



Traffic Commissioners
for Great Britain

Driver Safety Talk: Drivers' Hours, Tachographs & Driver Wellbeing

Introduction – Slides 3 and 4

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Good morning everyone, and thanks for taking the time to join this session. Today, we're going to talk about three things that directly affect your safety and your livelihood: drivers' hours, tachographs, and your wellbeing, especially fatigue.

Firstly, this isn't a box-ticking exercise. It's about keeping you safe, keeping your licence secure, and making sure every one of us gets home safely at the end of the day.

1. Why Drivers' Hours Matter – Slides 6 and 7

Drivers' hours regulations exist for one reason: fatigue is one of the biggest risks on the road.

Research shows fatigue is linked to up to one-quarter of fatal and serious road incidents.

Fatigue affects everyone, no matter how experienced you are. When you're tired:

- Your reactions slow
- Your awareness narrows
- It becomes harder to judge distances
- Microsleeps can occur without warning

A microsleep lasting just 2 seconds means 50 metres of travel without consciousness at 56 mph.

No one is skilled enough to overcome the laws of biology.

That's why daily driving limits, weekly caps, and mandatory breaks are non-negotiable. They're designed to prevent you from reaching the danger zone.

Everyone needs to follow the rules as anyone having these issues could impact on you. Another driver with slowed reactions can hit you!

2. Real-World Impact of Fatigue – Slides 9 and 10

You can see the basics on these slides but to understand the scale of the issue:

- Being awake for 17 hours doubles your collision risk.
- Being awake for 24 hours makes you seven times more likely to have a collision.

Sleep deprivation is also widespread:

- 40% of UK adults don't get enough sleep.
- 20% report poor sleep quality.

Given the demands of HGV work (usually long hours, monotony, early starts, night driving), these risks hit our industry harder than most.

And factors like sleep apnoea, which is more common in middle-aged men (a group very well represented in HGV driving), further increase fatigue risk.

This is why rest is not optional, it is protective equipment, just like a seatbelt.

3. The Role of Tachographs – Slides 12 and 13

Tachographs sometimes feel like they're only there to police you, but they actually provide protection when used correctly.

A properly used tachograph:

- Proves you followed the law
- Protects you in investigations or incidents
- Helps the company maintain compliance
- Prevents accidental or unnoticed hours breaches

Using it correctly means:

- Logging in properly at the start of every shift
- Recording all activities accurately (driving, other work, breaks, rest)
- Carrying the required 28 days of records
- Reporting faults immediately

Think of your tachograph as your legal witness.

You want it to tell the right story.

4. Breaks & Rest: Your Best Defence Against Fatigue – Slide 15

Breaks aren't wasted time - they're part of safe driving.

The law requires structured breaks because science shows your brain simply cannot sustain high-level attention indefinitely. Breaks:

- Reset your concentration
- Reduce fatigue-related lapses
- Improve decision-making
- Help maintain reaction times

Even if you feel “fine”, your brain may be entering fatigue without you realising it. And remember, your daily and weekly rest is just as important. If you ever feel excessively tired before your next break is due, speak up. Safety always comes before schedule.

5. Driver Wellbeing: Beyond the Regulations – Slide 15 continued

Driver wellbeing isn't always talked about, but it's essential for safety.

Physical wellbeing

- Hydration: Dehydration leads to tiredness and loss of concentration.
- Nutrition: Avoid long stretches without food - steady energy beats energy spikes.
- Movement: Stretch, walk, or mobilise joints during breaks.

Mental wellbeing

Driving is mentally demanding. The stress of tight schedules, traffic, waiting times, and night shifts adds up.

According to recent UK research into HGV driver facilities, drivers who feel safer and more secure rest significantly better

- 90% of drivers who rated vehicle security as good said they could rest well.
- Fewer than 40% felt they could rest when they perceived security as poor.

This directly shows how wellbeing and rest quality affect each other.

If anything, be that stress, fatigue or health concerns affect your concentration or mood, let us know. We're here to help, not to judge.

6. The Bigger Picture: Industry Context – Slide 16

The HGV sector is under pressure, with a shrinking workforce and high demand. Driver wellbeing and retention are directly linked to safety and performance. These challenges mean we must prioritise safe working practices more than ever.

7. We're Here to Support You – Slide 16 continued

If you are unsure about a rule, concerned about fatigue, or feel pressured around schedules, talk to us.

We'd rather support you early than manage a crisis later.

Safety isn't just an individual responsibility, for us it's a team effort.

8. Closing Message – Slide 17

To wrap up:

- Follow drivers' hours, they're designed to protect you.
- Use tachographs properly, they're your evidence of safe, legal driving.
- Take every break and rest seriously, fatigue is a silent risk with real consequences.
- Look after your physical and mental wellbeing, your health is just as important as your skill behind the wheel.

Your safety comes first.

Your wellbeing matters.

And we're here to support you every mile of the way.

Thank you and stay safe out there.