

Trial of Longer Semi-Trailers – Outline of Process Steps

Operator	Manufacturer	VCA
Receive trailer allocation (completed)	Apply for Approval(s) / test(s)	
↓		Receive application for Approval(s) / test(s)
		Carry out tests & create Approval(s) / LST Model Report(s)
	Receive Approval(s) / LST Model Report(s)	←
	Distribute Approval(s) / LST Model Report(s) / Information to Operators (optional)	
Receive Approval / LST Model Report Information (optional)	←	
Place order(s) with manufacturer(s)	Produce semi-trailer(s)	
Apply to Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) for a Vehicle Special Order covering the use of the longer semi-trailer(s) The information required can be found on the VCA’s website Submit the signed Operator’s Undertaking to VCA along with the application		
	→	
Receive VSO	←	VCA grants VSO, notifies Operator (within 10 days)
Commence commercial operation of trailer		
Submit data to Risksol every 4 months		

1. Operator

1.1. Submit Expression of Interest

Completed.

1.2. Receive Trailer Allocation

Operators have received the initial allocation. They have until 31 January 2012 to submit requests for re-jigging the number of 1m and 2.05m longer semi-trailers they have been allocated, within their overall total. Operators who have decided not to take part in the trial should return their allocations. The Department will redistribute these allocations in early February.

1.3. Receive Approval(s) / LST Model Report(s)

Where they are able to produce semi-trailers which are compliant with the trial's requirements, Manufacturers can obtain appropriate documentation from VCA. This documentation will aid the process of gaining a Vehicle Special Order (VSO).

The documentation will be in the form of;

- National Small Series Type Approvals (NSSTA), or
- Longer Semi-Trailer (LST) Model Reports

In each case the documentation will contain the range of specifications of compliant semi-trailers. Where a type of semi-trailer is the subject of an approval under NSSTA the Manufacturer will issue a Certificate of Conformity (CoC). This CoC will contain important vehicle details and is proof of compliance with the requirements of the scheme for a particular semi-trailer.

Operators can, with the agreement of the Manufacturer, use the reference to the identification number of the LST Model Report to simplify the process of obtaining a VSO.

As an alternative to NSSTA it is possible for either a Manufacturer or an Operator to obtain an Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) from VOSA (or VCA if it is combined with some Type Approval activities). However, this would need to be combined with an LST Model Report.

1.4. Operator Undertaking

In order to participate in the trial an Operator must sign and submit an 'Undertaking', (a copy of which has been e-mailed to prospective participants) which is available on the DfT website. The Undertaking should be sent to the Vehicle Certification Agency along with the application for the Vehicle Special Order (VSO) (see next paragraph).

1.5. Apply for VSO

Before the longer semi-trailers can be operated in commercial service, a VSO must be obtained from VCA. The VSO will allow vehicles to be operated on roads in Great Britain (i.e. England, Scotland and Wales). Whether or not to allow the operation of the longer semi-trailers in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Northern Ireland Government.

Certain things will need to be in place before a VSO is granted to cover one or more semi-trailers in an Operator's fleet. The Operator must provide:

- a signed Undertaking;
- their operator licence reference number;
- the reference number of a valid NSSTA or LST Model Report (obtainable from the manufacturer);
- operator and vehicle details required by as part of the normal VSO process

Where the required documentation is submitted as part of an application for a VSO it will normally be granted within 10 working days. Further general details on the VSO process can be found at;

1.6. Receive VSO & (after 29 October 2012) Consent

When VCA grants the VSO, it will send it to the Operator.

Before 29 October 2012 trailers will normally enter into service without any controls other than a requirement to meet C&U and the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations (RVLR).

After this date, the Road Vehicles (Approval) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009 No.717, sometimes referred to as the '2009 Approval Regs') will take effect for some trailers. This will require 'Final Suppliers' (e.g. Manufacturers, Dealers, etc.) to obtain a 'Consent for Entry Into Service' from VOSA.

The 'Consent for Entry Into Service' process will enable VOSA to ensure that appropriate records are set up to manage VOSA contacts with a vehicle during the time the vehicle is in service on the roads in Great Britain. (The consent will also be valid in Northern Ireland should the Northern Ireland Government decide to allow the operation of longer semi-trailers in the province.)

1.7. Use Semi-Trailer in Trial

Provided an Operator has signed the Undertaking and has in place;

- a valid VSO for use in Great Britain
- after 29/10/2012, a valid 'Consent for Entry Into Service'

then the Operator is at liberty to operate the trailer on the roads in Great Britain. However, such operation is subject to the constraints in the VSO and Authorised Weight Regulations.

Maintenance arrangements should be in place in the same way as for a conventional length semi-trailer.

1.8. Apply for Annual Test

Each Operator, as part of their Undertaking, agrees to ensure that any longer semi-trailer operated under the Scheme and benefiting from a VSO is presented to VOSA for an annual roadworthiness test, in the same way as a conventional length semi-trailer.

