



# Coach Chronicles

19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

The latest news, views, and announcements

## Cheers to You This Christmas Season

The UKCOA team would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, partners, and friends in the industry a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported the UKCOA this year.

We are truly grateful to be part of such an incredible community of professionals who continually go above and beyond. Your commitment to excellence and the support you show to one another are what make our industry truly special.

We hope you can take a well-earned break over the festive season to enjoy time with loved ones and recharge for the year ahead.

Please note that the UKCOA office will be closed after 20<sup>th</sup> December, reopening on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, but if you have an urgent matter, please call 0333 7333 222 and we will respond to you at the earliest opportunity.

## Limited Seats Now Available for the Winter Ball!

The highly anticipated Winter Ball may be officially sold out, but we have great news for those who missed out! A few seats have become available on our Industry Partner tables, offering a fantastic opportunity to join this incredible evening of celebration and networking.

If you'd like to secure one of these seats, don't wait – they're expected to go quickly. To express your interest or to get more details, please contact Stephen Telling directly. [stephen.telling@uk-coa.co.uk](mailto:stephen.telling@uk-coa.co.uk)

This is your chance to be part of a memorable night alongside fellow industry professionals. Don't miss out – we'd love to see you there!

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## Dates for Your Diary



### **21<sup>st</sup> January**

Members Meeting

### **25<sup>th</sup> January**

Annual Winter Ball

Royal Garden Hotel, London

### **1<sup>st</sup> February**

'Return to Driving'

DCPC Module Launches

### **9<sup>th</sup> March**

Members Dinner

Delta Hotel, Warwick

### **10<sup>th</sup> March**

AGM & Conference

Volvo Group, Warwick

### **12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> April**

UK Coach Rally, Blackpool

## DfT Update to EU Driving

We recently wrote to all members advising them that DfT had issued an update to the driver's hours and tachograph requirements when driving in the EU.

From 31 December 2024, PSVs with more than 10 seats operating international journeys between the UK and EU must follow AETR drivers' hours and tachograph rules. Domestic journeys within the UK are not affected and will continue to use the UK's assimilated rules.

The UK government has confirmed compliance with AETR rules for international journeys, a position agreed upon by the European Commission.

### **Key Changes:**

- **AETR Rules Apply for International Journeys:** These align with UK rules but differ in some areas:
  - AETR requires 28 days of driver records, not 56 days.
  - AETR does not include EU Mobility Package changes from 2020.
- **Smart Tachographs:** Vehicles with Smart Tachograph 1 or 2 are compliant. The requirement to retrofit Smart Tachograph 2 by 31 December 2024 is under review, and enforcement is paused.

PSVs used only in the UK must continue following existing UK drivers' hours rules.

# Sheffield Fines for Idling Engines

Bus and coach operators in Sheffield are facing stricter measures to reduce roadside pollution, as Sheffield City Council ramps up efforts to improve air quality. Drivers are now required to switch off engines immediately at stops or pull-ins, with fines of up to £20 for those caught idling unnecessarily.

The new rules, outlined in a letter to operators, align with Section 42 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and are part of the city's broader Clean Air Strategy. This builds on the introduction of Sheffield's Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in February 2023, which charges non-compliant vehicles to enter the inner ring road. Charges include £10 daily for diesel vans and taxis, and £50 for certain buses, coaches, and lorries.

Despite these measures, air pollution hotspots continue to exceed legal nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) limits. Civil enforcement officers will monitor compliance, asking drivers to switch off engines or justify idling. The council states that most drivers comply without further action, but those who refuse and lack valid reasons will face fixed penalty notices, with unpaid fines potentially leading to court prosecution.

## Progress on Coach Parking in Matlock Bath

Efforts to restore coach parking in Matlock Bath have made progress, with Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) agreeing to limit the use of Station Road Car Park as a temporary traveller site to four months each year.

For over two years, the site's nine coach bays and 22 car parking spaces have been unavailable due to traveller occupation. Following consultation, DDDC designated six temporary traveller sites, including Matlock Bath's Station Road facility, which will be used by travellers from 1 November to 28 February for two years.

The lack of coach parking has negatively impacted Matlock Bath's economy, reducing visitor numbers to the popular tourist destination. Coaches bring significant business to local shops and attractions, particularly during off-peak seasons. The council's decision ensures parking will be available during the peak season, but seasonal restrictions may continue to deter coach operators.

Further work is needed to secure a year-round solution. Proposals include redesigning the site to accommodate both coach parking and managed traveller access.

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## Prioritise Mental Health This Christmas

The festive season can be a stressful time for the coach industry, with long hours, tight schedules, and time away from loved ones. These pressures can affect mental well-being, so here are some tips for staying healthy and balanced:

**Plan Ahead:** The festive season can bring unpredictable traffic and tight schedules. By mapping out potential delays or busy routes in advance, you can manage expectations and minimize stress.

**Stay Connected:** Regular check-ins with colleagues and family provide much-needed support. A quick call home during downtime can lift your spirits.

**Set Boundaries:** While it's tempting to meet every customer's request, focus on delivering a safe, reliable service without overextending yourself.

**Take Care of Yourself:** Use rest stops to hydrate, stretch, and recharge. Simple mindfulness exercises during breaks can help manage stress.

**Reach Out for Support:** If things feel overwhelming, talk to someone.

- Samaritans (116 123)
- Mind (0300 123 3393)
- CALM (0800 58 58 58)

Taking care of yourself ensures you can continue to deliver the best service to your passengers.

## Heathrow to Increase Coach Parking Fee

Heathrow Airport has announced updates to the charges for its West Ramp Coach Park (WRCP), effective from **1st January 2025**. The changes follow a review of pricing and consultation with industry stakeholders.

Key updates include:

- **Price per movement:** £61 (excluding VAT)
- **Charge for toilet drop:** £10 per drop (excluding VAT)

These adjustments are designed to address an earlier pricing error where VAT was incorrectly included in the £56.54 per movement charge since July 2021. Heathrow state that this error, coupled with a continued reduction in coach park movements compared to pre-COVID levels and rising operational costs, has resulted in a 'significant under-recovery'.

To mitigate the financial impact on operators, Heathrow has opted to recoup the shortfall gradually over the next two to three years, reducing the scale of immediate increases.

Operators can find the full terms and conditions for the WRCP at [this link](#).