



Vehicle
Inspectorate



HM Customs and Excise



OPERATION TOURIST – THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PSV PASSENGER SAFETY

A Submission in pursuit of The Tilley Award Crime Reduction Category

Prepared by

Police Constable Melvyn Small

Of the Avon and Somerset

Road Policing Unit

Police Headquarters

PO Box 37

Valley Road

Portishead

BS20 8QJ

Tel: 01823 363055

Fax: 01823 363640

E-mail: melvyn.small@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

Endorsed by : A.C.C.Steve Mortimore

Index

	Page
Introduction	3
History	4
Objectives	4
Scanning	4
Analysis	5
Response	5
Assessment	5
Re - assessment (1995-1998)	6
Re-Assessment (1999)	7
Response (1999)	8
Assessment (1999)	8
Response (2001)	9
Assessment (2001)	9
Re - assessment (2001)	10
Response (2002)	10
Assessment (2002)	11
The Future	11
Conclusion	12
Index of appendices	13

Introduction

The coach industry in the United Kingdom has long been regarded as the safest form of passenger transport using our roads.

This perception of safety has been encouraged by the industry itself, which prior to Tourist was almost totally self-regulatory, with the Department of Transport, (*now the Vehicle Operator Services Agency VOSA*) carrying out occasional maintenance checks.

These checks were an attempt to ensure that passenger-carrying vehicles using our roads were safe to do so and to keep public confidence in a quickly growing industry.

There was no co-ordinated multi-agency approach to the regulation of the industry. The police rarely became involved in the checking of public service vehicles (*PSV's*). The regulations surrounding the regulations were complex, with officers often shying away from those complexities. Only a few officers from the road policing unit became involved and all too often this was when necessity dictated as a result of an incident on the roads.

Collisions involving buses and coaches compared to other forms of road transport were rare. However, when they occurred the results were often catastrophic, with loss of life and serious injuries, the incidents always attracted media interest, and more often than not were the result of a maintenance defect or a tired driver. The lack of any co-ordinated approach to the regulation of the industry did little to drive the industry forward to improve standards and reduce casualties.

Since the creation of operation Tourist, the coach industry has strived to improve the standard of coaches using the roads of the United Kingdom, and has had some success.

Coach travel in recent years has become a large part of the tourist industry in this country. Millions of people use this mode of transport for recreation as well as the everyday life of travelling around our communities, and taking our children to school.

In 2001, 70% of all passengers using public transport, travelled on coaches and buses
(*Confederation of passenger transport figures*) (322 words)



History

In 1994, Operation Tourist was conceived within Avon and Somerset Constabulary. It came about as a result of a local investigation into a Somerset based coach company who held a number of School bus contracts within the county. There was serious concern about the roadworthiness of some of the vehicles operated, and the safety of the passengers carried.

The investigation identified that the same vehicles that were carrying school children were also involved in the carriage of passengers who were embarking on holiday travel during the school holidays. These passengers were being conveyed throughout the south-west and on short continental breaks.

It was felt that the poor maintenance would have a serious impact on the safety of these passengers, and would increase the risk of road collisions. These collisions, due to the nature and size of the vehicles and the numbers of potential casualties may have a serious effect on a wide range of services.

Objectives

Acknowledging that there was a serious problem, two objectives were identified:

- Improvement in vehicle maintenance
- Reduction in casualty numbers and collisions

These objectives would if achieved, improve passenger safety and improve the general public's perception of coach and bus travel.

Scanning

The scanning encompassed all aspects of the problem, and identified evidence (*source of evidence in brackets*) to confirm this.

- An identified problem with the road worthy condition of passenger carrying vehicles (*The results of complaints received and initial investigation into the coach company*)
- The fact that the vehicles were used on longer national and international journeys during the summer months (*Obtained from driver records*)
- The poor condition of the vehicles were putting the passengers carried, and the general motoring public, in increased danger of being involved in a collision resulting in serious or fatal injury (*Previous coach collisions had often been the result of poor maintenance*)
- Due to the nature and size of the vehicles and the numbers of potential casualties, a serious incident or collision may have a serious effect on a wide range of services. (*Experience of previous collisions involving multiple casualties, and the strains placed upon the emergency services and local hospitals*)

Analysis

The analysis in the early days, identified the lack of a co-ordinated approach to the regulation of the coach industry, and the apparent self-regulation (*or not*) by the operators themselves. If one company in Somerset was using vehicles in such a condition, what were other coach companies in the force area doing?

The police alone were not able to carry out maintenance checks on coach operators throughout the force area. The Vehicle Inspectorate with their vehicle examiners and traffic examiners, with their mechanical expertise and knowledge of the industry were identified as ideal partners to assist with our response to the problem.

Although there had been a long-standing partnership with the Vehicle Inspectorate in other areas, this would be the first time the 'Partnership approach' would be used to target the coach industry

Response

In 1994, the partnership carried out a series of roadside checks at motorway service stations and major routes throughout the force area. This involved the checking of vehicles as they entered the services. It allowed us to assess the extent of the problem, if indeed there was a more widespread problem.

It would send a clear message to the coach industry that the conditions of their vehicles was being scrutinised and most importantly send a message to the passengers carried that the Police and VOSA were identifying that their safety was at the forefront of our minds.

Motorway services areas were identified, to allow for the safety and comfort of passengers. The facilities on offer at these locations would allow compliance with agreed ACPO and Vehicle Inspectorate's codes of practice for PCV's in service. (*Appendix A*)

Four locations were identified, and on a summer Saturday, the first Tourist operation was conducted.

In all, 236 vehicles were checked.

A massive 50% of all those vehicles were identified with defects, both maintenance and drivers hours

27 coaches were immediately prohibited from driving further due to the defects identified, it being felt that it was unsafe for them to continue in the conditions found.

Assessment

- The most noticeable aspect of the operation was the fact that the passengers welcomed the operation, and that their safety was regarded as a priority to the Police and Vehicle inspectorate.
- The results gave an indication that there was a serious problem associated with the UK coach industry.
- A number of the vehicles checked were from other areas throughout the UK, suggesting that an identified forcewide problem, may in fact be a regional/national problem as well, and a wider approach may be needed.
- It was identified that there needed to be a raising of awareness of the problem both within the industry and the media. The aim would be to focus the minds of the industry which it was felt had become complacent in its operating procedures and maintenance.

In 1995, a revised strategy raised the profile of the problem. The Avon and Somerset police co-ordinated a joint partnership approach with the Vehicle Inspectorate, and police forces throughout the south of England.

The operation, again carried out during the peak holiday time, targeting the M5, M4, M3 and M27 motorways, identified a large number of defective coaches using our roads.

