

TfL's Press Office

is a Low Emission Zone, says business

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has today called on Transport for London (TfL) to step up their efforts to publicise the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) scheme.

The LEZ comes into force on February 4 2008 and will affect the majority of hauliers in the UK. It will impose daily charges of between £100 and £200 on heavy goods vehicles that emit certain levels of pollution from 2008.

The penalties for failing to pay will be as high as £1,000. The FSB offices are constantly receiving calls from hauliers asking us for details of the scheme.

The FSB does not believe that Transport for London (TfL) has informed or consulted sufficiently with businesses.

There are approximately 103,000 Operator Licence holders in the UK but TfL has heard from fewer than 5% of them in consultations. This leaves the vast majority of haulage firms potentially unaware of the scheme. During a six-week period from September to October 2007 over 14,000 non-compliant vehicles passed through the zone area.

With only two months left until the LEZ is imposed there needs to be a much greater publicity effort from TfL. Otherwise not all firms will be able to make the necessary changes to their vehicles in time.

This could lead to the perception that the LEZ is a stealth tax rather than an attempt to tackle pollution in the capital.

Chris Glen, FSB Transport Chairman, said:

"There are now only two months to go until the Low Emission Zone comes into force in London. With over half of all UK lorries passing through the capital at least once a year the scheme will have a huge impact on the haulage industry.

"However, the scheme is a mystery to many in the sector with only a short time to go before implementation. Transport for London has a great deal of work to do in only two months to make them aware of the scheme.

"If TfL fail to publicise the scheme properly, hauliers will feel that they have been tricked into paying a stealth tax. This would damage the image of a well-intentioned project to address the urgent issue of air quality in London."



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