



Eco-driving

Training to reduce costs

It is generally agreed that fuel represents around 20% of the cost price per kilometre of operating an HGV. Improving performance in terms of consumption, therefore, is one of the constant objectives of a good fleet manager. And amongst the factors which influence how thirsty a truck proves to be, the human factor plays an important role. Which is why driver awareness is so important too.

Noxious emissions from HGV's depend most notably on the vehicle's consumption. Reducing this has a dual advantage: costs for the company are reduced, as is damage to the environment. Ecology meets economy...

The human factor

Two principal levers enable the consumption of a vehicle to be reduced: the technical aspect, and the driver. On the technical side, the European Commission has been taking a lead for some years now. And as is their role, manufacturers have been following closely behind, putting more fuel-efficient vehicles on the market with less polluting engines. On the human side, the ball is in the court of the users. It is the transport

companies or, more generally, the managers of HGV fleets, who have to take the necessary measures for reducing this consumption. The principal action to be taken is of course setting up a programme of driver training.

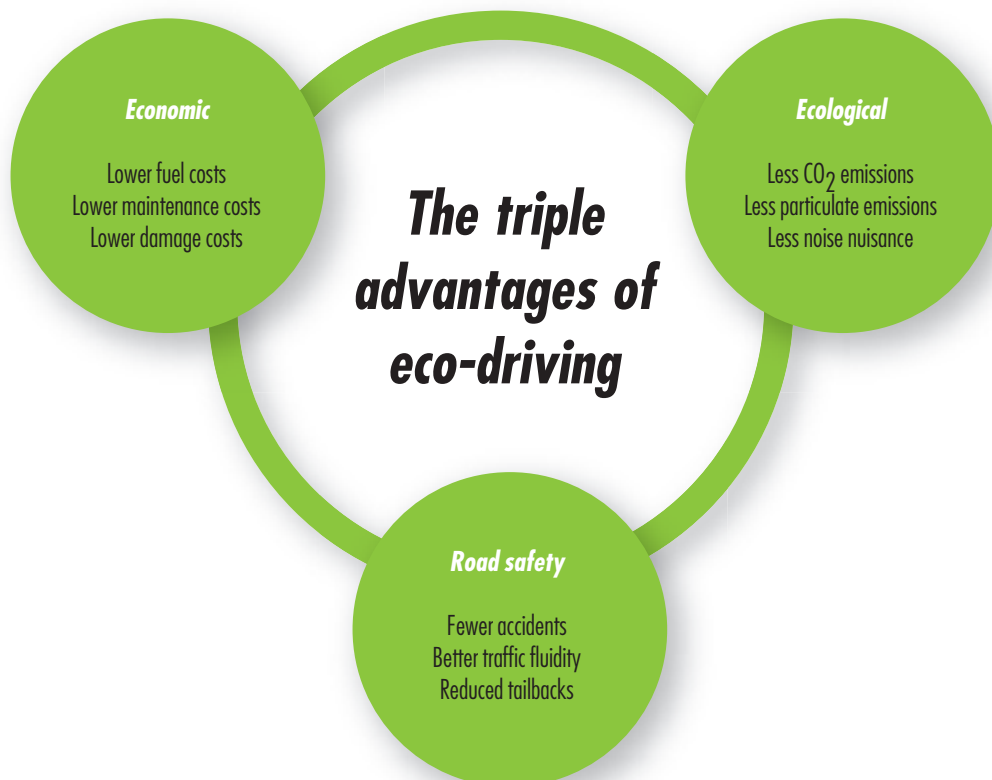
SAFED

In England, the 'Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving' programme has met with great success. Started in May 2003, this programme forms part of a continual training process made available to transport companies. It involves a complete day of training including theoretical and practical courses, aiming to improve both road safety and vehicle consumption. Apart from the tips and tricks for

better driving (see elsewhere), drivers also learn that it is not only behind the wheel that they can influence how much fuel they use. Their efforts have to go beyond this, to activities such as closing the fuel tank valve, checking that the vehicle does not have any faults, and recording vehicle data. In total, out of 6,375 drivers trained, the SAFED programme has enabled the industry to reduce fuel costs by some 10.5 million GBP (around 15.9 million EUR).

Pilot project

In Belgium too, this question is high up on the agenda. On January 10th, the 'Bond Beter Leefmilieu', with Federal mobility minister Renaat Landuyt and his Flemish counter-



Consumption

part Kathleen Van Brempt, presented the results of an eco-driving experiment undertaken with 7 transport companies.

Within each of these companies, part of the personnel took part in eco-driving training. Following the training, a reduction in consumption of 5% to 30% was recorded, which once again shows that driving style can have a considerable influence on transport costs and noxious emissions. In the long term, participants saw their HGV consumption decrease by 5% to 7%, and that of their personal cars by up to 10%.

Around ninety drivers from Wavre-Saint-Catherine based Van Dievel Transport followed this training course. Although eco-driving had already been uppermost in the pre-

occupations of company head Louis de Wael, a substantial improvement in consumption (5% less) was achieved. "At the end of 2006, our vehicles consumed an average of 29.85 litres per 100 km, against 31.44 litres in December 2005". And De Wael pointed out the fact that the training was particularly effective with the least experienced drivers.

Another interesting observation, noted by Thierry Delvaux of the Key Driving Competences training company, is that driving 'green' does not mean driving more slowly. On the contrary. In most cases, the average speed of those who consumed the least was higher than those who consumed the most.

■ Xavier RIGO



10 TIPS FOR DRIVING GREEN, MORE SAFELY AND MORE CALMLY

1. Check your tank before setting out
2. Anticipate traffic conditions and drive calmly, avoiding suddenly accelerating or hitting the brakes
3. Use the cab air conditioning sparsely, because it greatly increases consumption
4. Set off as soon as you have turned the engine on – waiting for it to warm up is a waste of fuel
5. Remove the roof deflectors when they are not required
6. Avoid short journeys – a cold engine uses almost twice as much fuel, and a catalytic converter can take up to ten kilometres before it becomes effective
7. Respecting speed limits will enable you to drive further on a tank; driving at 70 kph instead of 85 consumes 25% less.
8. Plan the journey to avoid traffic jams and road works as far as possible, or even to avoid getting lost
9. Check tyre pressures regularly – under-inflated tyres are dangerous and can increase consumption by up to 30%
10. If you are stuck in a jam, turning off the engine can save fuel and cut down on noxious emissions.



In Belgium, Van Dievel insists in particular on the training of the least experienced drivers.



5% SAVINGS BY EXEL IN DAVENTRY

Supply chain management specialist Exel has some 109,000 members of staff in over 120 countries. Arthur McLelland, Head of Transport at Exel in Daventry, tells us of his experience: "We took part in the SAFED programme because it is complementary to our in-house training programmes. For us, the safe driving techniques taught during these days are a real plus. They make our drivers more attentive to what's going on around them, and encourages them to be more respectful of their vehicle. Our consumption figures for before and after this training show fuel savings of up to 5% for the whole of the 45 drivers based in Daventry".

Paul Lanny, a professional driver for over 25 years, adds: "Everyone who has been driving for many years has his own way of driving. You would have to be an idiot not to take account of the information received during this training. My total number of gear changes, for example, has been reduced by 50% and my driving style is much more relaxed, with the result that I am not so tired at the end of the day. And if a driver isn't so tired, he tends to be more attentive to what's going on around him".



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