1.9. Apply for Variation to VSO (if applicable)

From time to time it may be necessary to amend the details on the VSO. For example, the ownership or responsibility for the operation of a semi-trailer may change. Operators will be free to transfer longer semi-trailers between each other. The allocation quota will move with the vehicle, once the Department has been informed of the change of operator. **However, the new operator must apply for the necessary VSO before the relevant longer semi-trailer can be used.**

1.10. Renew VSO

The VSOs which cover the operation of the semi-trailers in the trial will expire after 5 years, after which time the VSO may be renewed. It will be the responsibility of the Operator to apply for renewal in good time to ensure there is continuous VSO cover. Note that no reminders will be sent - Operators must make sure that cover of a VSO is in place at all times. An application for a renewal of a VSO will normally be granted within 10 working days.

2. Manufacturer

2.1. Submit Application for Test(s)

Vehicles which are to be used in the scheme must meet certain performance characteristics to ensure the risks to other road users are minimised. To ensure the performance requirements are met DfT reserves the right to carry out tests and / or evaluations, these may be conducted at;

- the facilities of a Manufacturer
- at VCA (e.g. MIRA or Millbrook proving grounds)
- other suitable facilities mutually agreed between VCA and the manufacturer and the third party provider (e.g. VOSA have facilities for turning circle tests at some locations)

Type Approval

The requirements of The Road Vehicles (Approval) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009 No.717, sometimes referred to as the '2009 Approval Regs') will take effect for most trailers as of 29 October 2012. Type Approval is a reasonably well known option for a Manufacturer and so the details of this process will not be repeated here. However, it is important to note that European Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) is not available as a longer semi-trailer cannot meet the requirements for Masses & Dimensions (97/27/EC).

Nevertheless, for NSSTA there are provisions in the 2009 Approval Regs (see Schedule 4, Item 48 in the Table, Column 3, paragraph 6), which provide exemption from certain requirements for certain kinds of vehicles. To take advantage of the exemptions vehicles must be compliant with the Authorisation of Special Types (General) Order (STGO). The semi-trailers used on the trial are covered by Article 36(1)(c) of STGO so the provisions in the 2009 Approval Regs may be invoked.

The 2009 Approval Regs also permit the use of IVA and similar provisions exist in Schedule 5 to give exemption to STGO compliant vehicles.

The cost of testing, examination, certification, etc., in connection with NSSTA and IVA will need to be met by each Manufacturer concerned.

Longer Semi-Trailer Model Report

The mandatory introduction of Type Approval requirements for O₄ vehicles as of 29/10/2012, will govern the entry into service of vehicles. However, as an interim measure before the 2009 Approval Regs take effect, the creation of LST Model Reports may make the process of including vehicles in the trial more streamlined. Although such documents have no legal effect LST Model Reports will contain details of ranges of compliant vehicles that may be used on the scheme.

It is anticipated that a Manufacturer may obtain LST Model Reports for types of semi-trailer taking advantage of both the 1.0m and 2.05m permitted additional lengths. For each Manufacturer producing semi-trailers, other than making vehicles available with other appropriate resources (such as personnel and information), there will be no cost for the Manufacturer in the production of these two LST Model Reports.

Timing

The availability of resources to conduct test, prepare reports, issue approvals, etc., will depend on demand. The timescales for obtaining;

- NSSTAs vary from vehicle type to vehicle type and Manufacturer to Manufacturer so it is not possible to give a meaningful estimate
- LST Model Report would be in the region of 5 working days
- IVAs can be obtained in 15 working days

2.2. Receive Approval / LST Model Report

Once the appropriate testing is completed Approvals and / or LST Model Reports will be produced by VCA and sent to the Manufacturer, and in the case of LST Model Reports, also sent to DfT.

2.3. Distribute Approval / LST Model Report

Operators will be keen to be sure that the vehicles they acquire for use in the trial will be acceptable and that use on roads in Great Britain will be permitted. Hence, if LST Model Reports or NSSTA are in place it would be sensible for a manufacturer to make appropriate information available to potential customers.

2.4. Apply for Consent for Entry Into Service (after 29/10/2012)

After 29/10/2012 the 2009 Approval Regs will take effect for some trailers. This requires 'Final Suppliers' (e.g. Manufacturers, Dealers, etc.) to obtain a 'Consent for Entry Into Service' from VOSA. Assuming the manufacturer acts as the 'Final Supplier' this process will need to be observed. Information can be found on the Business Link website at the link below;

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1085593313>

As the semi-trailers are over the length permitted by regulations a VSO is required to cover each vehicle used in the trial. A VSO will allow vehicles to be operated on roads in Great Britain.

For semi-trailers which are to be used on the trial the application for Consent should be routed through VCA where it will be matched with a Vehicle Special Order and forwarded to VOSA.

Details of where to send the application can be found at;

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/vca/vehicle-special-orders/vehicle-special-orders.asp>