



## ROADSIDE SURVIVAL

**FOR MORE THAN A DECADE SURVIVE HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING TO REDUCE THE DANGERS FOR THOSE WORKING AT THE ROADSIDE. VRL ASKED EXECUTIVE CHAIR, ALLAN MOWATT,\* FOR AN UPDATE.**

**What do you rate as SURVIVE's most significant achievements so far?**

SURVIVE (Safe Use of Roadside Verges in Vehicular Emergencies) has brought together and galvanised the efforts and energy of private and public sectors to improve the safety of those who work at the roadside and those who find themselves there because of an incident.

As a result of this coming together, we have delivered PAS 43, consistent advice to members of the public on how to behave if they find themselves on the hard shoulder and, most recently, the Best Practice Guidelines and the SURVIVE website.

**Do you feel that your voice is being heard sufficiently and that roadside service organisations and recovery operators now have a more safety-conscious ethos?**

An increase in the use of the website plus feedback from the Tow Show and the AVRO-Ex Roadshow indicates that the message is getting across.

**What more can be done through training?**

The National Highway Sector Scheme 17 Committee established the national training vehicle recovery committee with the intent of benchmarking training and assessment of vehicle recovery technicians. The committee appointed IVR(UK), specifically created by the



industry, to develop this over a two-year period.

The results have been outstanding. Some 24 training and assessment modules have now been completed or are near completion. These are available to relevant, registered training organisations throughout the UK that meet the standards of the scheme. Work is in-hand with the Sector Skills Council (Automotiveskills/IMI) to develop this base for incorporation into the forthcoming Qualification Credit Framework (QCF), the successor to the NVQ system in England.

As a result of this work, SURVIVE has adopted the scheme within PAS 43 as a recommendation for training and assessment of vehicle recovery technicians, making the first three modules (or their equivalent) a mandatory requirement for all technicians employed by recovery companies assessed against PAS 43. Other related organisations also see the value in adopting the first three modules and then adding further qualifications relating to their industries.

### What additional training developments are in the pipeline?

Further work and consultation will be required in respect of temporary traffic management (TTM) and risk assessment on all roads. To this end discussion is continuing with the NHSS 12D training committee for the development of TTM on rural and urban roads and for dynamic assessment of risk by the recovery technician when arriving on site. Guidance on the SRN and similar roads has also been issued in respect of risk and co-operation with traffic officers and Police forces.

IVR(UK) has been requested to develop an awareness module specifically for auditors who assess NHSS 17/17B. The broad outline for this training has been developed and will be published within NHSS 17/17B in the near future. In line with this SURVIVE is also looking at using this as a model for inclusion in the next edition of PAS 43, and to this extent is drafting an appropriate annex.

The training module summary can be reviewed in PAS 43:2008 or in the latest

version of NHSS 17 or NHSS 17B (available on the [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com) website under publications.)

### Is it down to what emphasis individual companies and organisations place on roadside safety?

It follows that under PAS 43 assessments the responsibility for training/competency of recovery technicians is that of individual PAS 43-registered companies. However, NHSS 17/17B requires relevant recovery technicians to be appropriately trained and assessed for the types of recovery equipment that they use, the requirements being that such technicians hold an identity/skills card showing the skills and qualifications that they have and, when challenged, should be able to produce the card as evidence of their competencies. NHSS 17/17B companies will hold a certificate (issued by a certification body) that identifies the area of work in which a vehicle recovery organization is competent to work. These categories are:

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- Motor Cycles
- Passenger Cars and Light Commercial Vehicles
- Heavy Vehicles
- Coaches and Buses
- Specialist Vehicles
- Storage of vehicles for police purposes (NHSS 17B)
- Storage of vehicles for Highway Authorities (named) (NHSS 17B)

Sub-categories include:

- Removal
- Recovery (NHSS 17B)
- Protection of Evidence (NHSS 17B) or
- Any combination of sub-categories

As other categories or sub-categories are identified these will be added as necessary.

**Where do you consider that SURVIVE has had most impact – with those who work on the roadside, or with motorists?**

SURVIVE is more visible within the breakdown recovery industry, yet the public now has greater awareness of our existence.

**Are commercial vehicle drivers more or less safety-conscious than car drivers?**

We have no evidence on this. However, one of the strengths of SURVIVE is that it contains representatives from the motoring organisations, the commercial vehicle recovery associations and, in fact, everyone who has a stake in improving safety on our roads.

**Statistically, has the number of hard shoulder injuries and fatalities declined in recent years?**

At a time when traffic flows have been increasing and our motorways are being used at a high density over much longer periods of the day, we believe that we are seeing a slight fall in such incidents, which are thankfully few in number.

**What is the SURVIVE view on motorway hard shoulder running?**

**Can it be justified on safety grounds?** Increasingly, SURVIVE has worked closely with the Highways Agency in the implementation

and monitoring of 'managed motorway' projects, some of which have involved the use of the hard shoulder as a running lane. Our view is that, provided future schemes are designed carefully and with due regard for the practicalities in attending breakdowns and accidents, there is no reason why hard shoulder running should not take place on those stretches of motorway where conventional widening is not practicable.

**What important additions or revisions do you anticipate will be made to PAS43 in the 2010 update?**

There are no radical changes planned to the basic standards, although there will be some minor additions and changes which are necessary to respond to matters arising over the last two years. For example, there is new guidance on how to deal with situations in which animals are being transported in the casualty vehicle.

However, the main changes will address growing concern amongst procurers of roadside assistance and vehicle recovery services that PAS 43 is losing credibility



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as a result of a lack of consistency in the standards applied by different certification and inspection bodies. This concern is shared by those accountable for the Highways Agency Sector Scheme 17.

We have consulted with the UK Accreditation Service and with other key stakeholders and we will be introducing guidance on the competences that assessors working on behalf of certification and inspection bodies must be able to demonstrate. We are also removing the current recommendations on the minimum percentage of a recovery fleet that must be assessed by an inspection body and we will replace this with a requirement for inspection bodies to inspect all vehicles in the fleet annually.

We are also introducing a provision that allows a certification or inspection body to undertake an unannounced assessment, though we would only expect this to happen when there are grounds to believe that the organisation which is subject to the assessment is no longer compliant with the PAS 43.

**There has been talk of making roadside repair and recovery vehicles more conspicuous. What more can be done?**

Conspicuity is usually thought of in terms of making vehicles brighter, and hoping that by attracting drivers' attention they will respond appropriately. But conspicuity must also inform approaching drivers, so they can make better decisions sooner. Drivers need to know what type of hazard they are approaching and how they should react. Conspicuity schemes can be designed to aid this process, helping drivers to understand that there will be workers close by and to help them be seen.

Consideration must also be given to the 'compatibility' between vehicle- and worker-conspicuity; for example if we make vehicles more conspicuous we need to find ways to avoid biasing drivers towards recognising vehicles at the expense of not seeing relatively less conspicuous road workers.

**Do you feel that SURVIVE is fully-representative, or are there still bodies or organisations outside**

**the group that could make a useful contribution?**

Yes, we have the main clubs, smaller recovery assistance firms, the Police, Highways Agency and other independent bodies. But there is always scope for new members.

**\*Allan Mowatt** is a chartered engineer and former president of the Institution of Highways and Transportation. He was director of highways and transportation for Kent County Council until 1997 and then a director of several highways construction companies until 2004. He is now a freelance highways consultant. He has chaired the SURVIVE executive for the past four years. The group's website is at [www.survivegroup.org](http://www.survivegroup.org).

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