Van Owners Not Aware of Legislation That Could Land Them In Jail

Monday 22 June, 2015

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- **Over 80 per cent of owner operators aren't aware of legislation that could land them in jail**
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Over four-fifths of van operators running individual vehicles or small fleets are in danger of landing themselves in jail, as they're unaware of legislation that makes them responsible for the working condition of a vehicle driven by one of their colleagues.

According to research carried out by leading Commercial Vehicle website *VansA2Z.com* at the 2015 Commercial Vehicle Show, 82 per cent of owner operators are unaware of Corporate Manslaughter legislation, yet if one of their staff is at the wheel of a company van and is involved in accident resulting in death or serious injury to themselves or a third party, the van operator could be found liable, especially if the vehicle is defective.

This unnerving situation will be highlighted at the upcoming DRIVEit @Bruntingthorpe event, where van owners and operators from across the UK will come together to evaluate some of the newest vehicles on the market, as well as meet key service providers.

The Institute of Car Fleet Management (ICFM) is hosting a Knowledge Zone at the event to help van operators, be them big fleets, hire companies or smaller operators such as plumbers, electricians and builders, to better understand the responsibilities they have towards any member of staff who may drive one of the company vehicles.

Government data, supplied by the Vehicle and Operator Standards Agency (VOSA), shows that at least 50 per cent of vans fail their first MoT roadworthiness test, with many older vans often exhibiting even more serious faults, such as structural corrosion. The vast majority of MoT failures relate to vehicle lighting, brakes and steering components, all of which could contribute to a major road traffic accident.

VansA2Z.com Managing Director, Kevin Gregory, said: "Illegal, badly maintained vans are a peril to other road users, and many owners are not only unaware of the faults on some of their fleet vehicles, but also of their personal liability if something does go horribly wrong.

"At the DRIVEit@Bruntingthorpe event, as well as to provide the opportunity to test drive the latest and greatest vans in a safe and controlled environment, our aim is to bring together operators and drivers to explain the liabilities and risks, and to show both of them some very simple checks they can carry out to prove their duty of care."

Statistically, around 300,000 vans a year are sold in the UK, with the number rising to 320,000 in 2014 and projected to be even more in 2015. That means, on average, at least 150,000 vans a year fail their first MoT, some with potentially deadly faults that could put drivers and road users at risk of injury, and their owners at risk of a jail sentence.

DRIVEit @Bruntingthorpe is a Light Commercial Vehicle Show where anyone who owns or operates a Van, 4x4 Pick-up, Light Truck or any vehicle under 7.5 tonnes can try out the latest vehicles from nearly all of the UK's major LCV manufacturers on purpose built test circuits. There is a tough 4x4 course, a rough terrain centre, a manoeuvring and handling course, motorway and a number of everyday simulated driving experiences to test light commercials back-to-back, giving visitors the chance to find out which vehicle is going to work best for them.

Whether it is a Mercedes-Benz, Ford, Vauxhall, Peugeot, Citroen, Renault or other LCV, guests can try them all out at this live interactive exhibition. The event is free to attend, with free parking. The Show takes place 7-9 July 2015 at the Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground in Leicestershire, just off J20 of the M1.

Visit www.driveitat.com to register for free tickets to visit the light commercial vehicle industry's major live, interactive exhibition.

ENDS

Photo credit: Central Motorway Patrol Group

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