



Vehicle Type Approval

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Type Approval for Cars

ECWVTA - Commonly asked questions

Type Approval for Motorcycles

Q1: What is EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA)?

ECWVTA is a system allowing a vehicle design to be "type approved" for sale, registration and entry into service across all member states in the EU without the need for further testing in each country. This will result in the creation of a single market by ensuring common vehicle standards.

Bus & Coach Certification

From April 2009, legislation was extended to cover all new road vehicles such as buses, coaches, trucks, trailers (including caravans) and certain special purpose vehicles such as wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). The legislation will be phased in over the coming 5 years depending on vehicle category.

System & Component Approval

Type Approval for Goods Vehicles

Q2: Who will be affected by ECWVTA?

Ambulances

The majority of businesses affected will be the manufacturers and converters of commercial vehicles, namely buses and coaches, goods vehicles and trailers. For a more comprehensive description of the vehicles affected please refer to the vehicle category definitions within the directive.

Trailer Certification

Two business sectors which will be particularly affected are body builders, i.e. those that take a chassis and build or modify a body of any description on it before selling it to the customer, and manufacturers of commercial vehicles imported from inside or outside Europe.

Motor Caravan Certification

Q3: Why does it matter?

Conformity of Production

ECWVTA for passenger and commercial vehicles is very important. Once the relevant application date passes you will not be able to sell or register any new vehicles covered by the Directive without it having an approval certificate. No approval, no sale!

Agricultural and Forestry Tractors

At an operational level, you may need to make significant changes to your business to comply with the new Directive. For example, manufacturers may have to change their product design or manufacturing process to meet new technical or quality management requirements, or ensure that their staff have the correct training and skills to adapt. It makes sense to prepare now.

Glossary of Terms

Q4: What are the enforcement dates for the new directive?

Definition of vehicle categories

The Directive became part of UK law from 29 April 2009. The dates from which ECWVTA will be enforced for each vehicle category vary from 2009 to 2014.

Technical Services

UK National Small Series Type Approval (NSSTA)

European Community Small Series type approval (EC)

Management Systems Certification

Legislation

Fuel Consumption & CO₂

UK Enforcement & Research - inc. WEEE & Batteries

Other Certification Activities

Dangerous Goods

Recruitment

VCA Graduate Training Scheme

Categories	New Type Optional	New Type Mandatory	Existing Type Mandatory
M1	NA	29th April 2009	NA
M1 Special Purpose	29th April 2009	29th April 2011	29th April 2012
N1 - Incomplete and Complete	29th April 2009	29th October 2010	29th April 2011
N1 - Completed	29th April 2009	29th October 2011	29th April 2013
N2, N3, O1, O2, O3, O4 - Incomplete and Complete	29th April 2009	29th October 2010	29th October 2012
M2 and M3 - Incomplete and Complete	29th April 2009	29th April 2009 (1)	29th October 2010
N1, N2, N3, M2, M3, O1, O2, O3, O4 -	29th April	29th October	29th October

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Special Purpose	2009	2012	2014
N2, N3 - Completed	29th April 2009	29th October 2012	29th October 2014
M2, M3 - Completed	29th April 2009	29th April 2010 (1)	29th October 2011
O1, O2, O3, O4 - Completed	29th April 2009	29th October 2011	29th October 2013



Note (1): National approval available for a further 12 months subject to Art45(4)

70/156/EEC (the old framework directive) was repealed with effect from the 29th April 2009. The first stages of application start to work in 2009, with voluntary whole vehicle approval being available for all types of vehicle at that time. Mandatory Approval will follow over the next few years, starting with buses and coaches (on the same date in 2009), with Whole Vehicle Approval for trailers bringing up the rear in 2013.

Q5: Are there business benefits from ECWVTA?

Yes. All vehicles will be manufactured to the same high standards of road safety and environmental performance, promoting customer confidence and retaining more value in vehicles produced.