Re-Assessment

Following the 1995 operation, the first of an ongoing re-assessment of the problem solving process began.

It was identified that there needed to be a process whereby the Traffic Commissioners office, the national body that regulates the PSV industry by the granting of licences to operate, and having the powers to sanction companies that transgress the regulations placed upon them, became involved.

Consultation resulted in the Traffic Commissioners offices nation-wide being informed of companies that had come to the attention of the multi-agency operations.

Another partner was added to the problem solving process. This was considered to be a major step forward in the process of improving the standards within the industry.

Following the 1995 operation, a database was created in Avon and Somerset, which collated details of checks carried out, listing offenders and offences identified. This would help in targeting for future operations. It was believed to be the first database of its kind nationally.



In the three years that followed, the industry press, the local and national media all became involved with the pre-publicity that raised the awareness of Operation Tourist.

The Avon and Somerset police co-ordinated a national day of action every summer whereby coaches and buses throughout England and Scotland were checked at motorway service stations and on major routes countrywide.

Over 40 police forces nationally became involved, Vehicle Inspectorate areas throughout the UK participated and over 2000 vehicles nationally were being stopped and checked in one day.

The Traffic Area offices and Traffic Commissioners nationally became involved in the follow up sanctions against offending companies and drivers.

The database of offenders grew and the motoring public carried on these vehicles were 100% in favour of the operations being carried out.

By 1998, the offence rate had dropped from 50% to 19% nationally.

The number of vehicles prohibited from moving, due to more serious defects had dropped from 11.4% to 4.5%

--- / ---

In 1998, the operation was incorporated into the Traffic Intelligence forum known as MERMAID to circulate the planning and details of the operation.

MERMAID was the forum that carried out the roadside checks on LGV's nationally, and the same police officers and VI officers were involved in both operations.

A 'spin off of TOURIST was the formation of operation COACHMAN. This operation was co-ordinated by Dorset police, through their traffic Intelligence unit, and the MERMAID forum. Dorset was one of the original partners in the creation of Tourist. The concept, recalling the early part of the investigation that led to the formation of Tourist, (School bus contracts) began a co-ordinated approach against coach operators who may be smaller than the national holiday companies, and sought the majority of their revenue through concentrating on school bus contracts. The coaches used were often older, and it was soon discovered that maintenance of these vehicles and the safety of the children carried were not paramount in the operators minds.

In the past 5 years, COACHMAN has enjoyed equal success. Every year defective buses that endanger our school children are identified.

In 2002, Five bus drivers were arrested for providing a positive breath test, whilst driving children to school in the morning. A frightening statistic!

Another problem that has been identified is the number of known paedophiles that have been identified driving school coaches. This development is monitored and those identified are passed to departments nationally who then begin the process of preventing these people from having continued access to children.

Another 'spin - off of the Tourist style of coach check around this time, was the introduction of similar coaching operations Europe wide.

This was co-ordinated by the Vehicle Inspectorate which, through liaison with its European counterparts, introduced coach checks in partnership with police forces all over Europe. Codename EURO-BUS, the operations are carried out two or three times a year.

The success of Tourist¹, meant that the momentum was carried forward in the same format into 1999.

Re-Assessment

Following the 1999 operation, it was identified that there had been an increase, albeit slight, in the numbers of defective vehicles being checked, and the number of vehicles being prohibited as a result of more serious defects.

- » Further *analysis* as to the reasons why, identified that a number of coach operators, had become familiar with the operations format, and had become complacent.
- Some 'rogue' companies were suspected of removing the older, more defective coaches from our roads on the day of the operation, to avoid detection. These were being returned to service after the operation, and continued to operate without further checks being carried out.
- The number of police forces able to participate was on the decrease. It was identified that this was due to face of 'Policing' going through a change, with Road Policing Units nationally moving towards the dual role of road policing and Crime related operations. Forces were unable to commit resources to 'Tourist' as previously. It was decided to increase the length of the operation from one day to one week. This would allow individual forces flexibility to participate without affecting their individual priorities.
- There had traditionally been press involvement prior to the operation. It was becoming more apparent that this was also having a detrimental effect on the effectiveness of 'Tourist' as a road safety tool.
- A need was identified to embrace the crime prevention opportunities that 'Tourist' provides.
- The database created in Avon and Somerset was unable to be made available to any force other than our own. This restricted the opportunity for forces to be able to research and target individual offenders in their own areas, with the implementation of the national intelligence model and intelligence led policing.

Response

To combat the familiarity of the operators to the operation, a complete media ban on all pre-operation press involvement. A national decision was made to concentrate on post operation media. This would also prevent the rogue operators removing the more defective vehicles from the road.

The creation within our own force of a simple leaflet, outlining the aims of 'Tourist', and including suitable crime prevention advice, relevant to the traveller. This was distributed to all passengers, spoken to on operational days. (**Appendix B**)

The national road policing Intelligence forum (*formally the MERMAID forum*) had introduced the PIKE commercial vehicle database, a nation-wide database collating details of stop/checks on commercial vehicles across the UK and Northern Ireland.

From the year 2000, this would include details of all 'Tourist' data collected during the operations, allowing access to all forces nationally. Thus providing the opportunity for intelligence led operations to be commenced.

A more comprehensive collation of statistics to allow more accurate analysis of performance.

Assessment (Following Changes)

Nationally, 1351 vehicles were checked, with an expected increase in offence rate to 22%. Small increase in the number of vehicles prohibited from continuing their journey rising to 4.9% was also recorded. The rises in offences were as a result of more infringements of driver's hours regulations detected.

This was due to the lack of publicity pre operation, and the beginnings of an intelligence-led approach to the operation.

'Tourist' is now fully integrated into the Road policing intelligence forum, with the Road policing unit in Avon and Somerset continuing to co-ordinate, and plan the operation at a national level.

Continued re-assessment of the problem solving process, together with identified changes in policing, led to a further *re-assessment* in 2001.

The operation was still welcomed by the industry and the public. It was felt that the operation had suffered due to a lack of pre-operational publicity. The RPU in Avon and Somerset brought a community safety officer to the department, with a mandate to improve and enhance the publicity that operational Road policing created.

Response

The input from that role enabled the re-introduction of press involvement within our force at a level that the agencies involved, had more control over. This would enable us to raise the profile of our aims and objectives in the local media.

Although we as a force had no direct control over the approach other forces took in relation to local media involvement, our national co-ordination of the operation had given some direction to the media strategy.

There were still identified problems with police force participation. The week-long experiment was well received. It was decided that the operation should be extended still further, covering two weeks, further ensuring flexibility and keeping operators unaware when checks would occur.

