

How does Corona affects EU Transport?

Austria

Latest Update: 19.03.2020 08:00

Transport: Driving Times and Sunday driving restrictions are loosened for the time being. Transport ist working more or less normal. Keeping the supply chain for food and other essential goods etc running is one of the primary goals. Austrian Airlines stopped regular service on march 18th at 23:59. Cargo Planes still in charge. Train traffic between austrian cities is limited and will be nearly closed on march 23rd.

Borders: All borders are still open for transports. Actual waiting time for trucks only to Hungary approx 3 hours. Rest is ok at the moment.

Here you find the waiting times at all hungarian borders:

<http://www.police.hu/en/content/foreign-citizens-cannot-enter-hungary>

Manufacturers nearly shut down their sales departments. On the road service and assistance is available within all truck brands!

Big manufacturers like MAN, Meiller or Magna closed their factories already or will close them within this week.

General: Supermarkets, gas stations, pharmacys are the only stores still open. We are not in complete lock down mode. But everybody is strongly recommended to stay home. Going to the office and to the stores mentioned above is still allowed. Public places are closed. Giong for a walk within your closest family still allowed. Some hard restrictions are on the way. E.g. More than 5 people together in the streets could be fined with 3.600.- Euros.

Belgium

Until Wednesday, March 18, Minister Bellot has made an exception for driving and rest times when it comes to the supply of food, medicines and other essential resources (supplying supermarkets and pharmacies). That temporary exemption applies until Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 11:59 pm and expressly applies only to the drivers of these transports. Drivers must state the reason for the deviation from the normal limits on the printouts or on the back of the tachograph disc. This is the usual procedure in an emergency.

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Belgium has effectively been locked down, although the brandnew Belgian government refuses to use the word, the same time stating "that it is in fact a lockdown".

The measures on flexible driving times are prolonged until 31st of march. Weekly working hours go from 56 to 60, two weekly from 90 to 96 hours.

It is allowed to postpone the weekly restperiod.

Technical inspections station have closed down, so it is no longer possible to take vehicles to their 6 month technical overview.

Bulgaria

Since Friday Bulgaria is in a state of emergency - Only the supermarkets, bank and insurance branches as well as pharmacies are working. The borders officially are not closed but all the people coming from Italy, Spain, China, South Korea and Iran are put under mandatory 14-days quarantine. From 16 o'clock EET (one hour later than Central European Time) Romania is closing the border points with Bulgaria.

For the time being the situation with the border with Greece is normal but from the Greek side there is already a queue of trucks. All transit trucks coming from so called risk countries - Italy, Spain, Iran, South Korea and China, are escorted by the police. All other transits should be normal. At least this is the official information from the Ministry of Interior.

The border Between Serbia and Bulgaria is closed for people, vans and buses, it is open only for transport of goods and for people with diplomatic passports. The situation is the same on the border with North Macedonia - only trucks are allowed to pass. The truck traffic on the borders with Greece and Turkey is very intensive. On the Turkish border Turkish authorities have mounted thermo cameras for measuring the temperature of the incoming passengers. This is slowing down the passing towards Turkey. International fast train between Bulgaria and Turkey was canceled. On the border with Romania - on the Vidin bridge over Danube river - there are waiting trucks in both directions and some smaller border points with Romania are closed. From tomorrow all the flights to Italy and Spain were cancelled .

16.03 11:17

Regarding the transport - yesterday from the Ministry of Transport announced that the first convoy of Bulgarian trucks, stuck on the border between Croatia and Slovenia has started to Bulgaria. The border Between Serbia and Bulgaria is closed for people, vans and buses, it is open only for transport of goods and for people with diplomatic passports. The situation is the same on the border with North Macedonia - only trucks are allowed to pass. The truck traffic on the borders with Greece and Turkey is very intensive. On the Turkish border Turkish authorities have mounted thermocameras for measuring the temperature of the incoming passengers. This is slowing down the passing towards Turkey. International fast train between Bulgaria and Turkey is canceled. On the border with Romania -on the Vidin bridge over Danube river - there are waiting trucks in both directions and some smaller border points with Romania are closed. From tomorrow all the flights to Italy and Spain was cancelled .

