



Department  
for Transport

# Trial of Longer Semi-trailers (LSTs): How to take part in the trial: January 2017

March 2017

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## Who can apply

The Trial of Longer Semi-trailers has been running since January 2012. A further round of allocations took place between September 2013 and January 2014, with an additional round in September 2014.

In January 2017 The Department for Transport agreed to extend the number of Semi-trailers in the trial by 1000. We are now inviting operators to bid for a share of this additional allocation. We would then expect operators to use this allocation and place firm orders with manufacturers to obtain the longer semi-trailers within six weeks of obtaining the allocation, failure to do will result in your allocation being revoked and may affect future applications. We encourage operators to apply only when they believe they require LSTs. Operators will be able to put LSTs on the road from 1 May 2017.

All freight operators can bid for a share of the new allocation, including those already in the trial and those who are new to it. Operators will be able to bid for a share of the allocation when they need an LST. However we will review the number of bids during the course of the year and if we receive bids that exceed the number of LSTs available to be allocated, we will scale back the bids accordingly. Operators will be free to use their allocations for either length of longer semi-trailer, either 14.6 metres or 15.65 metres.

Allocations will be subject to the overall cap that was applied as part of the original allocation process, to ensure that no operator receives too large a share of the total quota (please see criteria section below).

The Department for Transport (DfT) trial of LSTs is a research project to evaluate and understand the use of these vehicles. The usage and performance of all of the LSTs in the trial is being monitored and evaluated by DfT's contractors, Risk Solutions. If you apply for LSTs, you are agreeing to take part in this research project and you are making a commitment to collect data on your use of the LSTs and submit it regularly to Risk Solutions throughout the trial.

## Criteria for applying for an allocation

Allocations will be made against the following four criteria according to semi-trailer fleet size at the time of application, including any longer semi-trailers which an operator already has in the trial:

1. If you have 1-2 semi-trailers, including LSTs, in your total fleet you can be allocated a maximum of 1 LST;
2. If you have 3-10 semi-trailers, including LSTs, in your total fleet you can be allocated up to 2 LSTs;
3. If you have 11 or more semi-trailers, including LSTs, in your total fleet you can have an allocation of up to 20% of your total fleet, this will be capped at 50 initially but will be reviewed as the allocation process proceeds.
4. Only companies whose semi-trailer fleet is run by a single operator are eligible to apply - companies such as leasing companies, whereby longer semi-trailers are likely to be operated by a variety of different

companies are NOT able to apply, given that it would make the constant monitoring of their usage too complex.

The Department will review the applications to ensure that they meet these allocation criteria. This is to minimise the risk of any company gaining an undue competitive advantage.

Please note: any LSTs that you have in your fleet already will count towards the overall individual cap - the maximum you may hold is 20% of your fleet and not an additional 20%.

## How to apply for an allocation

Please note – you should ONLY apply for an allocation **if you are ready to order an LST(s) from a manufacturer now, or will be within 6 weeks of the allocation being confirmed.**

Allocations can be used for either 14.6 m LSTs or 15.65 m LSTs or both. Applications for an allocation must be submitted using the application form [here](#) [update link].

The application should include:

- Name of applicant company and individual contact details;
- Nature of business (e.g. Owner operator, 3PL etc);
- Number of semi-trailers in current fleet;
- Indicate which manufacturer you intend to build your LST(s);
- 'O' licence details.
- If you have already participated in the trial and received an allocation in previous rounds, even if you have not taken up that allocation, please include the Operator ID number that you have been given as part of this trial.

Please note that before you are able to put an LST on the road, you will need a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) from the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA). It is the operator's responsibility to obtain the VSO – this will not be done by the manufacturer. Details of how to obtain a VSO will be given with confirmation of allocation from the DfT.

Lastly, you must ensure that the technical specifications of the LST(s) you wish to order meet the technical requirements as set out [here](#).

Please email your applications to: [FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

After we have received your application, you will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible. You will also be given details of what happens when you join the trial, the requirements for mandatory data you will need to provide and how to apply for a VSO etc.

## After you have been given an allocation

### Provide Proof of Order

When you receive confirmation of an allocation for an LST, it will be valid for 6 weeks only (42 days) from the date of the email containing the confirmation. You must provide DfT with a Proof of Order from a manufacturer of the LST(s) in this 6 week validity period, failure to do will result in you allocation being revoked and may affect future applications.

Proof of Order can range from a manufacturer stamped receipt for the LST order to an order acknowledgment form signed by the operator with the manufacturer's stamp to confirm receipt, and containing details such as the specifications and price etc.

A copy of the Proof of Order must be sent electronically to: [FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk) within 6 weeks of receiving the allocation

After you have ordered your LST(s) you will then need to apply to the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) for your VSO and send them a signed operator undertaking [here](#) for being part of the LST Trial.

Please note that we will also continue to accept a VSO instead of a proof of order within the 6 week validity period. VCA will inform DfT when it issues a VSO to an operator, so you will not need to contact DfT when you receive your VSO.

Please note: if you have not sent Proof of Order or if a VSO has not been issued in the 6 week (42 day) validity period, you will lose any unused allocation and any future applications may be affected. Please inform DfT at [FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FREIGHT@dft.gsi.gov.uk) if you are not able to meet the 6 week deadline.

### **Data requirements**

As part of the undertaking of joining the trial, you will be required to provide a range of data on a four monthly basis to establish the safety of the trailers being assessed.

The data collection guidance documentation [here](#) gives more information on the data that is sought in the trial. This includes a range of information on the use and performance of the LSTs and details of any incidents involving the trailers.

You should note that failure to respect the conditions in the undertaking may result in the Secretary of State revoking your VSO.

## **Conditions of the trial**

The trial is open to any haulage operator or road transport operator (own account or hire and reward) interested in operating articulated heavy goods vehicles with a semi-trailer length between 14.6 metres and 15.65 metres. No Government funding is available to purchase longer semi-trailers under this trial.

The trial is not open to leasing companies.

Any semi-trailer operated under this trial will be permitted to do so under a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) and will be subject to the conditions set out in that Order. Applicants should note that semi-trailers may be subject to verification checks prior to the issue of the VSO. The VSO will be issued only to the specified road transport operator.

Participation is at the applicant's financial risk. While the DfT's intention is that the trial should run for an additional five years to 2027, the trial will be closely monitored to identify any developing trends, and its duration may be reconsidered in the light of emerging evidence, particularly the safety impacts of the semi-trailers. The Government will not compensate participants if the trial closes within the next 10 years. In the light of evidence collected in the course of the trial, particularly with regard to safety impacts, the Department may also withdraw certain types of semi-trailers with design characteristics from the trial. For example, some combinations of semi-trailer length and axle configuration.

In order to ensure that existing safety and roadworthiness requirements are not compromised, and notwithstanding the fact that vehicles operating under VSOs are not required to undergo annual roadworthiness tests, operators will be asked to sign an undertaking to provide operational information and to ensure that all trailers in their fleets continue to undergo annual testing. A copy of this undertaking can be found [here](#).