



Department
for Transport

Peter Nieto
Senior Coroner for Derby and Derbyshire
Coroner's Court,
Town Hall,
Chesterfield,
S40 1LP

From the Parliamentary Under
Secretary of State

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: [REDACTED]

17 February 2025

Dear Mr Nieto,

Thank you for your report of 5 December 2024 made under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, following the inquest into the death of Mr Jon-Paul Prigent. I am deeply saddened to hear of Mr Prigent's death and offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends.

My Department is strongly committed to improving the safety of all road users. Relevant regulation includes the requirement for all new vehicles to be approved to demonstrate that they comply with a range of technical requirements before they can be sold. The relevant manufacturer requirements for the type-approval of new agricultural tractors are set out in assimilated Regulation (EU) No 167/2013. Once a vehicle enters service the relevant requirements are contained in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.

My Department conducted a consultation in 2016 on introducing roadworthiness testing for fast tractors used for commercial haulage. As a result, agricultural tractors capable of a speed over 40km/h (approximately 25mph) being used for commercial haulage were brought into scope of the Motor Vehicles (Tests) Regulations 1981, therefore requiring them to be subject to annual roadworthiness testing. At the time, it was decided that it would not be proportionate to bring slower speed agricultural tractors in scope of annual roadworthiness testing given their use on roads is limited in comparison with other vehicles.

Our road collision statistics show that, over the last ten years, the number of incidents involving an agricultural vehicle where someone was killed has remained relatively stable.

This is despite a slight increase in the number of agricultural vehicles registered for use on our roads over the same period. In the 10 years from 2014 to 2023, in GB there was an average of nine deaths a year involving tractors in which a trailer may have been in use, and there is no evidence on an increasing trend in these fatalities. During the same time period there was an average of 323,000 tractors in GB, including the faster ones subject to roadworthiness testing, licensed for use on the road.

It is a legal requirement that all vehicles used on the road are maintained in a roadworthy condition at all times. Further, vehicles should not be loaded beyond their capacity. As part of ensuring compliance, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency ("DVSA") conducts roadside checks throughout the road network. Where non-compliance is evident, this can result in a vehicle being prohibited until the weight is reduced or the defect rectified. In addition to prohibitions, DVSA also impose fixed penalties on the drivers of such vehicles which range from £50 to £300 depending on the severity of the offence. Alternatively, more severe cases can be reported for criminal prosecution.

The DVSA publishes guidance on both maintaining roadworthiness and vehicle loading and these are available at the links provided below:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-maintaining-roadworthiness/guide-to-maintaining-roadworthiness-commercial-goods-and-passenger-carrying-vehicles

www.gov.uk/guidance/securing-loads-on-hgvs-and-goods-vehicles

The general principles of these guides equally apply to light goods and passenger vehicles below the operator licensing thresholds and for vehicles that are otherwise exempt (such as agricultural vehicles and trailers).

In addition, DVSA also publish the Categorisation of Defects manual which is made available so that vehicle owners, operators and drivers can become more aware of DVSA's standards and what will be done should problems be found. Part 1 of the manual is intended for heavy goods and public service vehicles and may also be used for agricultural motor vehicles, trailers and trailed appliances.

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6748955424108edc3c8cebde/categorisation-of-vehicle-defects.pdf>

The Health & Safety Executive provides guidance regarding safe workplace transport in the agricultural sector, which can be accessed at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/machinery/farm-vehicles-1.htm

Further, to assist owners in maintaining their agricultural trailers, a well-established private sector voluntary scheme, Tilly Pass, provides for the inspection and service of agricultural machinery to British Standard 14200:2023 on the maintenance of machinery. Details can be found at:

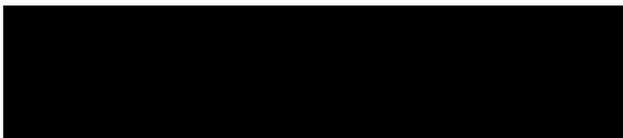
www.tilypass.co.uk/

In view of your report, I will instruct my officials to examine what more could be done to ensure the roadworthiness of tractors, trailers and coupling devices. Additionally, to help promote good maintenance of agricultural vehicles I have asked my officials to investigate how best to raise awareness of the DVSA's published guidance on maintaining roadworthiness and vehicle loading, as well as of the existing voluntary trailer maintenance scheme. My officials will consider how best this information can be communicated to operators of agricultural vehicles.

The Department will continue to monitor the effectiveness of vehicle safety regulations to identify any potential amendments.

Once again, I would like to express my condolences to the friends and family of Mr Prigent.

Best wishes,




MINISTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ROADS