

Traffic management matters

The Traffic Management Contractors Association (TMCA) celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Alec Peachey caught up with its new chairman Grahame Beswick

Impact protection vehicles are regularly hit by drivers



"We've got to come up with solutions to provide our personnel with a working environment that is as safe as reasonably practicable"

Grahame Beswick



The TMCA will provide live demonstrations of how to install traffic management at this year's Seeing is Believing

The TMCA was established in 1989 to meet the challenges of maintaining high standards of safety for workers and the public at major traffic management sites on motorways and high speed dual carriageways, whilst providing a forum for conferring with public bodies, in particular the Highways Agency, local authorities and the Health & Safety Executive.

Members of the TMCA are required to consistently set high standards for the installation, maintenance and removal of major traffic management schemes and to be at the forefront in establishing industry best practice.

Grahame Beswick, who is managing director of H W Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd has recently been elected as the association's new chairman following the retirement of Richard Pearson, who has become the new secretary. He outlined the TMCA's key objectives:

→ As traffic flows continue to increase on the UK's strategic highway networks, the opportunities for installation and removal of signs,

cones and temporary road markings (which constitute temporary traffic management systems), normally undertaken at night, become fewer and of shorter duration

- Furthermore, the increasing use of four, five (and even six) lane motorways increases the hazards associated with such installation and removal
- Given the above the TMCA has continually worked to ensure that the highest level of training and competency for traffic management personnel with publication and regular re-issue of their document "Notes for Guidance for Static Temporary Management on Motorways and High Speed Dual Carriageways" and the first traffic management training DVD - "Your Life on the Line"
- The TMCA have been at the forefront in the development of the national highway sector schemes 12A, 12B, 12C & 12D currently administered by Lantra with Beswick deputy chair of the 12A/B, 12C SSACTM and chair of the training sub-committee as

well as representing TMCA on 12D SSACTM and training sub-committee

- TMCA membership mandates accreditation to ISO 9001: 2008 and NHSS 12A/B to ensure that the appropriate quality standards are achieved
- TMCA are also actively involved in the Road Workers Safety Forum (RoWSaF) which has changed standards and developed new operational techniques to reduce the associated risks for traffic management personnel during installation and removal of traffic management layouts.

Beswick wants to raise the profile of the association. He said: *"We're going to be at Seeing is Believing, but it is also about being more visible within the highways industry as an association. Working methods are going to dramatically change this year, which coupled with a perceived increase in*

➔ **infrastructure spending determines that we need to be more active."**

Members of the TMCA have been collectively trading for some 200 years and it is this huge depth of experience which provides representation on all the traffic management industry related working groups and committees including RoWSaF.

In addition the TMCA has had a significant input into the industry's major documentation: "Chapter 8 of The Traffic Signs Manual"; Guidance for Safer Traffic Management"; National Highway Sector Scheme 12, incorporated within the Specification for Highway Works and all relevant interim advice notes.

The Highways Agency recently introduced a new procurement strategy of "category management framework" which includes traffic management. The selection criteria was based on quality and price and incorporates all types of traffic management – 12A/B (major works on motorways and high speed dual carriageways), 12C (mobile works) and 12D (works on single carriageways). All the successful category management framework contractors are TMCA members.

Best practice

The TMCA continually works to promote best practice to the highways industry. As part of its "Aiming for Zero" initiative, the Highways Agency has targeted the elimination of carriageway crossings by the end of 2014.

TMCA will be demonstrating both the issue and solutions at Seeing is Believing, which is taking place at Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground in Leicestershire from 19 to 20 November 2014.

"We're going to provide live demonstrations of how to install traffic management to current standards without the need to cross the carriageway," remarked Beswick. "Whilst we would maintain that in the right circumstances crossing live carriageways, including motorways, to install, maintain or remove traffic management can be undertaken safely by appropriately trained personnel, the recent changes in traffic management standards has facilitated methods of working which remove the need for this in the majority of relaxed works situations. We are concerned that there is a move to extend this to single carriageways, but do remain convinced that this will provide the lowest level of risk."

Protecting road workers

The protection of personnel undertaking traffic management and other works on the roads is key, but Beswick believes more could and should be done to educate drivers.

He said: *"Do drivers understand what the red X means? Why do drivers regularly run into the back of crash cushions with the highly visible flashing light and directional arrows displayed? That's the one thing we don't know*

and studies are ongoing to ascertain what further driver education would be helpful.

"It is not just the occasional strike, these impact protection vehicles are being hit regularly so driver awareness is vitally important. How many drivers read the Highway Code after they pass their driving test? There's a lot of new technology being introduced on motorways with hard shoulders converted to running lanes (smart motorways), in some instances permanently, with control by overhead signals and gantries. Does the motorist, including foreign lorry drivers, understand this change and fully comprehend the messages portrayed?"

Changes

The introduction of smart motorways has provided further challenges for TMCA in developing and agreeing techniques for installation, maintenance and removal of traffic management on these networks.

"The hard shoulder used to be the traffic management contractor's place of safety for their vehicle and where they worked from. Now it is designated as a running lane which is another issue that has to be overcome. It's an interesting time and we've got to come up with solutions to provide our personnel with a working environment that is as safe as reasonably practicable, whilst providing minimum disruption to the travelling public," Beswick concludes. ➔

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For further information on the Traffic Management Contractors Association visit www.tmca.org.uk. For membership enquiries email SecretaryTMCA@aol.com.

