

Hooks, Skips and Tipppers... The 'rigid' backbone of the waste industry

Ainsley Fraser

Now more than ever, do your homework, talk to people you trust, and check every detail ... then check it all again, says Ainsley Fraser

The diverse range of vehicle chassis and equipment now available on the market is certain testimony to the dynamic buoyancy of the waste industry – and most of what is out there is well engineered, fit for purpose and compliant with some of the most stringent regulations in the transport sector. But if you are in the market for new equipment, there are a number of important considerations – and just as many options – to have front of mind when deciding what to do. Here are just some of them:

Probably the biggest, single impact on the waste industry, so far as vehicles are concerned, has been the arrival of WVTA (Whole Vehicle Type Approval). In this issue, we are looking only at tipppers, hook loaders and skip loaders – so tractor units, articulated and drawbar trailers are not considered – although of course, they are very fully covered in the new regulations.

WVTA is one of the most comprehensive and complicated rafts of legislation to arrive on the shoulders of the transport industry for many years. By comparison, even Euro VI, which really applied to the engine, emissions and exhaust plumbing, was comparatively straightforward – even if expensive.

WVTA, as it affects rigids in our industry, applies to any vehicle over 12,000kg up to 32,000kg. The two main

classes are N3 (highway use only) but more commonly for us, N3G which covers vehicles which may go off-road. From a visual point of view, the easy features to spot on both are side and rear under-run protection. Wings and spray suppression must also comply – but spray absorbing mud flaps are not required if the vehicle is the off-road type. So given the nature of waste operations, the huge majority of vehicles are 'construction' type chassis variants and thus in the N3G classification so far as WVTA is concerned.

Virtually all of the chassis manufacturers have now completed base vehicle type approval on all their models – but in ordering the chassis, make sure you order the right one – as later modifications, such as changed rear cross members, can lead to a costly variations in approvals – and delays in delivery.

Now let's turn our attention to the bodies and equipment on the back. Most UK body builders have gone the route of NSSTA (National Small Series Type Approval). This classification is restricted to production of no more than 250 units of a particular model in one year. There are other, wider classifications, such as EU-wide WVTA, for which some have opted – or, for low



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