The National forum allowed greater flow of intelligence between organisations, which was providing targeted intelligence on specific companies. The introduction of a national intelligence package for 'Tourist', created by the Intelligence unit in Avon and Somerset, from intelligence received from all agencies involved, was to prove helpful.

Assessment

In 2001, 1473 vehicles were checked nationally. There was a reduction in the overall offence rate to 20%. However there was an increase in the number of Immediate Prohibitions issued to 7.1%, and for the first time a detailed analysis of drivers hours offences, (*as a direct result of the previous years findings*) of 19%. The crime prevention advice initiative within our force continued.

(*Education*) In partnership with the Traffic Commissioner for the Western traffic area, a presentation direct to coach operators in the South and West was commenced. This identified problems and defects found during the operation and how these could be rectified. This was carried out during seminar evenings organised by the Traffic Area.

for the first time, the aims, objectives and findings of 'Tourist' were being delivered to the industry and the people who were directly involved with the day to day running of coach operations.

We were able to provide information on operations and having identified types of offences we were finding, we were able to advise on passenger safety and in partnership with the VI, the importance of regular maintenance.

This direct contact was, and still is, very well received by the industry.

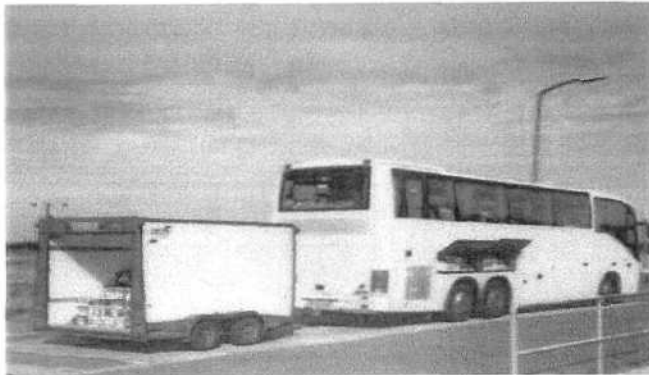
Re assessment following 2001.

Nationally the increase of intelligence in respect of smuggling into the UK of cigarettes and tobacco for commercial purposes, linking in with terrorist organisations in Northern Ireland, has led to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (*HMCE*) now playing a role in 'Tourist', with interest from Special Branch. Information indicating the use of coaches for smuggling purposes and the use of rebated fuel has added a further dimension to 'Tourist'.

The benefits agency also began to play a greater role.

Intelligence from the National Road policing forum, together with analysis of PIKE, has enabled even more targeted approach to the operation (*Appendix 0*)

Smuggled goods found as a result of coach checks during operation Tourist



- Need to diversify into areas of crime as well as traffic road safety issues
- The crime prevention advice leaflets enabled the RPU's philosophy of 'One stop. Two messages' to be promoted.
- Identified need that as a result of enhanced intelligence, that there may be a need for 'in depth' investigation into repeat offending companies.
- Further use of media required.
- Increased education input.

Response

Briefing document covering aspects of Smuggling. A publicity strategy of before, during and afterwards was employed. (*Appendix C*) A continued operational period of two weeks. Increased use of seminar evenings to promote Tourist to the industry.

A working party of the (national co-ordinator) and intelligence officers from the VOSA with experience in 'in-depth' investigations was formed to create a checklist that would provide the information required when carrying out such an operation. VI agreement was obtained that they were the agency to be able to carry out the investigative role.
Greater use of intelligence to create as much as possible, an intelligence-led operation.

Assessment Following 2002

28 Forces involved. 19 out of 23 Vehicle Inspectorate areas participated. HMCE and benefits agency officers employed. 1345 vehicles checked nationally. Intelligence-led targeted operation led to an increase in the offence rate to 29%. (*Mainly drivers hours*) Driver's hour's offences increased to 25%.

An Immediate Prohibition rate of 5.8%.

This was expected as the intelligence provided, focused on suspected offenders alone. Crime prevention advice to over 8000 people in the Avon and Somerset force area.

The Future

Talks are currently ongoing with the Freight Transport Association to provide a guide to PSV driver's hours. This has been identified following the increase of offences of this type, the current concerns over tired drivers and the associated road safety implications. It is hoped, through the Roads Policing Intelligence forum to provide a 'national' crime prevention message based upon the success of our own crime prevention advice.

In 2003, the operation will span one month to cover English and Scottish holidays, as well as the end of school trips.





Conclusion

Operation Tourist has been running for 8 years. In that period of time, it has become regarded as the premier operation nationally in respect of P5V safety. It has been responsible for an average 30% reduction in the number of detected offences on the UK roads that were identified following the first operation.

The operation has been identified as best practice by ACPO. The initiative has spawned other road safety initiatives within the UK and Europe. It has continually been re-assessed to meet changing needs in line with the SARA process and has reacted to changes in policing to encompass not only road safety but also crime prevention.

The operation within the Avon and Somerset Constabulary has employed best value, using available resources without overtime costs. It is living proof of a multi-agency approach to Problem Solving Policing, that is improving the aims and objectives it set out to achieve.

The operation has achieved its objectives set out in 1994 of:

An improvement in vehicle maintenance
and a reduction in casualty numbers.

I believe the operation will continue to improve on the targets already reached.

INDEX OF APPENDICES

ACPO / VI Codes of practice for coach operations

Example of the 'Tourist' crime prevention leaflet

Tourist' press strategy 2002

Tourist' Briefing document 2002

Examples of press releases - The early years

Press Cuttings

ENFORCEMENT CHECKS ON 'IN SERVICE' PASSENGER CARRYING VEHICLES.

A code of practice for Road Traffic Enforcement checks on 'in Service' passenger carrying vehicles has been agreed between the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Vehicle Inspectorate, ACPO and other enforcement agencies.

The code of practice has been complied with since the inception of Operation Tourist in 1994. The industry is aware of the code and it is in the interests of all that we continue to conform to it. For those who may not be aware of the code the salient points are listed below.

Vehicles will only be stopped by uniformed police officers

Checks should be carried out at safe, level well lit sites. They should be of suitable dimensions to accommodate the vehicle safely. The hard shoulder of a Motorway is NOT a safe place to carry out checks on a loaded passenger carrying vehicle/minibus.

The enforcement officer or police officer is responsible for informing the driver of what is going to occur and the estimated duration.

The enforcement officer/police officer is responsible for advising the passengers at the earliest possible opportunity of the purpose of the check, what is going to happen and the estimated duration of the check providing no problems are encountered.

AH discussions with the driver relating to offences or defects should take place outside of the hearing of passengers.

The checks should not require passengers to leave the vehicle unless a defect affecting their safety is found.

Where a problem is found the driver should explain this to the passengers in the presence of the Enforcement/Police officer.

