



Many thanks to everyone who came along to the latest round of Regional ATF Forums in May. There was a busy agenda that covered a wide range of topics including cessation of testing, briefings on our heavy vehicle re-timing exercise, ADR and dangerous goods, and an update on the Next Generation testing pilot. With 9 Forums (including a 'special' in Stornaway) and over 250 people, debate was lively and useful.

Some of the themes from the Forums are covered in this edition of the *ATF Bulletin*. We have also taken away feedback from delegates that we will be covering in a further edition later in the summer.



The ATF Forum in Cardiff – debate was lively and useful at all of the Forums

NEXT GENERATION TESTING UPDATE

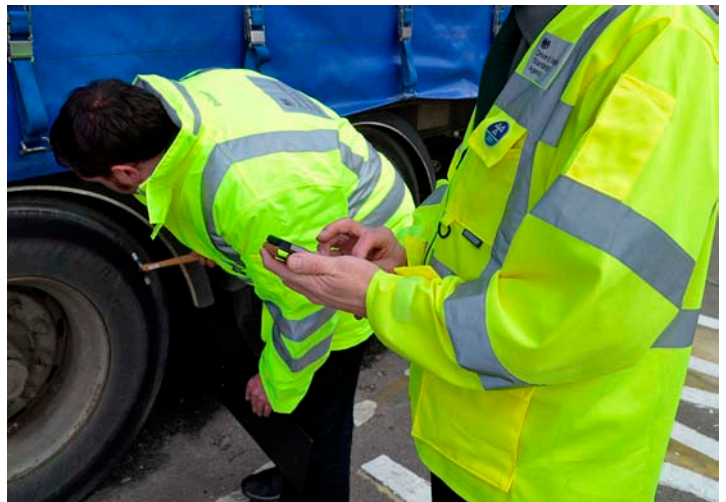
The Next Generation Testing (NGT) pilot has been running for three months in South Wales, Hereford and parts of the Midlands. As a reminder, the concepts being tested include:

- Flexible working between 6am and 10pm Monday to Friday and 6am until 8pm on Saturdays
- An automated scheduling system to deploy our staff in the most effective and efficient way
- Technical support for our testing staff, irrespective of what time of day they are undertaking vehicle examinations.

There are 25 ATFs in the pilot with testing being carried out by 19 Vehicle Standards Assessors (VSAs) assisted by 5 Specialist Vehicle Standards Assessors (SVSAs). Further support is provided by a dedicated planning and scheduling team and the pilot network management team.

“I’d like to thank all of the ATFs in the pilot network for their support,” says Steve Jordan, NGT Chief Operating Officer. “Like any pilot, we are testing concepts and new ways of working. The feedback from our customers in the pilot network has been invaluable in helping us do just that.

“NGT will deliver a flexible, customer-focused service designed around the needs of ATFs and the wider industry. ATFs in the pilot have been utilising extended testing periods and earlier start and later finish times to help deliver a better service to customers.



“We are confident that we have the basis for a modern service that can deliver not only what ATFs need now but one that will be able to respond to changing future demands.”

The pilot is already gaining useful input from ATFs, customers and staff and a full evaluation will take place in October.

Contracts review

With the launch of NGT, the enhanced service provision and other benefits, the Authorised Testing Facility (ATF) Contract needs to be amended to incorporate the changes. Therefore, DVSA will be undertaking a review and contacting our ATF providers and the recognised trade associations regarding the amendments to the ATF Contract.

Further details of the review and the ATF Contracts amendments will be sent to you shortly. This will be your opportunity to provide DVSA with your thoughts and opinions and help to shape the ATF Contract.

Cessation of testing continues

DVSA is committed to reducing service provision through our stations and we have recently announced a further round of cessation of testing. The stations affected are:

South Molton
Exeter
Royston
Plymouth
Norwich

Canterbury
Peterborough
Nottingham
Darlington
Haverfordwest

With the programme of cessation of testing at our sites, there will be a continuing need for ATF growth. As a government agency, DVSA cannot prescribe the number ATFs that will be required; this will be determined by the market.

DVSA is committed to supporting its ATF partners with initiatives such as cessation of testing and NGT. As new ATFs open, we will ensure that their business model is sustainable and that the flexibility that is offered for a short period to new ATFs is not used for commercial advantage. DVSA will continue to scrutinise the business plans of provisional ATFs to understand where their trade is coming from and that their operating model is sustainable.

