



TRUCKERS' TOILETS UK

Campaign to improve the health & wellbeing of lorry drivers

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NEWSLETTER 2-7



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Key word for 2015: Respect. As one of the Drivers commented: ".....it should be noted when you treat people badly you will get a bad response. Respect is a 2 way street. If we are expected to be respectful we must be treated with the same level of respect."



Plan for 2015: TTUK will focus on 5 main areas: [1] *medical evidence* [2] *location of facilities* [3] *costs & savings* [4] *human rights* and [4] *communication with companies*. By the end of 2015 we are aiming to have a Facilities Policy which will either be finalised or will be moving towards a conclusion.



Communication with Companies: We have reached a critical stage of our campaign. TTUK is now in discussion with Companies on the issue of accessing toilets on their premises. This is great news and we must encourage this communication. This support is extremely important to us. The basis for the discussions is to find workable solutions to the toilet access problem and we're asking for opinions from the Companies on some of the positive suggestions that drivers have made. We are beginning to be listened to and companies are willing to consider the issues. We must nurture this opportunity. I've welcomed the suggestion that Companies join in our discussions if they would like to do so that we can understand *their* points of view



Medical evidence: With a lot of discussion on exercise in the media [including Twitter], TTUK is asking drivers how easy it is for them to exercise and is receiving a very good response. The information is being collected and initially is being used for Tweets to highlight the issues affecting drivers, in addition to the lack of toilets. There continues to be a lack of concern with drivers' welfare which needs to be addressed. Eventually the evidence will be included in a TTUK health document. So Drivers: please keep your thoughts coming!



Government:



1. Department of Transport: In November Gill emailed Patrick McLoughlin MP, Secretary of State for Transport concerning an article in the Daily Mail [13 Nov 2014] which described hauliers leaving the profession because of the new European Union rule to sign up to expensive training. Gill pointed out that they are also leaving because of the way they are treated in the UK when it comes to accessing toilets and hand washing facilities during their working day. A reply was received from a person in the Department of Transport whose role was not stated which included the following: *'I realise the frustration that drivers must experience when they are refused permission to use toilets. However, **the Government has no powers to intervene** in these cases. I suggest that where this does happen, truckers should ask their*

employer, trade union or trade association to raise the matter with the company concerned. TTUK will update you on any developments.

2. Commercial Motor [15 Jan 2015] carries an article by Chris Tindall highlighting to readers the Government's stance on toilet access for drivers .

3. Jonathan Djangoly MP: Gill tweeted this MP again because of his apparent interest in transport and drivers' concerns – no response.

4. Election year: If you have politicians or their representatives knocking on your door, don't ignore them! If you are a lorry driver ask (1) what their party is doing about your health & wellbeing as a driver and (2) why you don't have regulatory access to a toilet like other workers. If you are *not* a lorry driver you can ask why public toilets aren't considered beneficial to your health! Please share any comments with TTUK – every little helps!



Shift workers: One of our drivers highlighted an article in *The Independent* [15 Dec 2014] which pointed out that a Health Survey for England found that a third of men and a fifth of women work irregular hours and are more likely to suffer health problems as a result because of the possible disruption to the body's 'clock'. Drivers aren't specifically mentioned but could this be an issue? Do you work irregular hours? Do you drive overnight? If so please contact us via TTUK



Washroom hygiene: A survey commissioned by the PHS group [Cleanzine 27 Nov 2014] found washroom hygiene was one of 3 important areas that could be upgraded. The standard of the facilities was found to impact on company culture and morale. As a result the washroom was one of the areas which should be kept at a high level of cleanliness. [TTUK: Drivers can help by leaving facilities –where they are available - as they would wish to find them!]



Hand Hygiene: 'Antiseptics and the Skin' an article by Chris Packham [www.enviroderm.co.uk/] examines the validity of the view that skin cleansers and skin creams are beneficial for the skin and for infection prevention. This very interesting document suggests that the regular use of such products actually does little to prevent infection because it reduces the skin's own preventative 'flora' thus allowing access to other microorganisms. Also, to be effective there must be suitable contact time between the skin and the product which is often not as long as it should be. Whilst we shouldn't stop using sanitisers on our skin, the article suggests using them only when necessary. An important point in the article is '*Where the hands are contaminated with organic matter an alcohol sanitiser's effect will be neutralised. In such a situation hand washing is the correct approach.....*' The article concludes there is a need to have a suitable assessment of the use of such products and a reminder that usage shouldn't persist just because sanitisers become common practice. [more next month]



Loo problem for bus drivers in Seattle area: In 2014 the state Department of Labor & Industries was contacted by a Metro driver who had a medical condition, had experienced problems finding a loo and had been given a minor infraction for being behind schedule because he needed a toilet. Metro responded to L&I by issuing a statement stating that services were not to be delayed unnecessarily except for visiting the loo. This provoked other drivers to voice their experiences and L&I undertook an investigation which included visiting some of the Metro's estimated 280 loos. A week before the report Metro was fined



for failing to provide its transit operators with unrestricted access to bathroom facilities and for not having toilets within a reachable distance during turnaround times. 'Creative' methods of relieving themselves were used as a result. L&I gave Metro 30 days to fix the problem or provide an improvement timetable. The lack of hot/cold water, paper towels and soap was also noted. The opening hours of some of the facilities were not considered suitable for the drivers and in certain areas there was a lack of facilities. A number of the toilets were found to be in poor condition and unsafe. The fact that many drivers reduced their fluid intake and suffered urinary tract infections or kidney infections was also confirmed. In addition, the difficulties of coping with periods prompted many women to call in sick each month. The Amalgamated Transit Union was criticised for not being proactive but responded by saying that Metro was responsible. Apparently there used to be a full time comfort station coordinator and a spokesman for Metro says they are now beginning to develop an action plan to correct these problems .[summary of article by Laura Kaufman, 5 December 2014, Crosscut Public Media 2015]
[Ed: The situation in the UK has similarities. Should we have a UK comfort station coordinator? Would your Union back YOU?]

Loo Tours with Katie and Lucy Loo: Rachel has had to return to the US but her London Loo Tours live on! Find out more at www.lootours.com

Public Toilets UK: A campaign for more public toilet facilities in the UK will be launched soon. Watch this space!

Toilets a Human Right: Did you know that toilets and sanitation are considered a human right? In 2010, the UN General Assembly recognised sanitation and water as a human right, essential to the full enjoyment of life and all other human rights. Number 9 on <http://worldtoilet.org/ten-things-you-can-do-for-un-world-toilet-day/> [4 Nov 2014]

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Truckers-Toilets-UK/520313554691335>



Next issue of the **Truckers' Toilets UK** newsletter will be February 2015

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The British Toilet Association < www.britloos.co.uk >