



Simplification of speed limit rules for buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles

Proposals to simplify motorway speed limits for buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) were published today by the Department for Transport.

The changes are needed because of differences that have arisen between new vehicles, which are fitted with speed limiters, and older vehicles which are not. This means that while newer HGVs are limited to 56mph older vehicles are able to drive at up to 70 mph on the motorway. Similarly, new passenger vehicles with over eight seats are limited to 62.5 mph on the motorway but older vehicles are able to drive at 70 mph.

This can cause confusion for other drivers and creates a disincentive for companies to invest in safer and more fuel efficient vehicles. In addition, vehicles with speed limiters are not allowed to use the right hand lane of three lane motorways but those without speed limiters currently are.

The proposals put forward in today's consultation include:

- setting a 65 mph limit for all buses, minibuses and coaches with more than eight passenger seats regardless of whether or not they are fitted with a speed limiting device
- setting the motorway speed limit at 60 mph for all HGVs over 3.5 tonnes regardless of whether or not they are fitted with a speed limiting device
- prohibiting all HGVs between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes and all buses, minibuses and coaches with more than eight passenger seats from using the right hand lane of motorways with three or more lanes

Road Safety Minister Paul Clark said:

"We want to provide clarity for everybody - drivers, operators, other motorists and the police - as well as making sure that there is a level playing field for those operating in the bus, coach and road haulage industry. These proposals simplify motorway speed limits for buses, coaches and lorries so that everyone has to abide by the same rules regardless of the age of their vehicle."

The consultation can be found at dft.gov.uk/consultations/open and closes on Tuesday 27 April 2010.

The PPP comments ... we were not aware of the current (strange) 62.5 mph limit for minibuses. With these proposals, we will have three limits set 5 mph apart effecting two inner lanes. We assume that the HGV limiters will be reset at 60 mph. We believe that the most significant problem now on an unsaturated M.Way is HGVs using the middle lane to creep past other limited vehicles causing saturation of the fast lane and general tail backs and tail gating. The close convoys then take miles to sort themselves out. The proposal does reduce the speed differential which is good but we can see the way they are thinking with 3 limits all enforced by SPECS cameras. Whilst we envisage two lanes of speedo checking distracted drivers tail gating each other. We are convinced that an honest review of the effects of limiting HGVs and PSVs will show a large increase in serious incidents involving these vehicles.