Heavy vehicle test time changes

Average test guide times for the annual testing of heavy vehicles will be changing from 1 July 2014, as a result of the findings of a thorough, independently verified re-timing exercise of heavy vehicle annual testing. The work was carried out to understand the impact on test times of changing technology, test requirements and the migration of testing to an ATF-based delivery model. Nearly 80% of tests are now carried out at ATFs and, with the cessation of testing at DVSA sites continuing, we needed to be sure that the average test guide times remained fair and reasonable.

A total of 1,716 tests were timed at GVTs and ATFs throughout the country with the sample selected to include a variety of layouts: drive through, drive in/reverse out and so on. A representative sample of heavy vehicle tests, including trucks, trailers and passenger carrying vehicles of various configurations, were timed during a full test.

The findings showed that testing took no longer at ATFs than at DVSA sites and that average timings for all motor vehicles and the majority of trailers remained unchanged. For 3-axle trailers the average test time increased by 5 minutes and for all PSVs there is a reduction in the average test time of between 5 and 20 minutes dependant on sub class.

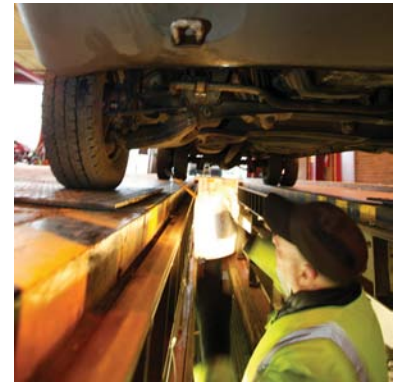
The new timings are as follows:

Vehicle group	Current	New	Difference
Motor vehicle 2 axle	40	40	0
Motor vehicle 3 axle	45	45	0
Motor vehicle 4 axle	55	55	0
Trailer 1 axle	20	20	0
Trailer 2 axle	25	25	0
Trailer 3 axle	25	30	5
PSV small <23 seats	50	45	-5
PSV medium 24-49 seats	70	50	-20
PSV medium 24-49 seats with seatbelts	70	55	-15
PSV large 50+ seats	70	55	-15
PSV large 50+ seats with seatbelts	70	65	-5

Remember that these are the average test times used to populate DVSA's booking system and to help you generate an appropriate schedule.

Other impacts on testing times

As you may have read in the [Moving On](#) blog last year, DVSA has simplified some heavy testing procedures, specifically around the option to jack vehicles and emissions. Where our examiners choose not to jack, this will save about 1 minute per steered axle. Where a vehicle passes a visual emissions test by our examiner, when the engine emissions are practically invisible and highly likely to pass any metered smoke test, the change is likely to save approximately 2 minutes per vehicle, assuming that they don't require a metered test as part of either RPC (reduced pollution certificate) or LEZ (low emission zone).



ADR and dangerous goods

Many ATFs are turning ADR vehicles away under the misunderstanding that an ADR vehicle is always a dangerous goods vehicle. This is not the case and in many cases ADR vehicles can be tested safely using simple and common sense approaches to operation, such as a temporary restriction of some types of work on adjacent bays for the duration of the test.

To help you understand whether you should be accepting a booking for an ADR vehicle, we have worked with industry to draft a simple flow chart. This uses a short series of yes/no questions that will help you and your staff to identify easily and quickly whether or not a customer is attempting to book an ADR on a dangerous goods vehicle.

We are looking for more volunteers to help trial the flow chart and make sure it is understandable and useful – many thanks to all of you who have already expressed an interest in trialling the new process. We would like a broad cross section of ATFs as possible to participate so if you would like to take part, please email us at TTPComms@vosa.gov.uk.

Ultimately we are trying to help you maximise the potential of your business through satisfying your customers' needs.