Where possible a prohibition notice should come into effect at a location where there are telephones/toilets/suitable waiting area and basic refreshment facilities.

Vehicles meeting deadlines (i.e. ferries, flights) should be given priority.

Delays should be minimal and in any case no more than 30 minutes unless offences or defects are found.

OPERATION TOURIST IS A ROAD SAFETY MEASURE AND AS SUCH HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY THE INDUSTRY AND TRAVELLING PUBLIC. SINCE 1994.

OPERATION TOURIST

During the busy summer months hundreds of buses and coaches use the main holiday routes throughout the United Kingdom.

We want to ensure that these vehicles are well-maintained and do not have defects which, if not corrected, could lead to serious accidents.

For this reason, check points have been set up nationwide so police and experts from the Department of Transport Vehicle Inspectorate can inspect buses and coaches.

In most cases the checks will be completed in less than half-an-hour. While they are being carried out you may leave the coach and should find refreshments, pay telephones and toilets available nearby.

We ask for your patience. This check is being made in YOUR interest - to ensure that the vehicle is completely roadworthy and that you arrive safely at your destination.

After all it is better to arrive a little late - than not at all.

Working with you - Working for you

Crime Prevention Pays

A few tips which could save you money, inconvenience and distress.

If you are going on holiday:

- look after your purse or wallet and keep cheque books and card separate
- avoid displaying large amounts of cash in public
- leave valuables in a secure place - hotels usually have a safe
- keep an eye on your camera/camcorder/binoculars.

If you are returning home:

- use up any holiday film by photographing treasured possessions - photographs will aid recovery and will also help with any insurance claims if they are stolen
- security code electrical equipment such as stereos, video recorders and televisions and make a note of serial numbers
- carry out a security review of your home - good quality locks on windows and doors, security lighting and alarms, all help to protect your valuables.

If you have any information which could help the fight against crime - phone Crimestoppers, the anonymous cash for information line, on 0800 555 111.

www.crimereduction.org

Printed by Avon and Somerset Constabulary

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

COACH BANDITS WARNED 'NEXT STOP, COURT'

Coach operators who flout safety regulations are putting passengers in danger say Avon and Somerset police.

Officers from the forces specialist road policing unit will be stepping up checks under the codename 'Operation Tourist'. The checks will be held at random locations throughout the force area during the peak holiday season.

Supt Lawrie Lewis who is leading Operation Tourist said

"The majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks.

But last year, some 20% of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way. Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the horror stories the officers discovered.

One doesn't have to apply too much imagination to the potentially lethal consequences of these types of faults."

Coach operators found breaking the law face having their coaches taken off the road immediately as well as prosecution.

Passengers who find themselves delayed whilst the operation is in progress are being asked to be patient. Supt Lewis added

"We carry out these essential checks as swiftly as possible with our partners from the Vehicle Inspectorate. We understand this can be frustrating for the passengers and appeal to them to bear with us.'

Crime prevention advice aimed specifically at travellers will be provided during the short delay.

"We want to ensure that passengers arrive safely at their destinations and that their holidays are crime free."

During: An example of the updates circulated

Update from Operation Tourist from checks to date in Avon & Somerset.

To date 34 coaches have been checked in Avon & Somerset. 4 vehicles (5%) have been found to have defects upon them, but none have so far been serious enough to take the coach off the road immediately. This figure on the maintenance front is encouraging.

However,

Of the 34 vehicles checked, 13 (38%) have been found to have either Tachograph related defects or the drivers have committed Tachograph related offences, although none have directly effected passenger safety, this is a noticeable increase on previous years.

2 coaches are suspected to be operating illegally and further enquiries are ongoing.

Nationally to date the trend appears to mirror the findings locally, however results from across the UK are coming in all the time.

It is anticipated that the complete figures will be available by early next week.

Avon & Somerset press statement
Operation Tourist

***** Police have increased their efforts on rogue operators*****

Police officers in Avon & Somerset have this year tripled their efforts in a national road safety campaign targeting coaches who flout the law. Officers stopped three times more coaches than last year.

Operation Tourist conducted by the specialist Road Policing Unit, in partnership with the Vehicle Inspectorate have checked 231 coaches using the roads of Avon & Somerset in the past 9 days.

One in five of those checked were found to have defects which attracted a prohibition notice.

Seventeen were found with defects that were considered serious enough to prevent them continuing until the faults were put right. Defects included, brakes, tyres and emergency doors.

Chief Inspector Tony Oliver of the Force's road policing unit said

" It is disappointing that we found 900 coach passengers were put at risk this year, by coach operators who flout regulations"

Worryingly, the number of drivers exceeding their permitted driving hours has risen slightly this year, these offences raise real concerns about fatigue related collisions.

9 operators are under further investigation for operating illegally.

Ch Insp. Oliver added

" The checks have been welcomed by the vast majority of operators who keep their fleets safe and well maintained. These checks are aimed at clamping down on the 'rogue operators' who give the coach industry a bad name.

Passengers were overwhelmingly in support of the scheme and welcomed the crime prevention advice that was given by our officers.

We will continue in our efforts to ensure that coach passengers travelling on Avon and Somerset's roads arrive at their destinations safely"

The partnership approach to road safety will continue with education and further road checks throughout the year.

National Press Statement 'Tourist'

*** Coach companies told 'Could do better'***

Police and Vehicle Inspectorate officers have cautiously welcomed the improvement in maintenance standards of coaches following a national operation, but, the verdict on the coaching industry is 'could do better'

In the past 9 days, officers from Police forces all over the UK, have been working in partnership with the vehicle Inspectorate. Together they have checked 1345 coaches in a 'Road Safety' campaign. codenamed 'Operation Tourist'

The operation found the number of coaches taken off the road for serious maintenance issues, had dropped slightly by 3% on last year to 18%.

However, 79 coaches were still found to have defects considered so serious they were prevented from travelling further.

The number of more minor defects found, has risen, together with the number of drivers hours offences detected.

Nationally, 36 drivers were prohibited from driving any further for exceeding their driving hours.

A further 21 coach operators are under investigation for operating illegally

Chief Inspector Oliver of the Avon & Somerset Road Policing unit, who co-ordinated the national operation said

"Any reduction in the number of defective coaches on our roads is welcome, however the number of minor defects found, shows that there is still room for improvement. A lot of the defects could be avoided with regular maintenance schedules."

