



TRUCKERS' TOILETS UK

Campaign to improve the health & wellbeing of lorry drivers

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Twitter: The issue of toilet provision for lorry drivers is now spreading even further! Gill has bitten the bullet and joined Twitter aiming for organisations connected to health, hygiene and politics.



HSE: TTUK has received a copy of the new edition *HSG136: A Guide to Workforce Transport Safety*. [thanks to Michelle Barkley]. Para 127 expands the need for the availability of welfare services and paras 33-36 discuss the issue of a 'shared workplace'. If this guide is followed it could improve the comfort of lorry drivers considerably but these are once again only 'guidelines'. Still it is progress and a basis from which to 'move forward' - to use current terminology.



Research [1]: The study mentioned in last month's issue [*The Effect of Acute Increase in Urge to Void on Cognitive Function in Health Adults* in *Neurourology and Urodynamics* 30:183-187 (2011)] also points out that holding on increases the risk of urinary tract infections and other bladder problems. This is described as being 'a known fact'. So if health problems are known why aren't toilets for drivers and other mobile workers still not a regulatory requirement?



Research [2]: A paper, reviewed by Dr Philip Tucker [Swansea, Wales] *The impact of rest breaks upon accident risk, fatigue and performance: a review*, examined whether a set break is better than a self chosen one in transport and non transport settings. It suggested that future research needs to examine the impact of breaks on accident risk, fatigue and performance. [Ed would argue that research is also needed to examine the effects of rest breaks without access to toilet facilities]



Toilet Anxiety: Dr Simon Knowles [Melbourne Australia] kindly answered a number of questions about the health effects on those who are anxious about using away from home toilets.. In summary: it is likely that a toilet refusal can lead to increased anxiety about using an away from home toilet in the future. Also holding on when you need to defaecate can cause bowel damage.



UK Paruresis Trust: A new supporter of our TTUK campaign, Andrew Smith, Chair of the UKPT expressed concern that toilet provision in the UK, once so good has now fallen sadly behind other countries such as France. People who suffer from toilet anxiety have concerns about the actual toilets: the cramped conditions, lack of privacy screens; few cubicles etc and tend to go for self employment in order to control their environment. If this is you, then you are neither unique nor alone and help is available. Visit www.ukpt.org.uk/ or email support@ukpt.org.uk



The IBS Network: 2 very good articles in this charity's October *Gut Reaction* magazine:
(1) *So have you got a shy bowel?* Ignoring the need to go to the toilet can cause constipation.



A gastroenterologist has claimed that constipation is more common in the suburbs because of early mornings and long train journeys into work. The report headlines the fact that two thirds of the population would only visit a public toilet to open their bowels in an emergency and only about a quarter would use the toilet regularly at a friend's house or in a bar or restaurant if they needed to open their bowels. Embarrassment about using the loo means there is a tendency to ignore the body's urge and put up with the discomfort until at home when it is likely the urge would have gone. And –

(2) *It's all too much stress! Or is it? A Personal View.* With about a quarter of the population affected by IBS and other long standing gut disorders it is very likely that a number of mobile workers are affected by this distressing condition. Are you one of them? Help is available at www.theibsnetwork.org



Toilet access: Commercial Motor [7 August 2014] carried an article by Justin Stanton which states that 77% of those who responded to a Trucking Britain Survey agree that accessing a toilet is a real problem. Comments from drivers highlighted not only the state of some of the toilets that are available but also the appalling toilet manners of some of the users who fail to consider others. One haulier pointed out that whilst there should be toilet access there should also be mutual respect between the company and the user. Comments anyone?



Cleaning personnel: TTUK contacted Mary de Cobos of *Future Cleaning Systems* who commented on the recent Equalities & Human Rights Commission's reports on the cleaning industry [Cleansize 16 October 2014]. Mary was interested in our campaign and our Ed is expecting further communication from her colleague shortly.



Blue Arrow: Our Ed is looking forward to the opportunity to discuss an overview document now being written by our Blue Arrow contact.