After the first panic - as far as I see there is no shortage of foods, the supermarket chains organized limited entrance in the shops in order not to have many people inside and there are small queues in front of the shops but the people are staying calm 1-1,5 m from each other. Even yesterday in Lidl the toilet paper was on promotion :-):-):-)

Czech Republic

Up to 18. 3. 2020 - The Czech Republic is in an emergency. All borders with neighboring states closed. The German and Austrian borders closed the Czech Republic, the Polish and Slovak borders closed their own authorities. The movement of goods is not restricted; all vehicles declared as utility and freight cross the border travel from category N1 upwards. On the Czech-Polish and Czech-Slovak borders there are huge columns of trucks reaching 30 km to 40 km. The reason is the border administration by the Polish and Slovak border controls. Drapes, respirators and other protective equipment that truck drivers and their operators or customers require are also a problem. Trade with them is booming, prices climb to incredible heights. At night, the Czech government took advantage of the state of emergency and confiscated 10,000 protective equipment to companies that wanted to sell it for up to 60 times the normal price. The Czech Republic is building an air bridge with China to import protective equipment. It has paid tens of millions and sends a fleet of Smart Wings aircraft for them. We are still holding on to a reasonable wave of spreading the disease, we have something over what we are infected, three healed and so far zero dead. Schools, shops, except for

groceries, pharmacies, haberdashery (so people can sew themselves), post offices and some others are closed. All schools, kindergartens and universities are closed. Teaching takes place on-line. Some towns _ Litovel, Unicev and about twenty villages are in total closure, quarantine. Other measures will follow. Car manufacturers close - Skoda Auto, Hyundai in Nošovice. Interruption of work for 14 days. We expect a huge impact on the economy.

Denmark

All borders closed in Denmark. Entry only for Danish citizens, trucks with goods or foreigners need a “worthy reason” to visit Denmark (such as visiting a seriously ill relative etc., or if they permanently live and/or work in Denmark). Cafes, restaurants and a lot of other types of shops must be closed. Public gatherings with more than 10 persons are banned.

Rules of weekly rest are currently suspended, and all trucks can enter the “green zones” in the big cities. Also some other administrative rules are loosened regarding drivers’ daily work, since renewal of certain permits etc. is impossible these days. The Danish queen appreciated the drivers’ effort in a speak to the nation on March 17 - so that’s just lovely.

Germany

In Germany the borders to at least five neighbor countries are closed except urgent for reasons and Cargo Transport. Weekend limits of truck transport are abandoned. In the free state of Bavaria it will be catastrophe plans starting from today which means shut down of all public meetings, closing of all not necessary shops and offices and the strong advise to minimize social contacts as much as possible. Strange situation in the federal republic: all those catastrophe limits, school closings and so are not decided by the german government but by the federal state governments, which leads to a more and less different situation in all 16 states of germany. Street transport is not limited yet but came down to an extreme low level as the borders of the transit ways are closed. Delivery of good and food is running without Problems, even in the times when people start buying too much.

Greece

Country is in a state of emergency and extended lockdown since Corona started in Lombardia, weeks ago. All people arriving in Greece from abroad are to be required to self-isolate for 14 days. Flights to Italy and Spain suspended. Additionally, all shops are closed with the exception of supermarkets, pharmacies and gas stations. Road transport currently not restricted and ferries to Italy still operational for trucks and drivers. Driving and rest hours have not been changed. All borders remain open for trucks with long waiting hours though. A full scale ban on passenger cars traffic appears to be imminent.

Finland

The situation is becoming increasingly difficult. At the supermarkets, shelves from time to time are almost empty, all events, (over 500 people) are cancelled/banned. If the ship and ferry traffic stops, all shipments to and from Europe will cease. As you may know, Finland is like an island behind a sea voyage.

UPDATE 16 March 8 PM. Emergency and Emergency Laws will come into force on 18.03.2020.

Finnair, which operated 110 right routes and operated 12 000 flights a month, now cuts 90 percent of its traffic. Norway closed its borders in the North today from Finns, and Russia and Estonia power the Westend. The ferry service is suspended on Tallinn-Stockholm, Riga-Stockholm and partly on Helsinki-Tallinn. All public gatherings of more than 10 people have been banned from Wednesday. More than 280 people are now infected with Corona virus.

France

As in many other countries, schools are closed in France. Also restaurants, bars etc are close. Truck stops too, and French drivers are said to be used to eating there. The French trucks are not designed for long stays or self-cooking. Many stores also close their doors, which reduces the work for transport companies. What is special is that some truck dealers in France close branches because of too little work. Breakdown services will remain active. Supermarket distribution is still going well. French citizens are nervous and there are long lines at supermarkets.

UPDATE 16 March - 8 pm. FRANCE is now in restriction (like Italy) but transport is not directly affected ! Why not directly, because many transport companies are already out of work ! All big factories closed, all shops are closed, restaurants not allowed to open, construction companies.... business is now really slow ! Only food, medical and petrol still in function ! French are not allowed anymore to leave France, 80% of flights will be cancelled.

For truckers who still working, now the biggest problem is to live on the road. Tomorrow I will drive one of my company truck from Paris to south of France, I will update you the situation for truckers in real life !

Ireland

All normal road and rail transport takes place normally. Supermarkets are normally supplied. Restaurants and pubs have been closed by the government. Ireland is particularly dependent on ferry services. Some ferry services have been modified, with some service cancellations. Irish Sea Vessels does transport trucks and trailers, but drivers are no longer allowed. StenaLine always let drivers share cabins, but now offers the possibility to staff cabins alone. Ferry services are also important for the pharma industry, in which Ireland is important for exports to other parts of Europe.

Update: 17 March: 11.20am - To help protect commercial drivers during the COVID-19 pandemic, cargo-carrying ferry companies are being urged to restrict cabins to one-person occupation, close all bars and restaurants on board and provide a room service for drivers to include meals and drinks.

The transport and logistics industry is calling for immediate financial support for hauliers who face going out of business because of the coronavirus crisis. Many hauliers have already reported catastrophic effects on their businesses as the volumes of goods drop sharply. Container volume from China has fallen by more than 70 percent in the last six weeks and the flow of goods from Europe is becoming increasingly disrupted.

Major disruption to Brittany Ferries' services due to COVID-19. The global coronavirus pandemic has forced the ferry company to consolidate services. The measures taken are

designed to ensure sufficient crew are available to operate as many services as possible, while responding to government advice for travellers visiting Ireland and Spain.

*In relation to the issue raised about truck dealerships closing across Europe and the question whether they can provide roadside back-up or not, a number of brand have replied as follows:

Volvo Trucks: Yes, we're in a very strong position because of our excellent people and dealer network across the UK & Ireland and into Europe. We will continue to do our utmost to service our customer's requirements and continue delivering a 100% service to our customers.

Mercedes-Benz: We strive to support our customers at this crucial time while protecting the health and well-being of our employees. Everything changing very fast, but for now we keep supply going of course. Front line service providers will especially looked after.

Renault Trucks: We will back up all the essential services for sure. For now workshops will across Ireland & UK will stay open.

Scania: At this moment there is a comprehensive network of Scania dealers open both in Ireland & abroad. This situation could change of course, particularly driven by Government rules & regulations.

Update 18.03 - 11.11am

Hauliers heralded by Irish Prime Minister

Governmental support for International hauliers established

RSA to postpone site inspections

Auto industry grinds to a halt

In an address to the nation on TV last night Irish Prime Minister Leo Vradkar paid tribute to the transport operators maintaining the supply chain going.

In a pledge to the public, he stated: "We will keep our essential services, supply chains and utilities operating."

"Our hauliers, who leave their families on a Sunday evening and travel across the continent to ensure that we have the products, medicine and equipment that we need. All who have kept our supply chain moving, we thank them, a different kind of frontline service," he said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has advised that they are available to support any haulier who may need assistance when overseas. They have put in place a new dedicated line for COVID19 with staff manning this number on a 24-hour basis. The number of this single consular helpline can be shared with all stakeholders:

+353(0)16131733.

More general information and queries on consular services and emergencies abroad is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs website at: <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/>

Just to reiterate again that on advice of the National Public Health Emergency Team, the Government is advising against all non-essential travel overseas at least until March 29 and that anyone coming into Ireland, apart from Northern Ireland, will be required to restrict their movements on arrival for 14 days. However, it is made clear that essential supply chain service providers such as hauliers, pilots and maritime staff are exempt from this guidance.

Statement from the Road Safety Authority regarding postponement of site compliance audits

"The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is to cease holding face-to-face enforcement inspections with immediate effect until 29th March in line with the latest government advice on the Covid-19 virus. This will be kept under continuous review. The RSA

enforcement activities will be continuing to the fullest extent possible. All operators and drivers are expected to comply with current requirements and to act responsibly in respect of their legal obligations. While premises inspections will not be taking place, operators and drivers seeking guidance information or wishing to make a complaint can contact the Authority through the usual channels and further information in that regard is available on the RSA website. The Authority is also making arrangements to ensure that applicants seeking digital tachograph cards can submit applications for processing although we are encouraging all applicants to use the on-line platform in that regard.”

The coronavirus emergency is disrupting Europe's automotive industry, forcing plants to close or reduce production. Across Europe an increasing number of manufacturers has announced that they are closing their plants such as BMW, Fiat, Ford, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, PSA, Renault and Toyota. Auto dealerships have closed subsequently. As raw materials suppliers cease production, logistics operations have also come to a halt, a major issue for members of the ECG - the Association of European Vehicle Logistics. It has cancelled its forthcoming General Assembly & Spring Congress due to happen in Malaga on 14/15 May.

“We inform our members that as the annual General Assembly is a statutory requirement for our association the assembly will therefore nonetheless take place on 14 May (3pm CET) in online format (webinar). The agenda will remain unchanged and the board elections will go ahead. Further details on how to participate in this webinar will be communicated in the coming weeks,” according to its statement.

Netherlands

Transport & Logistics have been declared by the government as ‘essential labour’, among other segments. All transport is going on. Bad reports coming from drivers who are treated badly at depots, not allowed to use toilets or even getting out of their truck. From Monday, restaurants etc. are closed, including truckstops. Truckers are advised to take their own food. Some truckstops are open for showers/toilets, some restaurants have started take-away services. National transport organisations have urged the government to have truckstops open for all services for truckdrivers. Supermarket distribution is in good shape, although people are hoarding here as well. Stena Line ferries Hook of Holland - Harwich is running freight without restrictions. Government has started financial support programmes for companies affected most by the situation. Prime minister was on TV Monday evening, explaining the flattening the curve theory and expecting many millions of the population to get infected, although with only minor symptoms.

Update 18.03 5.00 pm

The strain on the food supply chain is getting enormous. People are still hoarding so supermarkets are having Christmas like turnovers but workloads as well. Truckers from other segments who are now without a job are asked or are offering to join the food supply chain. Some people in the sector are calling out to cancel regulations for curfew times and low emission zones to ensure proper logistics. Minister of Transport will look at skipping driving times, was in Brussels on Wednesday to discuss this and other topics with European transport ministers. DAF will stop production lines from 23 March in Eindhoven. Scania will do the same in all Europe, so also in Zwolle and Meppel from March 25 th. Transport and Logistics in general is still possible. No problems at the borders here for goods transport.

Norway

At the moment Norway is closed. All foreigners are asked to return at the borders, if not they must undergo two weeks of quarantine. Only exception is transport, so far it's not clear what the situation is for foreign truck drivers. All the ferry between Norway and Denmark and Germany is about to stop, so trucks must pass Denmark with their new restrictions. Or there is one ferry between Sweden and Germany and one to Poland as the status unknown. But the general situation for the drivers is getting worse. A lot of their normal places to stop for toilets etc. are closed. At petrol-stations many places they have removed the access keys! Stores are open, but restaurants are in general closed.

Update 18.03 13:00

Borders are closed for all non residents except for transport. Some ferries is going but only people going home after visited Norway or Norwegians coming back and of course trucks.

Today they announced that all transport is except from drivers hours rules. They only have to stop for 45 min brakes and have the minimum of 9 hrs rest.

The situation for the drivers is reported getting a little better since some of the closed toilets and showers have been opened again. The health department has ordered that all these places along the roads are mandatory to keep open.

If your driver's licence is expiring you will have 6 months extension automatically (this at least applies in Norway don't know for drivers going abroad).

At the moment a big shipment of protective ware is stopped at the border due to EU's non export route. I guess Norway won't be a part of the European economic union in the future if this continues. Norway has no production of this kind of equipment and is in a crisis with lack of everything at the moment.

Poland

From one side - Poland is still less affected by coronavirus, with 150 people confirmed COVID and 3 dead. But maybe (?) it is tide with huge restrictions government brought last weekend. All schools, kindergartens, hypermarkets are closed, the same like restaurants and most of offices.

After 14 years, borders are now closed for passengers traffic, in buses and cars. All Polish citizens coming back to homecountry are sent for 14 days quarantine in home. But road transport works. Truck drivers coming home are not sent for quarantine, if they declare they go unload and load another cargo for next trip. But in a situation when on all crosspassing on borders are covered with sanitary and security police checks, all flow is slower. Then trucks on biggest Polish-German border on A2 motorway near Berlin have to wait 7 hours. It is fast, because on Ukrainian border they wait 37 hours...

There is another problem ; new governmental rules are for Polish truck drivers. And many are foreigners, not only 50.000 Ukrainians, so the law doesn't apply to every truck driver.

Also here we see problem on depots. Not prepared infrastructure for drivers coming from abroad, most usually closed for them.

UPDATE 16 March 8 pm - On the biggest border tresspass in Frankfurt an Oder (motorway A2 to Berlin) thousands of Ukrainian and Lithuanian cars and minibuses waiting for opening of border. But last decision of government implemented to defend Poland from virus doesn't allow foreigners to transit through country. Most of people has only the chance to use ferry to go to Lithuania. Decision to close borders on Sunday was taken on Friday and announced but...some people don't accept new situation.

Those problems don't include trucks but, because of fast traffic, cars are disturbing in trucks passage through border.

Update 17.03, 02 hrs pm

On interactive map prepared by software supplier (based on truck telematics systems) we can see waiting time on Polish borders. The longest queues are on German-Poland trespass near Goerlitz (A4) where vehicle must wait around 20 hours. Problem is so strong because a lot of Lithuanians and Belarus citizens try to go home by passenger cars and minibuses. Until now all road traffic was organized in one road, because there was no need to stop anybody for check and controls. Today, passenger cars are disturbing other vehicles, mainly trucks.

Police estimates medical check of truck driver and truck takes 3 to 5 minutes but there are hundreds of vehicles taxing to place of controls. Border infrastructure was for the last 14 years adjusted to common, fast flow of trucks and cars, now it doesn't work...

Update 18.03. 8pm

Poland also changed driving time rules for a period up to April 19th. Truck drivers may drive 11 hours per day or 60 per week. No penalties for longer driving at that time.

Portugal

Situation in Portugal is becoming worse too. The point is that everybody is afraid about what is happening in Spain. Government is closing down schools, restaurants and night life. Only 50 people inside each supermarket at one time. For now, no borders closed. Concerning truck drivers there are no changes.

Romania/Hungary

Many big problems for Romanian transport and surrounding countries. Borders are almost all closed, normally they should be open for trucks, but also in these cases, there are problems. For instance, Hungary has closed the borders from Slovenia for all the trucks in transit. The drivers should provide a medical certificate to prove they are not infected with Coronavirus. The certificate should not be older than 4 days.

The problem is no driver has such a certificate, because in Romania they cannot just go into a medical lab and ask to be tested for Coronavirus. They need to have symptoms and only then are tested.

Hungary states that starting from last night foreign trucks can cross the Slovenian-Hungarian border only between 21:00 and 00:00 only 15 trucks at every 10 minutes, so not more than 200 trucks per day!

Transport companies should provide, before a request to cross the border, data like the name of the driver, number plate of the truck and hour and minute when they intend to cross a certain border.

For Romania this is really problematic, because the price of being European Union member came with the disappearing of the local industry. Romania imports almost 80% of the food, so all the fruit and vegetables coming from Spain and Italy are limited to reach Romania because the trucks are asked to wait for days at the Hungarian borders. And not only Austria, Slovenia and even Croatia and Serbia make the transit really difficult. Trucks with medical supply are stopped in Germany, even if imported from The Netherlands, but Germany forbids the export of medical equipment and medicines so they stopped the trucks to Romania even if the goods come from The Netherlands.

The countries at the periphery of Europe are almost isolated, so it is really in a serious situation in Romania that will face soon a food crisis. Transport companies are fighting for each kilometre, for each driver, especially that very few drivers are willing to go to Italy at the moment. And when they go, they stay in long queues at the borders when coming back home.

On Thursday night Slovenia blocked all trucks at the border with Italy, some of the trucks went back and cross the border with Austria and then they were blocked again between Austria and Hungary. There are measured by night which make the supply of Eastern Europe in danger and European Commission should make a pan-European corridor for the trucks, at least for those carrying food. Otherwise it looks there is no more European Union.

Spain

Road transport is working normally in Spain in order to provide the goods required in the retail outlets. It was announced that no food shortages will exist. The problem is that there are some boarders closed in and out of the country. The government has cancelled times of driving to alleviate the situation. Most offices have asked staff to work from home where possible.

UPDATE: 16 March 8 PM. The Interior Ministry has given the order to close all land borders with France and Portugal. Only the passage of merchandise (transport is not affected), residents and for greater cause will be allowed.

In addition was given the order that the service stations favor the supply of food and drink, as well as access to the toilets for transport professionals.

Sweden

In Sweden, the Foreign Ministry announced on Saturday evening that they advise against traveling abroad if this is not necessary. Tourist flights from Sweden are canceled. Some regular flights to important destinations according to timetable.

Stena, which has ferry lines to Denmark, Germany and Poland, announced yesterday that they are stopping passenger traffic, but that some tours are run and then only for freight transport.

Events gathering more than 500 people were banned from the night until Thursday last week. The last round of the hockey league (which is the biggest winter sport in Sweden) was played without an audience on Thursday, and yesterday it was decided to cancel the playoffs.

Restaurants are still open and so far I have not heard that they will close, but there may be new messages during the day

Switzerland

16.03.2020, 2 pm:

Last Friday additional actions were decided. Border controls would be implemented again (Schengen) depending on the situation. Mainly our borders with Italy are of concern. At the moment they are closed for a very large number of people. Swiss citizens are allowed to enter and other nationals with important reasons like working. Keep in mind that Switzerland and Italy bring to bear the same actions on the shared borders. On the other hand goods are not affected and are still allowed to enter the country and to transit. With Austria and Germany closing their borders it is bound to become more complicated. But still - goods are not affected to enter and to transit. By the way, since today all schools are closed, public transport is running normally, but people are advised to not use trains and buses. Shops are still open, except for some areas like south Switzerland (Tessin) where only foodstores are still open and people are asked to stay home. To my knowledge there are no special rules concerning driving times.

Update 16. March, 7pm:

From today midnight until 19th April the state of emergency is declared. Border-control by land and air, only Swiss returning to Switzerland and people with the necessary paperwork are allowed in (transit for people stays possible). All shops not needed for

daily needs are closed, also fitness centers, wellness centers, zoos, skiing areas - you name it - all closed. Nightlife is over for at least 4 weeks. Goods in and out and transit are not affected.

The idea is to keep the healthsystem running, which is still in good shape and is providing enough emergency beds for patients of corona and other critical situations.

Update 17th march, 11.00 am:

From Thursday on (19th march) public transport will slow down, long distance, regional and city. Frequencies will be halved (e.g. instead of a train every half hour, they run every hour). As in most other countries home office is advised and is being adopted to great effect.

United Kingdom

On March 18th the EU drivers' hours rules were relaxed on the movement of certain items, in an attempt to keep supermarket shelves stocked.