ADR tests and drive-through/reverse-out bays

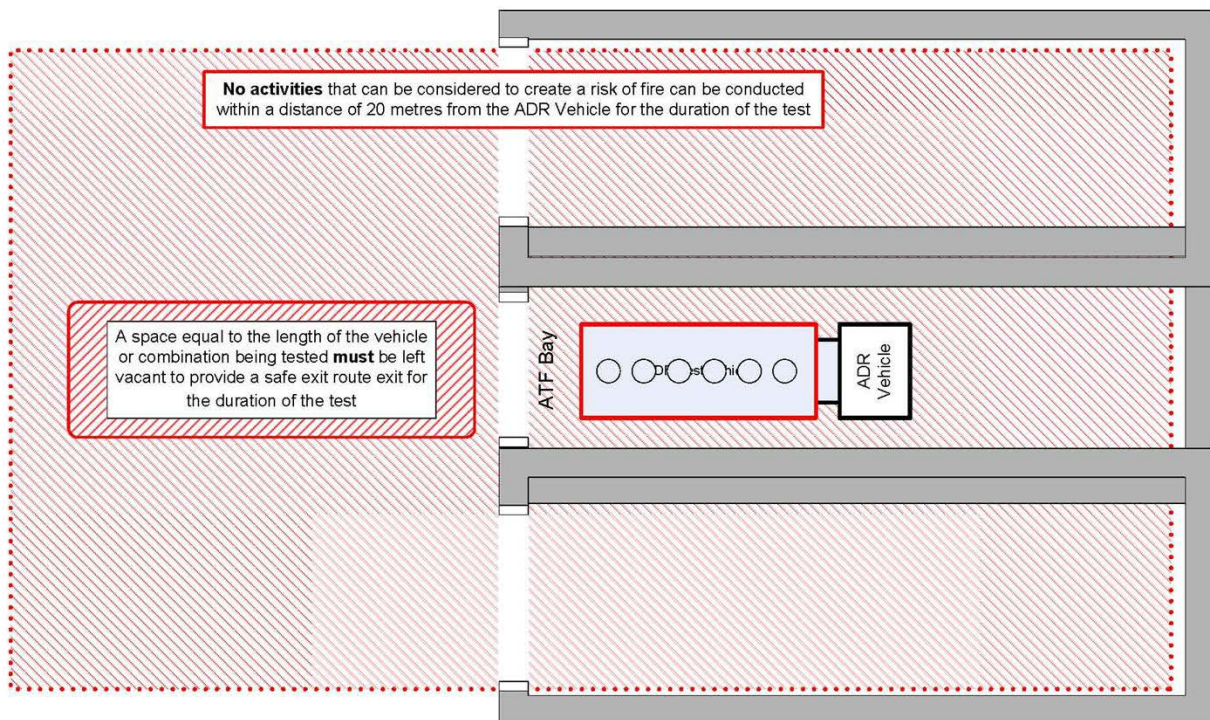
Whilst drive-through ADR test bays are well understood we have been receiving a lot of questions regarding ATFs with drive in/reverse out bays. Together with H&S and the Chief Fire Officers Association we've developed a suggested way of working that would minimise the risk of inspecting an ADR vehicle within this type of test bay.

These are;

- Maintain a 20m exclusion zone of any work that could cause a fire
- Ensure that the exit is kept clear for the duration of the test to enable rapid and immediate evacuation of the vehicle from the facility
- The clearance must be at least the size of the vehicle/combination under test.

(See diagram below)

Drive In/Reverse Out ATF Lane Spacing Diagram



Version 0.a Issued April 2014

Would you like to host driving tests from your premises?

Following on from our successful programme to move vehicle testing closer to the customer, we are now hoping to build on that achievement and are looking at new opportunities for the delivery of vocational (lorry, bus and car+trailer) driving tests.

As part of the success story, we would like you to consider the possibility of hosting these tests from your premises.

The key site requirements for the delivery of vocational tests are:



- A hard-standing area measuring a minimum of 66m x 11m which could be marked out for the off-road exercises and could be kept clear of traffic and people whilst the exercises take place
- A quiet area where examiners can complete their paperwork
- Somewhere for trainers and instructors to wait whilst candidates are out on test
- Suitable routes nearby so that a meaningful test can be conducted within the timescales allowed.

At present, we are looking to prove the concept of vocational testing at ATFs, so any arrangement would be a trial in the first instance.

We are particularly interested in sites in and around the following locations:

Stoke
Pontypool
Leicester
Kirkham
Southampton
Edinburgh

Swansea
Cardiff
Gillingham
Wolverhampton
Wrexham
Canterbury

If you believe that your site meets these requirements and would be interested in taking part in the trial, we would love to hear from you. To find out more, or arrange an initial assessment of your site, please e-mail ian.taylor1@dsa.gsi.gov.uk.

Stay up to date with DVSA

Please also remember that the only way to get regular ATF DVSA alerts with timely reminders about policy changes, consultations or service changes is to subscribe to DVSA Direct via DVSA's website: www.gov.uk/dvsa

Please continue to feed back your suggestions and areas of concern. Your comments will help us improve the ATF experience and of course we will keep you informed on the latest developments.



Did you know that DVSA run 2 blogs on GOV.UK to keep our customers up to date with the latest compliance tips and the services we provide?

[Matters of Testing](#) gives official advice and information for MOT garages and testers, while [Moving On](#) makes sure that commercial vehicle drivers and fleet operators are up to date with the latest rules and regulations for heavy vehicles.

But you don't have to remember to browse through the articles every day – you can sign up to get a free email reminder linking you to the latest articles. Stay on top of the latest information affecting your business – sign up to Moving On and Matters of Testing through our free email alerts service, [DVSA Direct](#).