Improved intelligence on rogue operators has also led to an increase in detection of drivers hours offences"

He added, *" The horror stories are still out there. One coach was found to be driven by a disqualified driver with children on board for a day trip.*

Another coach also carrying children was found with defective emergency exits, missing seat belts, and maintenance problems"

Commenting on the check Bob Tatchell, Operations Director at the Vehicle Inspectorate said:

"Operation Tourist shows the continuing commitment of the Vehicle Inspectorate and the Police to work together in the interest of road safety. We are encouraged that a very high proportion of vehicles inspected were found to be defect free and that the vast majority of coach operators take their responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of their vehicles very seriously. It is still disappointing that some coaches are not able to continue their journey until repairs are carried out and it is important that both the Vehicle Inspectorate and the Police continue to target and take action against those operators whose vehicles do not meet the required standards. We will continue with these type of checks in addition to our more

Highly targeted checks to ensure that the high standards of road safety in this country are maintained not only in the interest of passengers but of all road users."

Disruption to passengers was kept to a minimum by having check sites at service areas. Only those coaches were prohibited from moving would have had more than a half-hour delay added to their journey time.

Regular checks of all vehicles, including coaches are held around the country throughout the year, and concentrate particularly on those vehicles that are suspected of not meeting the necessary standards. These checks will continue to be held not only in the interests of passengers but of all road users."

The vast majority of coach operators ensure their fleet is well maintained and safe. And these operators welcome the checks. Passengers have shown overwhelming support for the operation.

Police and Vehicle Inspectorate officers will continue to monitor safety standards in the UK coach industry throughout the year in a number of further pre-planned roadside checks.

TOURIST 2002

Welcome to the Operation **TOURIST 2002**, Briefing Document. This document is produced to assist in the targeting of operations, during the week.

The list of targets is not exclusive, and we ask that wherever possible all types, makes and operators are checked.

Please ensure that for ALL stop/checks the new TOURIST checksheet is used, AND that the codes of practice are complied with.(both attached)

These Operators have come to the attention of Police and Vehicle Inspectorate intelligence officers throughout the UK.

COACH OPERATOR 1 (E.4.1)

OPERATOR LOGO

OPERATOR COACH
COLOUR PICTURE

Information has been received regarding **COACH OPERATOR 1** of ADDRESS *INCLUDED*

- drivers reduce their weekly rest period to 36 hours each and every week on the insistence of the Operator.
- It is alleged that the Company insist that they work to these hours or look for another job.
- Further information has been received relating to an incident occurring on 29/04/2002 in France, when a **Coach Operators** coach travelling on the motorway towards Calais, collided with the central reservation. No other vehicle was involved, suggesting driver error.
The coach was double manned with two drivers sharing the driving in two hour blocks.

This Company is the holder of four operator licences in the North East, North West, Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Areas. The combined total number of vehicles authorised is 407.

The vehicles are blue with coach company logo written down the side.
Originating Officers **Tracey Collins /Mike Power (VI)** Intelligence Unit

COACH OPERATOR 2 (B.2.1)

COLOUR PICTURE OF COACH OPERATOR 2

Intelligence suggests that drivers for COACH OPERATOR 2 of *ADDRESS INCLUDED* are failing to keep a proper record.

During the course of an organised check, 5 drivers' charts were examined and all were warned for failing to record journeys undertaken by crew bus as per the **Skills European Court ruling which states:**

"Any time spent in work /driving before/after taking over a vehicle subject to the obligation to install and use a tachograph must be recorded on the tachograph."

Stop/checks nationally please on Coach operator 2's vehicles, to ascertain the extent of the problem nationally.

Originating Officers Tracey Collins/ Mike Power (VI) Intelligence Unit

Coach Operator 3**Coach Operator 4**

(Graded E.4.1)

The above two companies are CUMBRIA based. The livery of both is a **WHITE base colour with the Company names signwritten on the coaches.**

Both companies do contract work and summer runs. Intelligence suggests that both companies are exceeding their permitted hours and using '***Ghost***' driver details.

Mike Woolaghan (Cumbria)

COACH OPERATOR 5

(Graded A.1.1)

This company operates out of *Address included*. It operates 14 vehicles. Intelligence shows that the company has a history of Tachograph, speedlimiter and maintenance offending. Also a history of Kerosene use in the vehicles.

Coach Operator 6. Standard International licence)

(Graded A.1.1)

This company operates 30 vehicles from an operating centre at Carluke, Lanarkshire. There is a history of Drivers Hours and maintenance offences.

Any information on either company would be appreciated on behalf of Richard Loftus, Intelligence officer VI Scotland.

Coach Booze Cruises

(Graded B.2.1)

Intelligence suggests that the regular use of coaches towing trailers engaged on apparent day trip **'booze and tobacco' runs from the Newcastle and North East Area.**

From the times of current sightings of vehicles it is apparent that the vehicles leave the North East after 6pm, returning around 6pm the following day. The coaches return through Dover around 10am which means that the actual 'shopping' is taking place during the early hours of the morning.

The information suggests that 4 coaches and trailers were sighted in different parts of the country on the regular Dover to North East route on 22/04/02 and 24/04/02.

Between 14:30 and 14:55hrs on Thursday 25th, April 2002 5 coaches were sighted, with trailers, all fully laden, travelling A1 northbound between Wetherby and Dishforth.

It would appear that in week commencing 22nd April 2002 some 13 coaches and trailers have been engaged in this 'shopping trip'. In addition North Yorkshire Police intelligence indicates that 4 similar coaches were seen travelling A1 south the previous week during the late evening. It seems highly unlikely that this level of business would be generated at this time of year which involves passengers spending almost 24hrs on a coach for a night-time shopping trip.

The Operators sighted on the A1 on 25/04/02 were as follows:

1. Coach operator A of Address included
2. Coach Operator B of Address included.
(Veh Reg. No:) **ABC 123D.**

3. COACH OPERATOR C of Address included
(Veh Reg. No:) **DCE 123F**

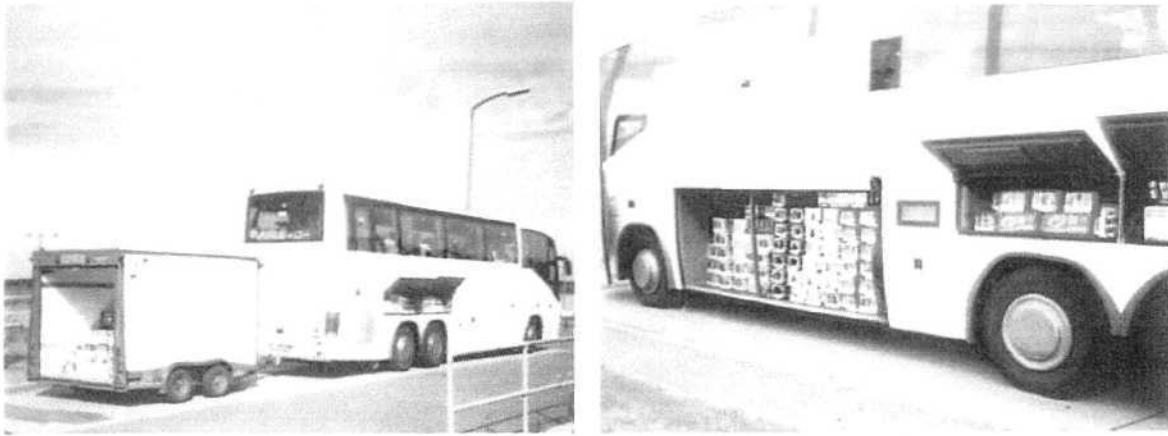
From inquiries made it would appear that **Operator A are the lead Company and have been actively attempting to purchase tri-axle coaches, obviously aware of possible weight implications.**

It is clearly apparent that a large amount of alcohol and tobacco will be carried on these vehicles on their return to the UK.

