

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Public Service Vehicles (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

S.R. 2015 No. 42

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of the Environment to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under Articles 61(1), 66(1) and 218(1) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. These Regulations amend regulation 7 (licence, disc and plates) and omit Schedule 9 (identifying symbols for bus and taxi discs) to remove the statutory requirement to display a vehicle test disc on a bus.

3. Background

- 3.1. On 5th December 2013, the Chancellor announced that the vehicle tax disc would be replaced with an electronic system. Vehicle licensing is an excepted matter that remains the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport and the abolition of the tax disc has applied to the whole of the UK since October 2014.
- 3.2. Given this change, it was deemed appropriate to remove the requirement to display a vehicle test disc for all vehicles in Northern Ireland. There is no requirement in Great Britain to display a test certificate and the Department for Transport has no plans to introduce such a requirement.
- 3.3. Buses used for hire and reward undergo a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) test and, if the vehicle successfully passes this test, a PSV licence is issued. The statutory requirements to display a PSV disc on a bus has been in place since 1985.
- 3.4. The primary reasons for requiring the display of a vehicle test certificate were to remind owners of the date that a test was due and to provide roadside enforcement officers with visible proof of test compliance.
- 3.5. Due to advances in technology, the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) now sends test reminders several weeks in advance of due dates and DVA Enforcement officers have systems which allow them to confirm test compliance from the record.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The Department has deemed it unnecessary to undertake a formal public consultation as the amendment is a deregulatory issue and will not create any burdens for private and commercial vehicle owners. Instead, the Department engaged with enforcement bodies and stakeholders

represented on the Road Safety Forum and took their views into account. No strong views were raised.

5. Equality Impact

- 5.1. An Equality Screening Exercise has been completed and as no equality issues have been identified. A full Equality Impact Assessment was considered unnecessary.

6. Regulatory Impact

- 6.1. The Department does not consider that there will be any cost impact on the small business sector particularly for those who utilise goods vehicles or operate under a Public Service Vehicle licence.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. There will be associated costs to adapt IT systems to remove the vehicle test disc from the vehicle test certificates but it is unlikely that this cost will be passed to those applying for a vehicle test.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 8.1. The Department has considered the matter of convention rights and community law and is satisfied that there are no matters of concern.

9. EU Implications

- 9.1. None.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

- 10.1. None.

11. Additional Information

- 11.1. Not Applicable.