

SPECIAL REPORT TYPE APPROVAL

How will the new law **affect operators?**

Wholesale change ahead

EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval becomes law in October, and trailer chief James Dennison wants more operators to realise how it will affect them



Words: Kevin Swallow

FIVE YEARS AGO the European Commission Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) created quite a stir. Seminars were hastily set up, engineers stoked EU resentment and smoothed fears in equal measures while operators seemed bemused, but today the issue barely registers.

The ECWVTA established parameters for the manufacture of trucks and trailers within the EU. From 29 October this year, all CVs exceeding 3.5 tonnes and all categories of trailers and semi-trailers must conform to its standards. This has ramifications that many operators are unaware of, according to James Dennison, (pictured) MD of Lancaster-based Dennison Trailers.

"The days of ordering a trailer and saying I want those lights, the number

plate fitted here, smaller sideguards [are over]. It all has to be approved," he says.

When a major customer wants to know all about ECWVTA, it opens their eyes and they realise things are going to change, he says. There are three types of approval manufacturers must adhere to: Whole Vehicle Type Approval (WVTA), National Small Series Type Approval (NSSTA) and Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA).

WVTA is approval of whole vehicles with no limits on production and is accepted throughout the EU, replacing national systems such as Germany's TUV that validates the safety of all roadgoing vehicles on German roads. Once achieved, only updates to a specific standard or manufacturer-design changes require new approval tests.

The manufacturer produces a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) for each unit



manufactured, and for most UK trailer manufacturers, including Dennison Trailers, WVTA will be the most common route to market.

Other regulations

Manufacturers of smaller volumes might opt for NSSTA, a UK national scheme designed for domestic sales. There are several relaxed technical requirements, a reduced Conformity of Production (CoP) requirement, and less administrative requirements. Should Dennison, for example, choose this option, annual production would be limited to 250.

IVA is another domestic scheme for manufacturing or importing single vehicles or small numbers. It doesn't require CoP and vehicles are inspected by Vosa or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) in Northern Ireland.

For a manufacturer like Dennison, there are four main areas: active safety, which includes steering, braking, spray

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ISO RATING AND CONFORMITY OF PRODUCTION (COP)

Conformity of Production (CoP) is an integral part of ECWVTA as it evaluates the manufacturing processes. Achieving a formal quality system, like ISO:9001 means the level of CoP scrutiny may be reduced.

James Dennison says: "It provides a framework for achieving operational efficiencies, cost savings, and continuous improvement. We are well on our way to achieving approval for most of our products and now produce trailers to ECWVTA standard."