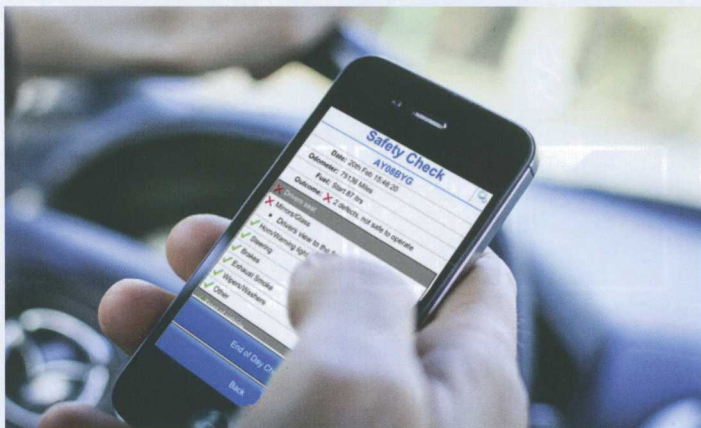


Inspecting the parts that all drivers have to reach...

Ainsley Fraser looks at how smart systems are helping to keep track.



Our Editor's heads up on this article stressed the importance of driver awareness, familiarity and understanding of vehicle parts and equipment ... to keep the truck safe, fit for purpose and avoid needless breakdowns. Absolutely. Actually, it's a lot more than that. It's obligatory ... it's a legal and regulatory requirement and we (driver, operator, vehicle owner, supply chain) are all in it together.

At the sharp end, the driver is effectively 'the manager' of a valuable mobile business asset when it's on the road – and it is his or her responsibility to ensure the fully functional operation, legality, safety and

compliance of the vehicle. Knowledge and training are relevant too. Vehicle responsibilities and obligations are included within Driver CPC courses, very often driver employment conditions, operating manuals – and of course, there is a robust enforcement regime to make sure we all comply.

Certainly, some of the clearest advice on what is involved can be found in the DVSA's Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness, available as a pdf download at goo.gl/RxcKBj.

Elsewhere, the trade associations – particularly the RHA and FTA, cover the subject well and in depth in a range of publications and handbooks.

The vast majority of operators in our industry go to great lengths to run their fleets very professionally, with well maintained, quality genuine parts equipped vehicles and highly trained and experienced drivers. In the waste industry particularly, that matters – as we work in a sector which the HSE, DVSA and the Police, amongst others, regard as 'high risk'.

So let's assume that our driver has ticked all the boxes and he pretty fully understands the mechanical basics,

all main components and parts of both the truck and the equipment mounted on it. The mindset discipline should be that the driver's truck always starts the day's work with zero defects – as the last thing any of us need on a busy day is a stop, a fixed penalty notice and a PG9.

To help him maintain that level of efficiency, help is at hand. The driver's 'daily obligations' begin with the Walk Around Check and O-licence requirements, including proper record keeping – even if it is paper based. Now there are also a range of hand-held information capture systems (including self-standing devices and systems linked to your smartphone) which can help carry out the job simply and efficiently – and do a lot more besides.

Paul Clarke, Managing Director of Truckfile, a leader in the field which works directly with some truck manufacturers says, "Implementing and using the system is as simple as scan, inspect and track. The inspection process is recorded on a database and, in the event of a defect being notified, the system can communicate the problem back to base, identify the part which needs to be replaced and even raise a workshop job sheet for its rectification."

The key to the system is QR codes; matrix bar codes designed for the automotive industry, which are used to identify the vehicle, the driver and the inspection points around the vehicle.