The passengers will have little - if any - luggage, leaving the luggage storage space and trailers available to carry goods.

In view of the previous history of organised **'bootlegging'** to the North East it is believed that these 'shopping excursions' could well be a new cover for organised importation of illegal alcohol and, more likely, tobacco.

There are also possible weight / driver's hours offences on the return trip. The coaches seen do appear to be double manned.



On the 18th June 2002 at Boston Spa weighbridge, a vehicle belonging to **Coach operator B** was stopped and checked. The vehicle was loaded with beer, cigarettes and rolling tobacco, however, as the 42 passengers were sticking to their story that the "contraband" was for their own consumption, each passenger purchasing precisely the amount allowed by Customs.



The passengers left the North East at 3pm on the 17th and arrived at the hyper-market at 2am. The drivers stated that they do 2 evening trips and one day trip per week.

The vehicle 'crossed the water' via Eurotunnel and called at Calais to purchase the booze and onto Belgium for the cigarettes and rolling tobacco.

The driver stated that they weighed the vehicle at Duxford on a self weigh facility but could not produce any evidence of this.

The vehicle was displaying a manufacturers plate which did not show a train weight, **however**, when Scania were contacted they gave the train weight as 38,000 kgs.???? When questioned, the driver stated that he was self employed although he received all instructions from the Operator.

The sum of the compensating axles on the vehicle were found to be overweight but not enough to prohibit, however, if the load had been 'slaughtered' as suggested, the coach would have been well overweight if checked before they reached Duxford.

Although the above relates to the north-east to south coast routes, there is every possibility that this activity could be national. *Please bear in mind during the operation*

Originated by: Tracey Collins/ Mike Power (VI) Intelligence Unit & PC Nev Duke (West Yorkshire)

Coach Operator Name

(Graded E.4.1)

This company based at *Address*, operate approximately 40 coaches both nationally and internationally. Intelligence has been received that they are breaching drivers' hours, and there may be maintenance problems. Drivers' hours offences may NOT be apparent at the roadside due to the 12 - day rule and weekly rest, but stops are required to gather intelligence for further investigation later this year.

Livery is **WHITE** with the company name in **RED/PINK** on the sides.

Originating officer: **Ian Gould (VI) Intelligence Unit**

Coach Operator Name

(Graded E.4.1)

This Devon based company operate approx. 12 vehicle both nationally and internationally. There is intelligence to suggest that falsifications may be taking place, and also information about the maintenance of the vehicles.

Livery is **CREAM** with the Company name in **BLUE** along the sides.

Originating officer: **Alan Prime. STE (VI) Exeter**

Minibuses & Driving Licences

It has been noticed that there are an increasing number of drivers driving minibuses who do not have the correct driving licence entitlement, for that type of vehicle. During *TOURIST* this year, could checks be carried out on this type of passenger transport, to ensure that all drivers are correctly licenced. Below is a brief outline of the entitlements dependant upon passenger seats:

8 Passenger seats or Less > **Cat B Licence Required.**

9 to 16 Passenger seats > **Cat D or Cat D limited to 5.5m length or Cat D1**

17 or more Passenger seats > **Cat D or Cat D limited to 5.5m length**

Should you come across a vehicle being driven under a permit (Sect: 19 or 22) issued under the Transport act, see below:

Small Bus (9 > 16 Passenger seats) **Cat D1 Not for hire or reward or Cat B if voluntary driver**

Large Bus (17 or more passenger seats) **Cat D or Cat D not for hire or reward**

Section 22 Community bus **Cat D or D1 or if not used for hire reward Cat D1 Not for hire or reward. Cat B if voluntary driver and not used for hire or reward**

One such driver was involved in a collision on the M5, Junction 26, approximately 6 months ago, where one of his passengers was killed.

Use of rebated fuel

It has come to our attention that a number of coach operators have been '*offered*' cheap fuel for sale. One company in the south west actually purchased one load before becoming suspicious and notifying the authorities. This load was probably as a result of Fuel Laundering activity (*Not confirmed*)

Like everyone – Coach operators wish to save money, some have been known to use RED /REBATED fuel. Where possible could vehicles checked be dipped for evidence of rebated diesel. Most Forces have a contact with RFTU at Customs. However there is a national helpline, which is **IPSWICH 0870 7853600**

112/96/RS - vb
June 9 1996



A V O N A N D S O M E R S E T C O N S T A B U L A R Y

Issued by Public Relations Manager

PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QJ

Telephone 01275 816250 Telex 44114 (Avsompol Bristl) Facsimile 01275 816111

OPERATION TOURIST

One in eight passenger-carrying coaches examined in safety checks yesterday (Saturday June 8) was found to have defects.

The safety checks - codenamed Operation Tourist - involved 12 police forces throughout the south and west of England and the Vehicle Inspectorate.

Examiners checked a total of 1,217 coaches and found that 150 - just over 12 per cent - had some defects although many were minor.

But the faults in 48 of the defective vehicles were so serious that the coaches were ordered off the road until they had been repaired.

Defects included faults with brakes, tyres and warning systems, and oil leaks.

Examiners also found emergency exit doors obstructed with luggage, locked or deliberately jammed shut.

Operation Tourist, the biggest operation of its type ever staged in this country, was carried out because of concern about the condition of some coaches and buses and passenger safety.

Check points were set up at 24 locations, across 15 counties, including service areas on motorways and A class roads.

Chief Inspector Martyn Snell, of Avon and Somerset Constabulary, who co-ordinated the operation, said: "This year's checks revealed far fewer serious problems with coaches.

"This shows the success of operations carried out by police, in co-operation with the Vehicle Inspectorate, since Avon and Somerset identified a problem with passenger-carrying coaches and buses in 1993.

"While the majority of coaches on the roads are safe, it is clear there are still some operators who are not keeping their vehicles properly maintained and we shall continue to make checks to ensure the safety of passengers and other road users."

He said the reaction of coach passengers was very positive. They appreciated the checks were being carried out to make sure they arrived safely at their destinations.

Working with you - Working for you

113/97/RS
June 30 1997



AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

Issued by Public Relations Manager

PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QJ

Telephone 01275 816250 Facsimile 01275 816111

OPERATION TOURIST

Rogue holiday buses and coaches are being targeted in a massive road safety blitz this summer.

The crackdown - codenamed Operation Tourist - will be the biggest operation of its kind ever staged involving more than a third of the country's police forces.

It follows police and public concern about the safety of thousands of passenger vehicles using main holiday routes.

Police and experts from the Vehicle Inspectorate will be carrying out random safety checks on passenger-carrying vehicles across the whole of southern England and the Midlands, to make sure that holidaymakers get to their destinations safely.

The operation is being co-ordinated by Avon and Somerset Constabulary and will also involve the Bedfordshire, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Staffordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, West Mercia, West Midlands and Wiltshire forces and the Metropolitan Police.

The safety swoop follows a similar operation last summer when random checks were carried out at 24 locations across 15 counties.

Officers taking part in that operation discovered that 174 of the 1,337 buses and coaches examined - that's one in eight - had mechanical defects including faulty brakes, tyres and warning systems and serious oil leaks.

Sixty-seven vehicles were in such a serious state that they were ordered off the road immediately.

Superintendent Tim Dow, head of the Avon and Somerset traffic department, said: "While the majority of coaches examined last summer were perfectly roadworthy - a number were in a dreadful state and could have caused a major accident and loss of life.

"The checks revealed that at least 3,000 people were travelling in coaches which were not roadworthy. That is a very frightening statistic.

NEWS RELEASE

“So this year we have decided to extend the safety checks. We will be carrying out roadside checks on motorways and main roads, without warning, during the peak-holiday months.”

No-one should be delayed for more than half an hour while the experts check the safety of the bus or coach in which they are travelling, unless defects are discovered.

“We apologise in advance for any inconvenience this may cause for passengers on coaches and buses but these checks are being carried out to ensure their safety. It is better to arrive a little late than not at all,” said Supt Dow.

“Vehicles which do not meet the required safety standards are a potential danger - not just to the passengers but to everyone travelling on our roads.

“These safety checks have been welcomed by both passengers - and the responsible coach operators who keep their fleets of vehicles properly maintained.”

He said forces would ensure checks were carried out at locations where passengers had access to a telephone, toilets and refreshments, while coaches were examined.

For further information contact Ray Stokes on 01823 363156.

138/97/RS (vb)
August 10 1997



AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

Issued by Public Relations Manager
PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QF
Telephone 01275 816250 Facsimile 01275 816111

PRESS OFFICER	
C/INSP.	CB
INSP.	
DIST.	
C/STOP	JB
CLERK	
ATTACH.	

OPERATION TOURIST

Fifty coaches were ordered off the road in safety checks carried out across southern England and the Midlands yesterday (Saturday August 9).

A total of 1471 coaches were checked by police and examiners from the Vehicle Inspectorate as part of Operation Tourist - the largest operation of its kind ever staged.

Examiners found 171 of the coaches - that's one in eight - had serious faults.

Defects in 50 of the coaches were so dangerous that they were taken off the road immediately - with the other 121 being allowed to continue their journey but ordered to carry out repairs within 10 days.

The nut holding the steering wheel of one coach was found to be only finger tight, and the batteries of another coach were so damaged that they could have caused a serious fire.

Police officers also detected 430 other offences including drivers working while claiming unemployment benefit, driving excessive hours, falsifying documents and two passengers were arrested for possession of drugs.

Superintendent Tim Dow, head of Avon and Somerset traffic department which co-ordinated the operation, said: "While the majority of coaches on our roads are safe, it is clear there are still some operators who are not properly maintaining their vehicles.

"We shall continue to carry out checks, in co-operation with the Vehicle Inspectorate, to ensure the safety of passengers and other road users".

"These checks have been welcomed by the travelling public and responsible coach operators who have thanked us for getting unroadworthy coaches off the road"

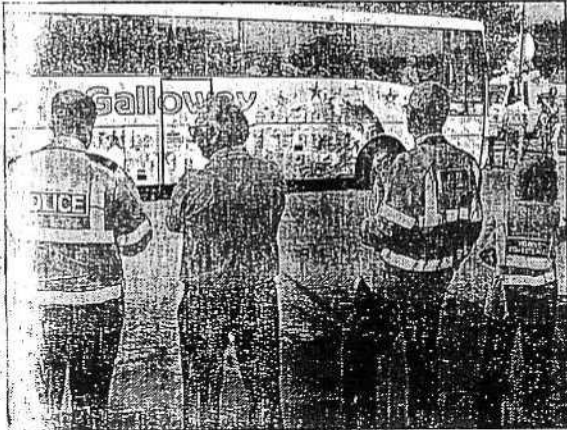
NEWS RELEASE

The results of the checks - in each force area - were:

	Vehicles examined	Immediate prohibition	Delayed prohibition
AVON AND SOMERSET	218	7	13
DEVON AND CORNWALL	78	2	7
DORSET	56	1	2
ESSEX	54	1	6
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	91	3	8
HAMPSHIRE	211	12	10
KENT	35	2	3
METROPOLITAN	160	3	13
STAFFORDSHIRE	74	2	9
SURREY	73	3	8
SUSSEX	62	0	7
THAMES VALLEY	182	7	17
WEST MERCIA	41	2	1
WEST MIDLANDS	64	2	9
WILTSHIRE	72	3	7
TOTAL	1471	50	121

For further information contact Ray Stokes on 01823 363156

Police stop coaches in safety checks operation



Action: A coach inspection at Gordano Services

POLICE are cracking down on coach operators with random safety stop checks in the run-up to the peak holiday season.

Officers were pulling in coaches from the M5 at Gordano Services near Bristol yesterday as part of a national campaign codenamed Operation Tourist.

More than 150 coaches have been stopped in the last eight days by Avon and Somerset police and five were immediately taken off the road with serious defects including major brake problems and tyre faults. And 10 others were handed prohibition orders after minor faults were found in such areas as exhaust systems.

The unit inspected 25 coaches at Gordano Services this morning, but only three minor problems were uncovered involving an exhaust, tyre and a driver's tachograph record.

One of the coaches stopped was carrying Walsall Football Club's players on a pre-season

West Country tour, but it escaped a red card and was allowed to continue its journey.

Supt Lawrie Lewis, head of the force's road policing unit, said: "The vast majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks."

"But, last year, one in five coached we stopped were found to be defective in some way.

Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the horror stories we uncovered."

