

Service Bulletin

Technical Guidance for Tyre Specialists



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EU Roadworthiness Directive



Welcome!

Since 2010, M/Wheels, one of Europe's leading wheel specialists and distributors of commercial vehicle wheels, has been running a CV wheel safety campaign which has seen major input into both EU Roadworthiness Directive Periodic and Roadside documents, which were fully implemented by all 27 EU Member States on May 20th, 2018.

The NTDA welcomes EU recognition of the safety critical nature of CV wheels which can put drivers and others at great risk if unsafe. While the UK did not fully implement the Roadworthiness Directive, M/Wheels continues to work closely with both the Department for Transport and the DVSA to improve wheel safety in the UK.

We would like to thank M/Wheels for their help with this month's bulletin.

Stefan Hay
Chief Executive

The Current Landscape

Commercial vehicles are subject to a wide range of stresses and strains on the road, which results in increased forces placed on the wheels. As such, wheel safety is a critical issue for fleets, but continues to be largely overlooked across the industry. This low level of awareness, coupled with the rising number of commercial vehicles on our roads, is a cause for great concern – raising the risk of legal action and ultimately, the number of road traffic accidents and threatening the safety of drivers.

Despite the risks placed on commercial vehicles every day, there hasn't been any data available on wheel detachments from heavy vehicles, or even on the number of accidents caused by wheel failure, since the Transport Research Laboratory report in 2006, that found there were between three and seven fatalities a year – just from wheel loss alone.

Awareness of the impact of wheels on road safety remains low but with it being such an important element of commercial vehicles, changes need to be made.



In this issue we look at...

the EU Roadworthiness Package

The National Tyre Distributors Association

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European Union Law

The MWheels commercial vehicle wheel safety campaign has been running since 2010 and was successfully incorporated into the new European Union (EU) Roadworthiness Directives, which became law in May 2014.

Adopted by both the European Parliament and European Council, the EU law states 'compatibility between parts and components, such as between wheels and wheel hubs, should be treated as a critical safety item and should be checked during roadworthiness testing'.

Addition legislative text includes several visual wheel inspection prerequisites and also that 'wheel size, technical design, compatibility or type not in accordance with the requirements [laid down by type-

approval at first registration or first entry into service] and affecting road safety' will be classed as a major defect.

Reasons for failure in the assessment of deficiencies are classed as major or dangerous, with the legislative text covering both roadside technical inspections and periodic vehicle testing.

Under the new inspection regime 'minor' deficiencies should be addressed but no retest is required, 'major' problems will require a retest and 'dangerous' issues may see the Member State prohibit the use of the vehicle on public roads.

In effect the law legally addresses MWheels' proven argument that non-circumferential hubs, which give only partial contact between axle and wheel,

are causing untested load stresses which cause cracks and halve the life expectancy of a wheel which in turn creates serious safety concerns.

It also brought into context a number of minimum essential requirements that must be stipulated when purchasing second-hand or potentially inferior wheels, and furthermore the key roles that will be played by CV fleet managers and product purchasers.



UK Position

Following the EU Roadworthiness Package, Member States had three years to adopt and publish the new rules and then a further year to apply all the measures.

However, despite both the UK and EU acknowledging that wheels and wheel hubs are safety critical items, the DfT's draft Heavy Goods Vehicle Inspection Manual, which came into force from May 2018, showed 'no major changes' to section 06, Road Wheels and Hubs.

It is up to each individual member state to decide its own testing regimes to meet the new minimum EU standards. As a result MWheels believes there are still flaws in the updated UK approach, so met with the Department for Transport and

DVSA back in May, to uncover solutions to certain problems, such as 'wheels not marked with a load index or load marking must be assumed to be capable to carrying the axle weight', and to research what can be introduced for the betterment of operational vehicle safety.

Following the meeting, four actions were identified to begin the process of cooperation.

MWheels was to produce a short report, highlighting its concerns with the new UK testing regime in relation to EU Directives 2014/45/EU (Periodic) and 2014/47/EU (Roadside), emphasising where it believes the changes did not reflect the newly imposed minimum safety requirements as required by Europe.

The company offered to share its detailed technical information and laboratory research findings on the life-shortening effects of non-circumferential hubs on CV wheels, which it would like the DfT to use for an educational campaign with fleet operators who are not aware of the situation.

MWheels also requested a joint research project to start gathering important evidence on operational vehicles to see how many trailers do or do not conform to the UK and EU testing standards.

And to ensure the cooperation maintains a healthy momentum a meeting was scheduled at the start of autumn for all parties to reconvene. This date is now set for October 31st.



Keeping your fleet safe

It is more important than ever to know whether CV wheels are fit for purpose and incorporating the following three points into the wheel purchasing behaviour of fleet managers could lead to fewer commercial vehicle accidents.

CV wheel best servicing practice

The service manager must perform regular vehicle checks, paying attention to the inside and outside attachment faces on wheels, as this is where cracks may appear prematurely. Where cracks are detected, wheels must be replaced immediately.

Drivers must also make regular vehicle checks. Daily walkaround checks are crucial: a visual check followed by a physical check, if needed. Any defects must be recorded in writing. Annually,

fleet operators should remove the wheel completely to check for damage.

Traceability of supply using a robust procurement process

For wheels to be fully compliant and roadworthy, full transparency along the purchasing line from the source is necessary. However, current legislation means that a wheel could be involved in a serious accident, potentially incurring serious damage, but be back on the road the next day, with no record of its history.

With the right procedures in place, fleet operators can have control, compliance and a full audit trail. Questions should be asked such as: where the wheels were sourced; have they had a full risk assessment; are they second hand; is the wheel sufficiently stamped.

Always purchase wheels from a reputable supplier.

Choosing the correct wheel and fittings

Only certain manufacturers currently provide fleet operators with the information they need to choose the correct wheel and fittings. Selecting the correct fittings and accessories to the wheel are equally crucial, as the wrong components can lead to wheels loosening.

MWheels has produced a white paper Evaluating Commercial Vehicle Wheel Safety - how to keep safe and stay compliant, that includes more detail on the above information and a comprehensive 10-point wheel checklist on how to spot problem wheels.

It is available to download via <https://www.mwheels.co.uk/downloads/evaluating-wheel-safety-white-paper/>.



The Future

In the future, the traceability of products operating within fleets, including wheels, will be critical to a safe and reliable commercial vehicle industry.

Partnering with reputable companies, such as MWheels, will mean there will be a technical expert on-hand to advise on any issues, and to check they are correct for the vehicle type and sector in which they operate

The new European law means wheels are finally being recognised for being safety critical but there is still more work to be done.



NTDA
Technical Helpline
0121 386 4624



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