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Dear xxxxx

Freedom of Information Request – F0007901

I am writing to confirm that the Department has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 18 July 2011. You asked for:

“Details of the Department for Transport’s tyre procurement policy.

Details of any guidance the Department for Transport issues to its fleets regarding the frequency and nature of tyre condition checks.

Details of the progress made towards implementation of EU Regulation (1222/2009) on the labelling of tyres with respect to fuel efficiency and other essential parameters, including any timescales of implementation and whether an enforcing body has been chosen.”

The Department for Transport does not issue a central policy for the procurement of replacement tyres for its vehicles. Contractual arrangements for the replacement of tyres are made on an individual basis by Executive Agencies of the Department who operate vehicle fleets. The central Department does not operate a vehicle fleet of its own.

The Government Car & Despatch Agency (GCDA) has reason to procure tyres for approximately 700 vehicles nationwide; they also maintain a fleet of enforcement vehicles used by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. The GCDA makes use of three suppliers for the ‘supply only’ and the ‘supply and fit’ of tyres. These suppliers (Goodyear/Dunlop, ATS and Kwik Fit) are drawn from the Office of Government Commerce’s Pan-Government Framework for Tyres and Associated Services. Tyres are chosen considering value for money and local availability.

Tyres for the Highways Agency (HA) Traffic Officer fleet are procured through a 4 year contract awarded to Babcock Critical Services, who provide service fleet management including the provision and replacement of tyres. The HA winter service fleet is also provided under contracted service providers who are responsible for operating and maintaining the vehicles. The HA provides advice that all tyres must be to a similar specification as provided by the original vehicle manufacturer.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has a fleet of 407 vehicles, predominantly blue light emergency vehicles (of 4x4 derivative) and some saloon or estate cars. Tyre replacement is managed through a contracted vehicle management company. As some of the tyres are of a specialist nature the MCA consult industry experts to ensure the best fit for the nature of work carried out (mainly off road). For on road tyres MCA use suppliers such as Kwik Fit or ATS so as to provide best value for money and ensure national coverage.

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) fleet is made up of 30 cars, 157 motorcycles, three lorries, two trailers, one bus, one van and one mini-bus. DSA does not have a procurement policy for tyres; therefore this information is not held. DSA confirm, however, that when new tyres are needed their staff is expected to purchase tyres recommended by the manufacturer.

The Driving & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has a total of 35 vehicles comprising 29 cars, 3 vans, 2 minibuses, and 1 people carrier. Of these, 24 are leased and the remaining 11 are owned by DVLA. For the leased vehicles, tyre replacement is part of the lease contract. For the vehicles owned, DVLA has a contract with a company for all vehicle related maintenance including tyres.

The Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) has a fleet of 3 cars. Tyres are procured through local suppliers on the basis of value for money and local availability.

The Department does not issue central guidance regarding the frequency and nature of tyre condition checks. Executive Agencies expect employees responsible for driving duties to carry out visual safety checks on their vehicle before daily use ensuring that they meet the condition, correct inflation and tread depth recommendations/legislation.

The EU Tyre Labelling Regulation 1222/2009 was agreed in November 2009 and will require tyres (manufactured from July 2012) to bear a consumer information label at point of sale indicating their rolling resistance, wet grip performance and rolling noise measured value with effect from November 2012. A recent amendment to the Regulation (introducing wet grip requirements for medium and heavy commercial tyres) was adopted by the European Commission in May 2011 and the amendment is now under the scrutiny process of the European Council.

As an EU Regulation, 1222/2009 is directly applicable in UK law and hence does not require transposition. The Department has begun work on implementing into UK legislation enforcement and penalty provisions for the Regulation. Initial instructions have been provided to drafting lawyers, and first discussions held with them. We expect to consult on draft regulations in March 2012 and have regulations in force in advance of November 2012. The Vehicle Certification Agency and National Measurement Office have both expressed an interest in enforcing these requirements. No decision on the enforcing body has yet been taken, however it is hoped that this can be achieved by the end of the current financial year.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department's Information Rights Unit at:

Zone D/04
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please see below the DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

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Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF