

Moving engineers

Increasingly sophisticated commercial vehicles and their on-board equipment require specialist engineering attention. Brian Tinham looks at CV 2007

What

Commercial Vehicle Show 2007

Where

NEC Birmingham

When

24–26 April
8.30–17.30

Operations, plant and transport engineers with an eye to the future would do well to get to the Commercial Vehicle Show (CV 2007) at the NEC Birmingham, 24–26 April. The transport industry is adopting newer technologies and that has implications not only for transport engineers, but plant engineers and surveyors when it comes to maintenance, repair and safety.

Think, for example, of the increasing use of PLC-based automation on top of existing pneumatics and hydraulics on trucks and special purpose vehicles. It all presents challenges in an industry looking to new skills and engineering disciplines.

So while CV 07 will major on trucks and concept vehicles from DAF Trucks, Isuzu, Iveco, John Deere, Mercedes Benz, Scania, VW, Whale Tankers etc, as well as navigation systems from TomTom and Tracker, driver safety equipment from SmartDrive, tyre depth checkers from Truckfile, tail lifts from Ratcliff Palfinger and Ray Smith – and displays from hauliers, global logistics providers, specialist vehicle builders, fast fits, body shops and so on – in fact, the show could be career-enhancing for engineers.

The Skills Zone – sponsored by irtec, Skills for Logistics, the Road Haulage Association, SMMT and Automotive Skills – is the place to start. It will showcase maintaining vehicles like transporters, tipper trucks, petrol tankers, refuse collectors, fire service equipment etc. Just as important, it will cover truck-mounted cranes and fork lifts, tail lifts, motorised hoists and air conditioning. Visitors will be able to get the picture from fleet operators and maintenance shops in terms of garage facilities, like lifting and inspection kit and diagnostic tools.

On the irtec stand, there'll be maintenance theory assessments, with visitors challenged to test their knowledge against the IRTE's licensing exam computer – with results on a plasma screen.

CV 2007 at the NEC: more than just trucking



David Oakley, head of licensing for IRTE, says: "With technology like engine management systems and electronic braking systems constantly changing, engineers need to be sure they are up to date and certified. There will be plenty of SOE staff and assessors on hand to talk about training, certification and accreditation schemes."

Much the same applies to garage equipment. As Ian Chisholm, SOE head of technical services, points out: "Fleet operators and engineer surveyors will want to know that lifting and ramp equipment, for example, meet guidelines."

Operations support

Paul Winstanley, senior environmental engineer with Alfred McAlpine Business Services, adds: "Road transport engineers need support. All automotive businesses are pushing education for modern vehicles. Garages still want engine technicians and fitters, but they also need qualified engineers able to handle hydraulic and pneumatic lifting equipment, and the newer automation systems."

What about employers? Go to the Municipal Zone and the Cool Zone. The former covers the refuse collection and street cleaning vehicle builders, with manufacturers, suppliers and hirers of all types of equipment and associated maintenance businesses. Meanwhile, the Cool Zone majors on fridge bodies, chassis, refrigeration equipment, monitoring systems and services for transport operators.

As for equipment, here's an indication. Lamerholm says its new transmission protection system will save tyres and protect forklift transmissions by preventing operators from slamming trucks from forward to reverse above a pre-set speed.

Meanwhile, for tail lifts, check out Ray Smith, which merged with trailers manufacturer Bogies in November last year and will be showing a new 1500kg slider lift and one tonne single ram folding lift. Also, take a look at Ratcliff Palfinger's column, van, chassis-mounted and passenger lifts. This company will be launching plans to help operators meet their legal obligations in terms of fitness for purpose.

Talking of which, go to the IRTE stand in Hall 5. It will be launching the 'Simple Guide to Tail Lifts' for operators and engineers, developed by the IRTE with BES professional sector of the SOE, HSE and SAFed (the Safety Assessment Federation). 