



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
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Alison Norton
Assistant Coroner
Office of HM Senior Coroner for North Yorkshire &
York
The Coroners Court
3 Racecourse Lane
Northallerton
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14 May 2024

Dear Ms Norton,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Reports to Prevent Future Deaths dated 20 March, sent to the Department for Transport following the conclusion of your inquest into the deaths of Shirley Ann Hunt and Ellie Louise Frances Hunt. I am sorry to hear of the tragic deaths of Mrs Hunt and Ms Hunt, for which I offer my sincere condolences to their family and friends.

You found that the evidence considered during your inquest raised concern that adults and children over three years of age can travel in the accommodation area of a motor caravan without restraint, and in doing so, this may create a risk to life.

Fortunately, there are relatively few casualties amongst occupants of motor caravans in Great Britain, but the Department is committed to improving safety for all road users with appropriate vehicle construction standards and ensuring the safe operation of vehicles.

From 29 April 2012, newly registered motor caravans have required all seats intended for use when the vehicle is travelling, irrespective of whether they are fitted to the accommodation area or elsewhere in the vehicle, to be fitted with seat belts. Seats which are not suitable for use whilst travelling and not fitted with seat belts must be clearly identified to users by means of a pictogram or a sign with appropriate text.

Motor caravans first used before 29 April 2012 and any vehicles converted to a motor caravan after registration are subject to different rules, and only require mandatory seat belts for the driver and front passenger seats. There are no regulations prohibiting the fitment of additional seat belts where more passengers are intended for transport than can be accommodated in front seats.

Vehicles converted after registration are typically those which are re-purposed and converted following an initial service life as a commercial vehicle. We believe this to be the category of vehicle that the Hunt family were travelling in at the time of the collision.

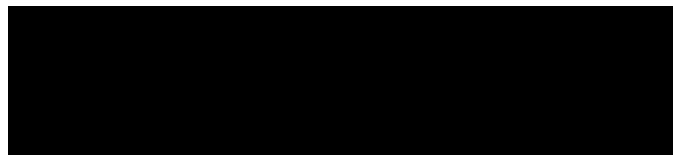
Although it is not illegal to travel unrestrained in the accommodation area of a motor caravan where no seat belts are fitted, the Department has published guidance at the following link which advises that passengers are safest in a forward or rearward facing seat equipped with a three-point seat belt.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/carriage-of-passengers-in-campervans

Overall, I believe the existing regulatory framework is proportionate as it introduced enhanced requirements for new motor caravans from 2012 and provides sufficient in-use provision to cover the broad range and age of motor caravans operating on our roads.

However, I have asked my officials to consider what further options might be possible and appropriate to help prevent similar occurrences in future.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT