



**Following the latest round of Regional ATF Forums in May, this special e-bulletin has been put together to give you an update on the issues raised. Many thanks to everyone who came along and contributed to a lively and useful debate.**



## MAY FORUM UPDATE

The ATF e-bulletin in [June](#) gave a summary of what was covered at the Forums. In brief, the topics were:

- The formation of the Agency: DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency), a merger between VOSA and DSA, was launched on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014. The merger will mean changes internally but customers will see no disruption to services.
- ATF Progress: We now have more than 440 ATFs open bringing passenger and heavy goods testing closer to the customer, and over 80% of testing is now done at non-DVSA sites.
- Cessation of testing: We have announced plans to cease testing at 10 more DVSA sites showing our commitment to reducing service provision at our own stations.

- Heavy vehicles retiming exercise: With 1 in 5 tests now being carried out at ATFs, and with changing technology and test requirements, DVSA needed to be sure that the average test guide times remained fair and reasonable. We carried out an independently verified re-timing exercise of annual test times involving 1,716 tests at GVTSSs and ATFs throughout the country and with a variety of layouts. The results were that the majority of test times remain unchanged, but for 3-axle trailers the average test time increased by 5 minutes and for PSVs there is a reduction in the average test time of between 5 and 20 minutes dependant on sub class.
- ADR and dangerous goods testing and changes to testing procedures: Many ATFs believe that they cannot test these vehicles but you could be turning work away. DVSA has developed a [simple flow chart](#) that will enable your staff to identify easily whether a customer is attempting to book an ADR on a dangerous goods vehicle or not. This in turn will ensure that you do not turn away tests you could do, you maximise your ATF's potential and satisfy your customers' needs.
- Next Generation Testing (NGT): The pilot continues to run in South Wales, Hereford and parts of the West Midlands. NGT will deliver a flexible, customer-focused service designed around the needs of ATFs and the wider industry. ATFs in the pilot have been taking up extended testing periods and earlier start and later finish times to help deliver a better service to their 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.



## Reduction in testing fees for ATFs

DVSA is pleased to announce that from the 1 October we are reducing the HGV and PSV testing fees on average by 3.5% for ATFs. The fee adjustment will be made to reflect the different costs between tests conducted at ATFs and DVSA sites. To achieve this, fees at DVSA sites will increase on average by 18.5%. These changes reflect the real cost of providing our services to ATFs and we will continue to provide value for money for commercial vehicle businesses.

## You said, we did

We have found the ATF Forums invaluable in engaging with the ATF network. By taking on board your ideas about growing your business we are continuing to move at pace towards the common goal of having as much testing done at third party sites as possible.

In previous forums you said you wanted:

### **“Timely and relevant communications and access to DVSA staff”**

We are committed to producing four ATF e-bulletins a year and we run a series of two ATF Forums per annum hosted by a DVSA Director.

“Timely and relevant communications and access to DVSA staff”

### **“We don’t want to compete with DVSA”**

We don’t want to compete with ATFs and DVSA is committed to reducing service provision through our stations.

“We don’t want to compete with DVSA”

### **“Help us promote our business”**

‘Find your nearest ATF’ on [www.GOV.uk](http://www.GOV.uk) is a central place for customers to find you and is promoted by our Contact Centre staff.

### **“More flexible testing periods and improved efficiency”**

Next Generation Testing is progressing well and includes better IT for our testers to maximise their time testing and offers the ability for ATFs to book additional test periods and longer test days – watch this space! Tests have been simplified and made more efficient with reduced need for jacking and smoke emissions tests.

### **“ATF Lane Utilisation”**

Business Development Managers are actively helping ATFs open more lanes so that we can reduce testing through our own stations.

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## Forum Q&A

At this last set of forums the 5 main points raised were:

### **Q. Can you tell us why we cannot have half day testing when other ATFs are getting this service?**

A. We are only offering half day testing to help ATFs establish their business; once established we will discontinue this service whenever possible.

### **Q. Could ATFs share examiners between them to ensure that resources are used appropriately?**

A. Under NGT examiners will not be based at one ATF but will be allocated by a central team to carry out tests where they are needed. New examiners and apprentices have been recruited but it will take time to train them.

## **Q. Is DVSA going to stop the growth of ATFs?**

A. As a government agency DVSA cannot prescribe the number ATFs that will be required; this will be determined by the market.

## **Q. Is what you say at these Forums filtered down to the staff on the ground?**

A. Every effort is made to keep our staff up to date and well informed and under NGT more time will be made for communications. If you have an issue with a member of staff, this should be addressed through your Station or Area Manager (or Network Business Manager in the NGT pilot).

## **Q. Where did the figure of 85% utilisation come from?**

A. We had to have a figure to start with as a baseline and ensure that staff are employed and used appropriately. Letters are sent out automatically when an ATF drops below this figure and this will continue until we reach 90%, ideally 100%, in the future. There has to be some sort of measurement to ensure resources are being used efficiently. If you are having issues with your utilisation then please contact your station or area manager.

# **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](http://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](#).