

TimberTransportForum

delivering solutions for a growing UK harvest

The Convenor

Rural, Economy and Connectivity Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Tel: 0131 348 5882
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17th October 2019

Response to Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee call for views on pre-budget/financial scrutiny on roads maintenance in Scotland

Dear Convenor

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee.

We committed to come back to you with information on Tyre Pressure Control Systems (TPCS), both on the cost of the system and the proportion of timber vehicles fitted with the system.

With regard to cost: There are two manufacturers in the UK market and some variation depending on whether the lorries are pre-ordered with the system (which allows for predrilling of axles etc.) or it is retrofitted to existing lorries. Typically, the cost of fitting the system to both truck and trailer will be between £10,000 and £12,000.

On the proportion of vehicles fitted with TPCS, this is more complex. The specialist timber haulage fleet typically comprises many small rural haulage firms. Based on moving 8.5 million tonnes per year, we estimate the timber fleet in Scotland to be around 600 vehicles.

A recent analysis of lorries delivering logs to sawmills and other processing plants across Scotland showed a considerable range in the number of vehicles fitted with TPCS; from 27.5% to 100%.

This variation is not surprising. The system is most commonly fitted to bespoke timber lorries fitted with log cranes. Where timber is travelling longer distances, it is more likely to be loaded onto industry-standard flat-bed lorries which can carry a non-timber load on the return journey. These are rarely fitted with the system. The catchment area for mills can be large and the forests from which timber is arriving at a mill on any one day will vary. The hauliers and the lorries used, will also vary.

Based on this analysis and industry experience, we would suggest that at least 50% of the timber lorry fleet is now fitted with tyre pressure control systems.

We can expect this proportion to gradually increase.

We hope this information is of interest to the committee and we would be happy to provide further information as required.

Yours sincerely

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