

Subject: VOSA - INCREASED FOCUS on FLEET VEHICLES

What's Happened?

During a routine check, a BPS vehicle was stopped by the Police, to check for possible overloading of the vehicle.

How Did It Happen?

The Mercedes van was stopped and the Police officer examined the contents of the vehicle, as he believed the vehicle may have been overweight. The van was then sent to a VOSA (Vehicle & Operator Services Agency) weighbridge for further examination. The inspector deemed the vehicle to be within the legal weights allowed, so proceeded to inspect the entire vehicle. The vehicle was carrying 2 x 20ltr diesel cans onboard and as such must carry a fully charged fire extinguisher (2kg minimum). The fire extinguisher being carried was depressurised, and a Prohibition Notice was served on the Company as a result.

Recommendations and Lessons to be Learnt:

- Always check the gauge on the front of your fire extinguisher at regular intervals, the gauge can go into the red even if the extinguisher has not been used.
- Be aware of what weight your vehicle is allowed to carry, contact your Line Manager / Transport Department if in doubt.
- VOSA are currently increasing the amount of "spot" checks they are carrying out by 50%, and are on the verge of issuing fixed penalty noticed to drivers, to make them more aware of their responsibilities.
- The checks will also include the functionality / condition of the following : indicators, lights, windscreens, spare wheel, fire extinguisher, contents of vehicle, weight of the vehicle, trailers, tyres - this list is only an example, and they will look at more areas.
- If your vehicle is above 3.5t and you carry extra fuel in cans you will need additional extinguishers, contact your HSQE / Transport Department for advice.



This fire extinguisher had **not** been used, but the needle on the pressure gauge is in the red. It **must** be in the green sector of the gauge. This extinguisher will not function and this was the cause of the Prohibition Notice served by VOSA. Extinguishers can become depressurised by the motion of a moving vehicle - regular checks **must** be made. Fire extinguishers must also be fitted with a tamper proof seal to demonstrate that the extinguisher has not been used.

IF YOU ARE QUESTIONED BY ANY OF THE ENFORCING BODIES (Health & Safety Executive/Environment Agencies/VOSA/Police etc)

YOU MUST INFORM YOUR LINE MANAGER IMMEDIATELY

IF IN DOUBT ASK