The Covid-19 outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation. The United Kingdom (UK) is doing everything it can to tackle the pandemic and mitigate its impact. The UK has already taken several steps. These include reducing dwell times for shipments to allow for quicker permission to progress, assessing the need for personnel to be on site if such functions can be discharged remotely and changes to site opening hours to allow for greater facilitation.

We have also introduced the use of email in lieu of postal applications for authorisations to reduce cross contamination and viral spread and we are allowing the use of estimated figures for the completion of supplementary declarations.

We are advising traders, their agents and relevant government agencies to exchange documents electronically. This can be by email, fax or digital photograph. Traders may also apply for their existing authorisations to apply to additional locations. We will also be publishing online an exhaustive list of government agencies at the border and their email addresses and contact details.

We have also taken a number of measures in relation to transit movements. These include goods moving under transit procedures being taken directly to any approved Temporary Storage Facility even if the facility is not located with a Transit Office of Departure.

Providing relief from import duties (customs and import VAT) for medical equipment to assist in the fight against Covid-19 has been a key part of the UK response. We have also activated our disaster relief clearance route to allow for faster clearance through the ports of goods to combat Covid-19.

The Chancellor has announced an unprecedented package of support for businesses. This includes enhanced Time to Pay arrangements, £330 billion worth of government-backed and guaranteed loans and a workers’ support package. VAT registered businesses can also defer their domestic VAT payments due with their VAT returns between now and the end of June and will have until the end of the financial year to pay the VAT due.

These changes have been published on the Gov.uk site and we have interacted with trade bodies to maximise the distribution to businesses across the country. Please follow these links to the relevant guidance:

- [https://www.gov.uk/difficulties-paying-hmrc](https://www.gov.uk/difficulties-paying-hmrc)

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The current situation is being kept under review and the relaxation may be amended or withdrawn earlier than 31 May 2020 if circumstances change. Operators should use this period to increase resilience.

If any drivers or operators consider that they are being asked to use the relaxation without correct justification then they can email their concerns to drivershours@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

Retrospective checking of the use of these relaxations will take place as necessary, including by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA).

Please note that the previous relaxation of the EU drivers’ hours rules on breaks (i.e. the requirements for daily breaks of 45 minutes after 4.5 hours driving replaced with a break of 45 minutes after 5.5 hours of driving) was applicable from 23 March 2020 until 21 April 2020 only.

Those wishing to use this relaxation should read the full notice here and must follow its requirements.
Temporary and limited relaxation of the enforcement of driving and rest times for the drivers of vehicles transporting essential goods

The UK has notified of a temporary and limited relaxation of the enforcement of driving and rest times for the drivers of vehicles transporting essential goods. This relaxation is granted pursuant to Article 14(2) of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 and the purpose of this document is to notify the Commission accordingly. It will apply to those drivers involved in the delivery of food, non-food (personal care and household paper and cleaning) and over the counter pharmaceuticals when undertaking certain journeys in England, Scotland and Wales.

Start date: 18.03.2020
End date: 16.04.2020
Further information: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/temporary-relaxation...

Following a recent review of the current relaxation of the enforcement of the driver hours’ rules; which is due to end on 21 April, a decision has been made, based on the current evidence, to continue with the relaxations (apart from the relaxation on the EU break requirements) until 23:59 on Sunday 31 May.

Detailed information has been provided by UK DFT and is available here.

Source: RHA
09.04.2020

In cases of non-resident drivers becoming unwell with the coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms while in the UK, the national authorities recommend the following:

1. If emergency/clinical care is needed, an ambulance should be called;
2. The official guidelines must be followed, i.e. immediate self-isolation; it is the responsibility of the freight company to safeguard employee well-being and therefore place them in suitable individual accommodation;
3. Foreign nationals can also approach their embassy for assistance;
4. In exceptional circumstances, depending on capacity, it may be possible to arrange accommodation at the London Isolation Centre.

Source: FTA

The Department for Transport (DfT) has introduced a temporary and limited urgent relaxation of the enforcement of EU drivers’ hours rules in England, Scotland and Wales. It has also introduced a temporary and limited urgent relaxation of the enforcement of GB drivers’ hours rules in England, Scotland and Wales.

This applies to those undertaking carriage of goods by road in all sectors, between 00.01 on Monday 23 March and 23.59 on Tuesday 21 April (continuation of the relaxation past 5 April is subject to review).

The EU drivers’ hours rules can be temporarily relaxed as follows:

a) Replacement of the EU daily driving limit of 9 hours with one of 11 hours.
b) Reduction of the daily rest requirements from 11 to 9 hours.
c) Lifting the weekly (56 hours) and fortnightly driving limits (90 hours) to 60 and 96 hours respectively.
d) Postponement of the requirement to start a weekly rest period after six-24 hours periods, for after seven 24 hours period; although two regular weekly rest periods or a regular and a reduced weekly rest period will still be required within a fortnight.
e) The requirements for daily breaks of 45 minutes after 4.5 hours driving replaced with replaced with a break of 45 minutes after 5.5 hours of driving.

Drivers must not use relaxation ‘a’ and ‘d’ at the same time. This is to ensure drivers are able to get adequate rest. DfT guidance can be found here.

From Monday 23 March all road user charging schemes in the capital will be temporarily suspended until further notice. This includes the Congestion Charge, the central London ULEZ and the London-wide LEZ.

Source: FTA