Meningitis Now: Our contact at this charity has moved on but TTUK is delighted that the new incumbent is keen to continue the association. The reason? Their mobile charity workers are experiencing problems in accessing toilets as they drive around their regions – *and our Ed thinks this must affect other charities as well!*



Hand hygiene: As hot water can actually damage the thin layers of fat that form a barrier on our hands it should not be used for hand washing because whilst the skin is recovering micro organisms and chemicals can penetrate. Chris Packham www.enviroderm.co.uk suggests a mixer tap or a thermostatic mixer valve just before the tap is best and preferable to lukewarm water which carries a risk of Legionella



Unite the Union: TTUK has asked to know the outcome so far of the ratings given to toilets on the *Better Loos 4 U Campaigning* section of the Union website. Have you ticked the boxes? It's something you can do TODAY that will help to change the situation.



BBC News: [30 September 2014] '*Union members staged an unofficial walk out at Ferrybridge, near Castleford, amid claims that facilities were dirty, blocked and without toilet paper*'.

Apparently the matter had been raised before but no action had been taken. The walk out resulted in positive talks between managers and workers. It is perhaps easier for workers in one particular facility to take action than it is for lorry drivers around the country who are constantly on the move – but this action does highlight the need for discussions between managers and workers and shows that communication can make a difference.



Wincanton: Gill has had an introductory telephone conversation with the HR business partner at Wincanton and is looking forward to further discussions.



Grant Shapps MP: In view of the success of the Ferrybridge workers Gill wrote to Grant Shapps [*local MP*] pointing out that lorry drivers do NOT have regulatory access to ANY toilets and suggesting that '*hard working*' mobile workers such as lorry drivers on whom we rely on a daily basis - be given due consideration. His PA has informed us that the issue has been raised with Robert Goodwill MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport and any reply will be passed on to us.



Watch this space for updates

Victoria Borwick, Deputy Mayor of London: As Victoria Borwick is involved with the Transport Committee and is also Chairman of the Health and Public Services Committee at the London Assembly, both of which appear to include the health and wellbeing of mobile workers, Gill has written to her about our campaign. The Deputy Mayor's Research & Support Officer has responded and says that Victoria is asking the teams within the GLA about this issue and admits that it doesn't seem to be on the committee radar – but she will keep trying!



Ladies in Waiting [1]: A toileteer colleague passed on the following question: How many Building Control Officers are enforcing the British Standards ratio of men:women in public toilets? We don't know but ladies, if you have to queue, why not contact the management of the facility and politely suggest they may be guilty of sex discrimination! *[Thanks Michelle]*



Ladies in Waiting [2]: On a positive front it was reassuring to see not one, but two mobile toilet units specifically for women at Alexandra Palace this month at the Knitting & Stitching Show which tends to attract more women than men. The organiser has been thanked for her foresight.



Hand Hygiene: Dr Ackerley MD of Hygiene Audit Systems and Visiting Professor of Environmental Health, University of Salford has suggested key times for washing hands and for the use of wipes. She has also suggested paying attention to items in and around the cab. Visit Truckers Toilets UK or contact Gill for the suggestions.



New book: Interested in Victorian life? Then this book could be right up your street! *Dirty Old London: The Victorian fight against filth* by Lee Jackson, a very entertaining and knowledgeable writer [pub: Yale University Press, 2014].

Urinetown the Musical < www.urinetown.co.uk> now at The Apollo Theatre, London. You've just gotta go!

London Loo Tours www.lootours.com. If you want to book a tour with *The Loo Lady* herself do it now before 19th November! If you're interested in becoming a guide please contact Rachel at rachel@lootours.com

Don't forget to join in our Truckers Toilets UK campaign on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Truckers-Toilets-UK/520313554691335>



Next issue of the **Truckers' Toilets UK** newsletter will be November

Gillian Kemp

The British Toilet Association www.britloos.co.uk