

Dear Sirs,

Firstly let me congratulate you all on your achievement in getting this APPG up and running.

It is just what the industry needs & i have no doubts that Richard Goddard is the right spokesperson.

I do however have some reservations at the minute.

Firstly i find it odd that the 2 associations that represent over 3000 roadside operatives have been totally ignored in this process whilst the opinion of a couple of independent operators is accepted as fairly representing the industry.

Secondly we now seem to have Tendo, PROF & CSRRR being banded about to further confuse the industry.

I realise Tendo are consultants who will be paid to the point of them not being required.

But do we really need both the other organisations, aren't they doing the same thing.

Finally many of our members wish to help & support this initiative but are unable or unwilling to do so until they have information on the people they are supporting & why.

From a RRRR viewpoint i would love to be able to get my members to rally around you all and give you their support but your present set up & lack of information is preventing this.

Anyway to your questions -

1 - The casualties & near misses are affecting the business of many members. We have staff leaving because either they are becoming wary of the dangers we are now in or more often their wives & family are now more aware of the dangers & are no longer willing to accept the risks involved. Business owners are also having to invest more & more into extra safety equipment & lighting.

2 - There are near misses with every operative on a daily basis. Drivers regularly get hit by the mirrors of passing traffic & we get reports of vehicles running over cones & encroaching into our safe working area every day. Sadly it is impossible to record these incidents when all you are concentrating on is keeping your customers safe & getting loaded & away from the danger area as soon as humanly possible.

3 - Safety measures would differ depending what road types you are working on. I would certainly advocate ALL vehicles being lifted to safe locations before they are worked on & stopping the practice of trying to fix vehicles on live lane situations, whether that is a "B" road or a motorway. I would also recommend "Safety Vehicles" were deployed to all "live lane" situations immediately to firstly make customers safe & secondly have the casualty vehicle prepared for when the recovery vehicle arrives so he just has to hook up & go. In an ideal world we would expect Police & Highways to be our safety vehicles but as we are all well aware Government Cutbacks now do not leave either the Police or HE enough money to provide us with the protection we need & deserve. I also believe that recovery vehicles should be equipped with RED lights which can be switched on whilst stationary, connected to the PTO or Handbrake so that they automatically go off when vehicle moves away. Our amber lights can still be used too in conjunction or when moving. Lets face it everyone knows RED means STOP whilst AMBER is just a warning.

4 - All lane running was fought against by ALL the experts but Government did it anyway & left HE to try & make it work. Many of our members including my own company REFUSE to recover from "Smart" motorways unless member is in an ERA. Even then the RED X is not sufficient safety to be able to pull back into traffic in busy areas & periods and i find the ERA far more dangerous to load in than the hard shoulder ever was. You can watch an empty hard shoulder behind you & know you are safe, you cannot do this in an ERA. The other big problem again is HE. They simply cannot cope with everything they are expected to do. I have had many reports of Recovery vehicles waiting 4 hours or more for help with vehicles in LIVE LANES but they work on a priority system so if there is a couple of incidents in their area the poor customer has to sit in the danger area for as long as it takes. Operators are then taking their lives in their hands & risking doing the recovery in a live lane - Operators should not be risking their lives trying to save the lives of customers because HE are unable & sometimes unwilling to do so.

5 - The general public have been asked to play Russian Roulette on these Smart Motorways - They break down & suddenly whether they live or die is down to pure luck. A mother breaking down in FOG in the centre lane with a car full of children is very likely going to die. How can anyone expect to get 3 children out of a car under control & safely over 2 lanes of LIVE traffic without getting hit in this FOG. In my opinion there is NO safety measures that will ever make these motorways safe. The public are now getting confused because of the different types of motorways. I believe these motorways should be "controlled" inside lanes just like the M42 which are made live during busy periods, I dont think ANY motorway should have the inside lane "live" at all times. That is our safe working area, a lifeline for the public & a lane for emergency services to get to incidents - keep it as such. If these motorways do stay then the only answer i see is for operators to tender for various stretches of motorways & be allowed to use IPV vehicles in their area then drop casualties at safe locations. At least then other operators would be collecting from safe locations such as service areas. The public though will NEVER BE SAFE.

Input we are getting from members is that they will simply refuse to work on them soon.