



Department
for Transport

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Recipients as per cover message

- by email -

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Dear Colleagues,

FRENCH COVID RESTRICTIONS: PRE-DEPARTURE TESTING FOR HAULIERS

I am writing to urge you to take up the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) offer of support to establish pre-Departure Covid testing facilities for hauliers bound for France.

As you will know, following the closure of the UK-France border on 20 December we worked quickly first to agree a Protocol with the French authorities to allow haulage movements to resume on the basis of a negative Covid test, and then to set up emergency testing facilities in Kent to allow us to clear the backlog of HGVs. We now need to move to a new phase of operation that addresses the need to manage Covid testing alongside contingency planning for potential disruption at the end of the EU transition period, and also eases some of the burden that has hitherto been placed on Kent by these exceptional circumstances. We are mindful in that context that while the current Protocol with the French Government expires on 6 January we must prepare for all scenarios.

To that end, with effect from tomorrow, 1 January, the Kent Resilience Forum will be implementing arrangements that **provide a 'fast-track' for HGV drivers arriving in Kent with proof of a negative Covid test**. Whether heading for Eurotunnel or Port of Dover, hauliers who have evidence of a negative test within the previous 72 hours will therefore proceed more swiftly to their point of departure than those arriving in Kent without one. With the end of the Transition Period, it is also crucial that HGVs arrive in Kent 'border-ready', so to benefit from this 'fast-track' **hauliers will also be required to show they have complied with the new requirements to obtain a Kent Access Permit** (via the Government's "Check an HGV" Service). We will continue to provide testing facilities for hauliers who do not get tests before reaching Kent, but those drivers will face longer delays than they otherwise would; and we are also considering the introduction of charging for tests in those locations should it be necessary to provide a further incentive to arrive 'Covid test-ready'.

I would therefore strongly encourage all those engaged in international haulage to **make arrangements for testing of drivers before they set off on journeys to or through France**. There is already wide range of private testing providers - see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-private-providers-of-coronavirus-testing>. But **DHSC are also ready to support any business that wishes to set up its own testing facility**. This does require some preparation and the acceptance of requirements on matters such as data sharing and risk. But DHSC stand ready to provide lateral flow testing kits **entirely free of charge** and to support work to establish testing facilities via webinars and Q&A sessions. Testing facilities could be established at a

haulage business's premises or at those of their customers, support can be provided for whatever will work best for the sector.

We are also considering the swift establishment of testing facilities at the EU Transition Information & Advice sites we have set up across the strategic road network. However capacity at these will inevitably be limited and logistics businesses that are able to do so are strongly advised to put their own testing arrangements in place on the basis of DHSC's support.

I am attaching some summary documentation on what the establishment of such a facility involves. For further detail, including forms to order testing kits, please contact CV19DfTTaskforce@dft.gov.uk in the first instance.

Please do feel free to share this letter with others who would wish to be aware of the contents. And thank you for all your continuing efforts to keep our supply chains moving in these extraordinary times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Rimmington', written in a cursive style.

Ben Rimmington