex 6 of UN ECE Regulation No.79.01
9. A semi-trailer shall be equipped with an on-board weighing device, where the wheelbase of the semi-trailer, as defined in paragraph 7.6.1.2 of Annex I to EC Directive 97/27/EC, does not exceed the result of the equation listed in that paragraph, . The weighing device shall be capable of indicating any overload of the trailer axles or axle groups.
10. The requirements of paragraph 9 shall not apply where the maximum permitted gross weight of the vehicle combination does not exceed 38 tonnes.

11. Until further notice, the vehicles must comply with the above requirements and shall comply in all other respects with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 S.I. 1986 No 1078, as amended, and the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 S.I. 1989 No 1796 as amended.

D.1

Operator's Undertaking in relation to the Trial of Longer Semi-Trailers

DATED: **2011**

[Add Name and address of the operator] ("the Operator").

WHEREAS;

the Operator has volunteered to participate in a scheme to trial the use of longer semi-trailers on the roads in the UK ("the Scheme");

a longer semi-trailer is a trailer that exceeds the permitted maximum length of 13.6 metres set out in regulation 7 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 by not more than 2.05 metres ("longer semi-trailer");

the DfT has decided to issue a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) to the Operator under section 44 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 allowing the Operator to use a specified number of longer semi-trailers in the UK, subject to conditions imposed by that VSO;

the DfT requires the Operator to ensure that an annual roadworthiness test is carried out on all vehicles participating in the scheme; and

the DfT requires the Operator to provide information to [add name of evaluation and monitoring body] on a regular basis, which will be used to evaluate and monitor the use of longer semi-trailers under the scheme, and ultimately to determine the success of the scheme against its objectives.

1. The Operator undertakes to:

1.2 ensure that any longer semi-trailer operated under the Scheme and benefitting from a VSO is presented to VOSA for an annual roadworthiness test, in the same way as a conventional length semi-trailer.

1.3 provide information to [add name of evaluation and monitoring body] on a quarterly basis by completing the form set out in the Schedule to this Undertaking.

- 1.4** label clearly any information that it considers to be commercially confidential, so that confidential nature of that information can be taken into account in the event that a request for disclosure is received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the balance of public interests has to be determined; and
 - 1.5** informs immediately the Secretary of State for Transport where any vehicle operated under the Scheme is involved in an accident which results in death or serious injury to a person or substantial damage to property.
- 2.** The Operator understands that any failure to fulfil the undertaking in paragraph 1 may result in the Secretary of State, in his absolute discretion, issuing an order revoking the VSO, which would end the Operator's participation in the Scheme.

Signed by

For and on behalf of

the Operator

SCHEDULE

DRAFT INFORMATION RETURN FORM

The following is an indication of the type of information that will be requested from those participating in the trial. A final information return form will be published following testing with industry trade bodies.

1. Name and address of registered keeper.
2. Dates of survey.

Section 1: Trailer Details

3. VIN number of the semi-trailer.
4. Gross vehicle weight (kg). Carrying capacity (kg).
5. A description of the axle configuration with the tractive unit for the survey period.

Section 2: Trailer Activity

6. The estimated odometer reading at the start of the first survey day and of the last day.
7. If the trailer was not used at all on the public roads during the survey period, whether this was because of: No work; Repair; Site work; Holiday; Service; No driver; Other reason.
8. An estimate of the mileage this vehicle undertakes in GB each year:
Miles/km
9. How many litres/gallons of fuel were used by the tractive unit to draw this trailer during the survey period: Litres/gallons
10. Journey details for the survey period (for example the type of goods carried and distance travelled).
11. Details of any incidents occurring in the preceding four months (including type, severity and location of incident).

Section 3: Business Details

12. Name and telephone number of the person to be contacted if questions arise about this form (please print).

13. Size of business: Micro firms: 9 employees or fewer; Small firms: 10 – 49 employees; Medium firms: 50 – 249 employees; Large firms: 250 employees or more.
14. Name of town where this trailer is based (if different address to Q1)
15. Confirmation of whether this trailer was mainly being operated during the survey on own account or for Hire/Reward
16. The nature of the applicant's business.