



REGIONAL ATF FORUMS

Welcome to your ATF e-bulletin. This is the fourth issue and we hope that you are finding it useful. If you have any ideas for articles ideas, please drop us a line at the email address below and we will do our best to incorporate it.



Thank you to all those who attended the Regional ATF Forums around the country in May. In total nearly 180 ATF operators came to the Forums to get the latest news from VOSA, share experiences with other operators and give their feedback.

It's becoming clear from your feedback that you find these events really useful. Many of you have said that it's a good opportunity to get help and advice in resolving the issues you have told us about. You have also said it's good to hear from a VOSA Director in person and that it's a useful way to catch-up and share ideas with other ATF operators.

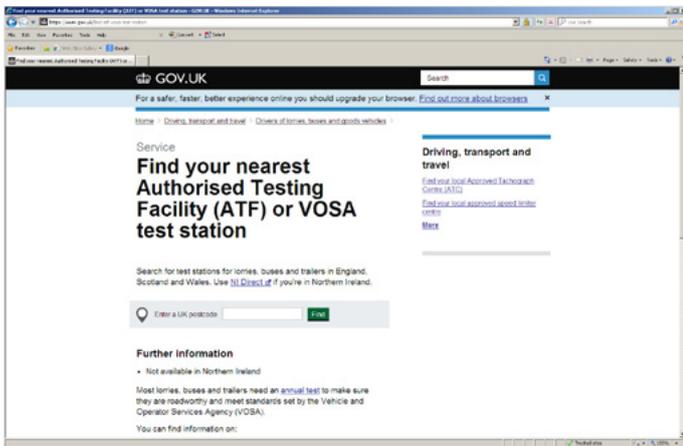
The next round of Forums will take place in November. We will be in touch nearer the time with full details.

In the meantime, if you have any issues and concerns please let us know by contacting your local management team or by emailing us at:

TTPComms@vosa.gov.uk

'Find Your Nearest' service is live

We have now launched the web tool to allow your customers to search on line for their nearest ATF.



The 'Find your nearest ATF' tool can be found on the www.gov.uk website and it is a valuable tool for you in promoting your business.

When your ATF details are brought up on screen by a search, you have the opportunity to put a link to your own website there for potential customers to view.

We would advise that you check that all of your details are correct on the website. If you need to update any of your details then please contact your local VOSA Station Manager.

Update on 'Next Generation Testing'

Work is continuing with our Next Generation Testing (NGT) project and it is clear from your feedback at the recent ATF Forums that our plans have been welcomed by you.

NGT is about giving you, the ATFs, the flexibility that you require to successfully operate your business. VOSA is determined to remain the provider of choice for testing services.

Those who attended were given some more detail on the new, flexible way of working that NGT will bring.

The proposed NGT service offering allows ATFs to;

- ▶ Book more flexible testing sessions
- ▶ Have staff remain on site after session finish time to complete booked work
- ▶ Make bookings all year round – confirmed on a quarterly basis with three months notice
- ▶ Request short term booking within the three month period
- ▶ Access on-line support

We recognise that you are keen for change to happen at a fast pace and we aim to bring the new way of operating in as soon as possible.

Definition of low floor vehicles

Over the past few months VOSA has received several enquiries over the definition of low floor vehicles and what restrictions are imposed when testing on an inspection pit with a maximum depth of less than 1.6 M.

Following a consultation exercise the following definition has been agreed.

Low Floor Buses:

- A PSV certified to DDA requirements, or
- Certified to carry wheelchairs; or
- With a substantive floor area height of 30cm/12ins or less. (Measurement taken from the substantive floor area or chassis, not including axles, suspension etc).

Low Floor Trailers:

A trailer with a substantive floor area height that is lower than the centre-line of the axle.

Low Floor Vehicles:

Both of the above.

Managing your contractual commitments

In order for us to be able to provide a consistent and fair service to all, it is important for all ATFs to respect their contractual obligations. Underutilisation, short-notice cancellations of testing periods and poor management of PFA's are hampering our ability to offer the best possible overall service to you.

1. Utilisation

VOSA has limited resources. ATFs are required to respect the fair usage policy and avoid under utilisation of examiners time. ATFs that don't make full use of their testing periods are more likely to be charged a reservation fee, and are also booking staff that could have been allocated to another ATF who could have filled the period.

When balancing ATF growth with resource impacts, we will use the following rules as guide for expected utilisation:

Months 0 & 1

Average monthly utilisation of no less than 50%

Months 2 & 3

No less than 75% average utilisation for the two months

Months 4 and onwards

No less than 85% average utilisation for the two months.

Month 6 onwards

No less than 85% average utilisation over two consecutive months.

ATFs that do not meet the expected utilisation will have their sessions reduced to a level where the level can be achieved, for example they could have one of the five testing days removed.

2. Cancellation of Testing Periods with less than seven days notice

ATFs are obliged to give VOSA no less than seven full days notice of cancellation. We do try to be understanding when testing periods have to be cancelled at short notice, however,

we have noticed examples where a pattern has emerged with cancellations becoming a regular occurrence. In these cases we have to take a stronger line. For us to allow growth at ATFs, this situation is not sustainable as we have limited resources which could be allocated elsewhere with a fair amount of notice. This will benefit the end customer as much as VOSA and ATFs.

Cancelling testing periods with less than seven days notice, will result in future months testing periods being reduced.

3. Finance: Failed draw-downs from PFA

The effects of ATFs having insufficient funds available in their account when draw-downs are made causes a substantial amount of additional administration effort for VOSA. Please ensure there are sufficient funds in your account seven full days prior to a confirmed reservation. This is another area where we will be exercising our contractual rights to avoid contravening HM Treasury rules on managing public money.

Should there be a failure to draw-down funds more than twice in any month, that ATFs will have all testing periods for the following month cancelled.

Should there be any three of these situations in any 12 month period, this will lead to VOSA considering the termination of the ATF's contract.

That termination will come into effect at the beginning will be the month following the third occurrence.

Hosting IVA tests

Are any of your customers' body-builders or manufacturers who are affected by the new European Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) rules?

If so, you might find it attractive to start offering Individual Vehicle Approval tests at your ATF.

From April 2009, type approval legislation was phased in and by October 2014 will be extended to cover all new road vehicles including buses, coaches, trucks, trailers, caravans and certain special purpose vehicles such as wheelchair accessible vehicles.

As VOSA only currently offer Heavy IVA tests at five sites nationwide, there may be potential in your area to pick up some work as a lot of different categories of vehicles are now coming into scope.

There is no limit on the pit-fee that you can charge on IVA tests as there is with statutory annual HGV and PSV tests. Although it wouldn't be attractive to a lot of ATF operators, some may be able to find a niche in the market. For more information on becoming a Privately Owned Testing Facility (POTF) and doing IVA testing please visit [link](#).

ATF E-BULLETIN

Please let us know if the information in this e-bulletin is valuable to you and if so, how often you'd like to receive it. You can do this via our inbox: TTPComms@vosa.gov.uk

Many thanks to those of you who volunteered to become more practically involved in making improvements and trialling ideas; we have your details on record. In fact some of you may already have been contacted by VOSA staff.



VOSA ALERTS

A large banner for VOSA Direct subscriptions. It features a dark blue background with the word 'SUBSCRIBE' in large white letters. To the right is a white envelope icon. Below this, the text 'VOSA Direct' is written in white. At the bottom of the banner, there are four white vehicles: a truck, a bus, a van, and a car, all set against a light blue background.

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

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.