A key objective of ECWVTA is the harmonisation of the European market. ECWVTA will reduce trade barriers by creating a level playing field for companies wishing to sell their vehicles in Europe. Currently, EU member states have different approval schemes, so a manufacturer may need to have their vehicles approved to each country's standards. This can be a complex, time-consuming and costly process for UK businesses and can be obstructive to their commercial plans, but ECWVTA will allow any such approved vehicle to be sold anywhere across the EU. No member state can refuse to register or permit the sale of and entry into service of new vehicles (on the grounds of construction) if they are accompanied by a valid certificate of conformity (CoC).

Q6: How do manufacturers obtain Type Approval?

To achieve Type Approval for a new model of vehicle you need to demonstrate that you have quality management standards that meet the requirements for Conformity of Production (CoP) and that your vehicle meets the technical requirements set out in the Directive and associated legislation.

In practice, this means you will need to:

- Consider the design and construction of your vehicle to ensure that all relevant components comply with the technical requirements, as listed in the ECWVTA Directive;
- Make an application for Type Approval to the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) or another member state approval authority, requiring:
 1. Your production processes to be subjected to a CoP Assessment. You will need to provide documentation of your systems to demonstrate that all vehicles of the same type, manufactured following the documented process, will conform to the type approved specification.
 2. A thorough examination of your pre-production vehicles (including destructive testing where appropriate) to ensure that the vehicle meets the rigorous safety and environment standards.

Once Type Approval has been awarded, the manufacturer will be solely responsible for ensuring CoP remains valid for all vehicles produced under that approval. The manufacturer will then be able to issue a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) for each vehicle produced of that type.

Ensuring Continuous Conformity

After approval has been given, the UK automotive approval authority must first verify that the production arrangements of the manufacturer continue to be adequate. Verification must be carried out in accordance with certain procedures set out in the directive, and where appropriate, with the specific provisions of the separate directives.

Impact on Resources and Business Processes

To meet the new challenges presented by ECWVTA you may need to review your staff and financial resources to determine whether you need to bring in additional skills and how much more compliance may cost.

Q7: What about manufacturers only wishing to sell within the UK?

There are two separate national schemes for lower volume UK manufacturers. These are:

- National Small Series Type Approval (NSSTA)
- Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA)

The schemes are designed to maintain ECWVTA standards, whilst minimising compliance costs for low volume manufacturers, usually small to medium-sized companies.

However, unlike ECWVTA, these UK national approval schemes will not necessarily be accepted automatically by other EU member states. Producers who want to export products with national certification will have to apply directly to the Type Approval authority in the country to which they wish to export, although the Directive provides for processes to facilitate the mutual recognition of national Type Approvals.

Q8: What else can you tell me about the different approval schemes?

There are four different schemes:

1. ECWVTA is aimed primarily at manufacturers of vehicles and bodywork producing large numbers of the same vehicle type or product each year. It can be applied to complete, incomplete or completed vehicles. Achieving ECWVTA means the manufacturer can sell the product in any EU market without needing additional national tests in another EU member state. VCA is the designated UK type approval authority and can help in this area.
2. ECSSTA (EC Small Series Type Approval) has been created for low volume car producers only, and like full ECWVTA will allow Europe wide sales but with technical and administrative requirements that are more adapted to smaller businesses.
3. NSSTA (National Small Series Type Approval) is a UK national scheme for low volume manufacturers who intend to sell only in the UK. The advantages of NSSTA are a reduced CoP requirement, and reduction in administrative requirements. Like ECWVTA, once the design is approved, individual vehicles do not need to be tested
4. IVA (Individual Vehicle Approval) is a UK national scheme and the most likely route for those manufacturing or importing single vehicles or very small numbers. IVA does not require CoP, although most bodybuilders and converters will work with manufacturers to ensure there is no warranty compromise. Under IVA, vehicles have to be inspected by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) in Great Britain or the Driver Vehicle Agency (DVA) in Northern Ireland.

Q9: Where can I get more information?

You can obtain further information about ECWVTA and NSSTA by contacting:
Email: enquires@vca.gov.uk or Tel: +44 (0)117 9524235

To find out more about IVA contact:
Email: enquiries@vosa.gov.uk or Tel: 0300 1239000
Web: www.businesslink.gov.uk

For IVA in Northern Ireland contact:
Web: www.dvani.gov.uk