

## **Temporary relaxation of the enforcement of the retained EU drivers' hours rules: All road haulage sectors in Great Britain**

In response to requests from industry the Department for Transport has introduced a temporary relaxation of the enforcement of the retained EU drivers' hours rules in England, Scotland and Wales, due to the pressures on local and national supply chains. The temporary relaxation of the rules reflects the exceptional circumstances stemming from a shortage of HGV drivers and the effects of COVID-related restrictions causing acute supply chain pressures.

### **Timing of the relaxation**

The relaxation of the rules applies from 00:01 12 July 2021 until 23:59 on 8 August 2021. The current situation is being kept under review and the Department reserves the right to withdraw or amend the relaxation if circumstances change.

### **Scope of the relaxation**

Anyone driving in Great Britain (GB) under the retained EU drivers' hours rules and undertaking carriage of goods by road can use this relaxation where necessary. The relaxations are not limited to specific sectors or journeys.

It is permitted for a driver using this relaxation to drive outside Great Britain during the period of this relaxation. However, this relaxation only covers driving undertaken within Great Britain.

### **Details of the relaxation**

The retained EU drivers' hours rules can be temporarily relaxed as follows:

Replacement of EITHER

- (a) the permitted increase to the daily driving limit from 9 hours to 10 hours with one of 11 hours (allowed up to two times in a week); OR
- (b) the requirement to take a regular weekly rest period of 45 hours in a two-week period with an alternative pattern of weekly rest periods as specified below, and an increase to the fortnightly driving limit from 90 hours to 99 hours. This enables two consecutive reduced weekly rest periods to be taken.

The alternative pattern of weekly rest periods for drivers using the relaxation related to weekly rest periods is:

- The regular weekly rest period in a two-week period can be replaced by two reduced weekly rest periods of at least 24 hours.
- Following this, two regular weekly rest periods must be taken. However, any reduction in weekly rest shall be compensated for in the normal way by an equivalent period of rest taken before the end of the third week following the week in question.
- In addition, any rest taken as compensation for a reduced weekly rest period shall be attached to a regular weekly rest period of at least 45 hours (which can be split over 2 regular weekly rest periods).

This relaxation must not be used in combination with existing rules for international driving, which allow for two consecutive reduced weekly rest periods in certain circumstances. It is not recommended that this relaxation be used for drivers engaged partly in international journeys.

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

Operators must notify the DfT if this relaxation is used by completing an [initial notification of relaxation form](#) and emailing a copy to [RSSSFOLRCOVID19@dft.gov.uk](mailto:RSSSFOLRCOVID19@dft.gov.uk). A completed [follow-up notification of relaxation form](#) must then be emailed to [RSSSFOLRCOVID19@dft.gov.uk](mailto:RSSSFOLRCOVID19@dft.gov.uk) one week after the end of the period of relaxation.

Failure to comply with the requirement to notify the DfT would be an indication to enforcement authorities that the relaxation had been used inappropriately and follow-up investigatory action may occur.

In addition, when driving under the retained EU drivers' hours rules, drivers 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 essential for enforcement purposes.

The temporary relaxation of the rules reflects the exceptional circumstances stemming from a shortage of HGV drivers causing acute supply chain pressures. It must be used only where necessary, otherwise the normal drivers' hours rules should be followed.

The Department encourages operators facing high work demands or work absences to take urgent measures to secure drivers who have limited or no current work.

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.

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.

Please note that relaxations in relation to transport which is undertaken solely in the territory of Northern Ireland are a matter for the devolved authority.

## **Enquiries**

All enquiries regarding interpretation of these temporary arrangements should be made to the DfT using the following contact details:

- during office hours (9am to 5pm), email [RSSSFOLRCOVID19@dft.gov.uk](mailto:RSSSFOLRCOVID19@dft.gov.uk)
- out of hours, phone the DfT Duty Office on 020 7944 5999

**07 July 2021**

**Department for Transport  
United Kingdom**