Here is the wording from the official document:

Last night the Department for Transport relaxed the drivers' hours rules for the transport of some essential items, in order to combat panic buying caused by Coronavirus. Here is the official document in its entirety:

In response to requests from Industry, the Department for Transport has, pursuant to Article 14(2) of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, agreed to a temporary and limited urgent relaxation of the enforcement of EU drivers' hours rules in England, Scotland and Wales for the drivers of vehicles involved in the delivery of food, non-food (personal care and household paper and cleaning) and over the counter pharmaceuticals when undertaking the following journeys:

- 1) Distribution centre to stores (or fulfilment centre)
- 2) From manufacturer or supplier to distribution centre (including backhaul collections)
- 3) From manufacturer or supplier to store (or fulfilment centre)
- 4) Between distribution centres and transport hub trunking
- 5) Transport hub deliveries to stores

This exemption does not apply to drivers undertaking deliveries directly to consumers. This temporary relaxation applies from 00:01 on Wednesday 18 March 2020 and will run until 23:59 on Thursday 16 April 2020 and will apply only to the drivers specified in this notice. The Department reserves the right to withdraw the relaxation earlier or extend the relaxation if circumstances change.

The department wishes to make clear that driver safety must not be compromised.

Drivers should not be expected to drive whilst tired - employers remain responsible for the health and safety of their employees and other road users.

For the drivers and work in question, 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.

The practical implementation of the temporary relaxation should be through agreement between employers and employees and/or driver representatives.

The drivers in question must note on the back of their tachograph charts or printouts the reasons why they are exceeding the normally permitted limits. This is usual practice in emergencies and is, of course, essential for enforcement purposes.

The temporary relaxation of the rules described above reflects the exceptional circumstances stemming from the COVID-19 outbreak. The department wishes to emphasise that, as a general rule, we expect business to plan for and manage the risks of disruption to supply chains.

All enquiries regarding interpretation of these temporary arrangements should, in the first instance, be made to the Freight Operator Licensing & Roadworthiness Division at the Department for Transport via the switchboard on 0207 944 3000 (during office hours) or to the DfT Duty Office on 0207 944 5999 (out of office hours).

We will keep these temporary arrangements under review.

On March 16th PM Boris Johnson issued the UK's first significant restrictions. The key measures are:

Non essential journeys have been banned.

Home-working must be carried out where possible.

From this weekend at-risk groups (such as the sick and over 70s) must self isolate for at least 12 weeks.

Everyone should avoid crowded places.

Meanwhile our borders are open. Trucks are not affected by any restrictions. Nighttime curfews have been relaxed. There are plenty of stories of truck drivers being refused access to customers' toilets because of the virus. This is illegal and our magazines are fighting for the drivers.

Panic buying continues and shops have empty shelves.

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) in the UK is imploring Government to pledge immediate financial support for hauliers who face going out of business because of the coronavirus crisis.

RHA chief executive, Richard Burnett told transport secretary, Grant Shapps that many hauliers have already reported catastrophic effects on their businesses as the volumes of goods drop sharply. Container volume from China has fallen by more than 70 percent in the last six weeks and the flow of goods from Europe is becoming increasingly disrupted. He said there's been an artificial spike for manufacturers delivering into the retail supply chain which will no doubt at some point settle once the nation has stocked up. But he warned that there could be uncertainty with the possibility of retail and food outlet closures in the weeks to come driving a downturn in volume.

Hauliers supporting the entertainment sector are facing an immediate collapse as concert tours and major sporting events are cancelled; one firm reported that tours worth millions have been cancelled over the next three months impacting those hauliers directly.

Mr Burnett said the transport industry is integral in keeping the UK moving and called on the transport secretary to undertake a series of measures to ease the burden on operators as the crisis unfolds.

These include immediate cash flow injections, deferment of tax payments, and a delay to the launch of clean air zones by at least six months.

Mr Burnett said: "We need to get immediate financial relief into these businesses over and above the measures announced in last week's Budget.

“Without this support businesses will risk closure as 85% of the haulage market is SME and holds no more than two to three weeks of cash flow. Any drop in volume will mean businesses can’t be sustained.

“The Government will need to provide more radical financial support to ensure they survive.”

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