"Coach operators breaking the law face having their coaches taken off the road immediately as well as being prosecuted."

Passengers have been delayed about 30 minutes while the checks have been carried out.

Officers said that the passengers were very supportive about the checks and were given crime prevention advice for their holidays while they waited.

Police crack down on coaches

POLICE are cracking down on coach operators with random safety stop-checks in the run-up to the peak holiday season.

Officers from the Avon and Somerset force are pulling in the coaches as part of a national campaign.

More than 150 coaches have been stopped in the past eight days, and five were immediately taken off the road with serious defects including major

brake problems and tyre faults.

Ten others were handed prohibition orders after minor faults were found in such areas as exhaust systems. The owners have been given ten days to carry out repairs.

Supt Lawrie Lewis, head of the force's road policing unit, said: "The vast majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained."

"But last year, one in five

coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way.

"Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the horror stories we uncovered."

"Coach operators breaking the law face having their coaches taken off the road immediately as well as being prosecuted."



Police target coach safety
W. Ga 2
18/7/02
Pg 25
EVAL

COACH operators who flout safety regulations are putting passengers' lives in danger, say Avon and Somerset police.

The force's road-policing unit is stepping up checks at random locations during the peak holiday season under the codename Operation Tourist.

Supt Lawrie Lewis said: "The majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks, but last year some 20 per cent of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way.

"Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the horror stories the officers discovered."

Crackdown on coaches

POLICE are stepping up checks on coach operators this summer under the code name Operation Tourist.

The checks will be held at random locations across the Avon and Somerset area during the peak holiday season.

Superintendent Lawrie Lewis said: "Last year, some 20 per cent of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way." WDP 15/7

eval

Police safety checks

COACH operators found breaking the law will be taken off the road, in a new crackdown by the Avon and Somerset road policing unit.

An increased number of random checks on coach operators will be held this summer at random locations in Bridgwater and Burnham during the holiday season.

Although the majority of coaches are well maintained and welcome the checks, 20 per cent of coaches stopped last year were defective. Damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits are just some of the faults found.

Operators and drivers will be prosecuted if their coaches are not up to standard.

And police are appealing for passengers to be patient while these checks are being carried out.

For more advice please contact Officer Will Marsh on 01275-816350

Police step up coach checks

EP 19/7/02 P21 EVA
by SIMON PEEVERS

COACH operators who flout safety regulations will be driving into trouble today as police step up roadside checks.

Officers from the Avon and Somerset force's road policing unit have been running random checks on coach operators throughout the summer to make sure vehicles are roadworthy.

Police were checking coaches at Gordano services, Junction 19 of the M5 motorway.

Superintendent Lawrie Lewis, head of the force's road policing unit, said: "The vast majority of our operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks.

"But last year, one in five of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way.

"Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the horror stories we uncovered."

Coach operators found breaking the law face having their coaches taken off the road immediately as well as face prosecution.

Supt Lewis added: "These essential checks are carried out as swiftly as possible with the help of the vehicle inspectorate to ensure road safety.

"We understand this can be frustrating for passengers and we appeal to them to bear with us, but one of our main aims is to ensure their safety."

Other motorists and potential problems are also being tackled by the police today.

Last year the police were called to more than 1,200 reports of debris on the M4, M5 and M32 motorways around Bristol.

A large amount of the debris had fallen from moving vehicles because it had not been secured properly in the first place.

WPC Michelle Parsons said: "When you are taking the family on holiday or buying the essentials for another DIY there is always a temptation to cram more into your vehicle than is safe.

"We hope this new scheme will stop and make people realise the potential danger they are facing."

s.peevers@bepp.co.uk

M5 shock

Five coaches travelling through Sedgemoor during the holiday season are defective, startling figures have revealed.

Some coach operators are being investigated further allegedly operating illegally and 17 coaches were put out of service by police involved in a road safety crackdown.

Around 900 passengers travelling on 231 coaches were considered to be "in danger" by road policing officers during Operation Tourist.

A number of operators were issued with police notices to rectify the problem within ten days or face further action.

Avon and Somerset Police stopped 231 coaches at a Sedgemoor M5 service station during a nine-day period last month.

And figures just released show a startling percentage of coaches were not considered roadworthy by the police.

Dangerous brakes, tyres and faulty emergency doors led police to stop a number of coaches from continuing their journeys through Sedgemoor to holiday destinations throughout the south coast.

By SARAH BOOBYER

newdesk@bridgwatermercury.co.uk

have found around 900 coach passengers had been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regulations.

"The checks have been welcomed by the vast majority of operators who keep their fleets safe and well maintained. This operation is aimed at clamping down on those rogue operators who give the coach industry a bad name.

"Passengers were overwhelmingly in support of the scheme and welcomed the crime prevention advice we gave them while they waited.

"We will continue in our efforts to ensure coach passengers travelling on Avon and Somerset's roads arrive at their destination safely."

The police also revealed the number of drivers exceeding their permitted driving hours had also slightly risen this year, which they feel raises concerns about fatigue related collisions.

Road policing officers and the Vehicle Inspectorate will be continuing with their road checks and

17 coaches unfit for road

GAZ 02.08.02 EVAL pg

By Gazette reporter

THREE times as many coaches were stopped this summer by police officers as a national road safety campaign stepped up a gear.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary road policing officers, working in partnership with the Vehicle Inspectorate, checked 231 coaches over a nine-day period last month as part of Operation Tourist.

The random stops were carried out on roads across the Avon and Somerset force area, including the M5 motorway, to check that each vehicle was safe and roadworthy.

Out of the 231 vehicles stopped, 17 had defects that were considered so serious the coaches were stopped from travelling onwards until the faults were put right. Defects uncovered included brakes, tyres and emergency doors.

One in five of the coaches checked were found to have defects which attracted a prohibition notice. This means the coach operator can continue the journey but has ten days to rectify the problem or face further action.

Chief Insp Tony Oliver of the road policing unit said: "It is worrying that we found around 900 coach passengers had been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regula-

tions."

The number of drivers exceeding their permitted driving hours has also risen slightly this year. These offences raise real concerns about fatigue-related collisions.

Nine operators are now under further investigation for allegedly operating illegally.

Chief Insp Oliver added: "The checks have been welcomed by the vast majority of operators who keep their fleets safe and well maintained. This operation is aimed at clamping down on those 'rogue operators' who give the coach industry a bad name.

"Passengers were overwhelmingly in support of the scheme and welcomed the crime prevention advice we gave them while they waited.

"We will continue in our efforts to ensure that coach passengers travelling on Avon and Somerset's roads arrive at their destinations safely."

The partnership approach to road safety will continue with educational events and further road checks throughout the year.

17 coaches taken off the roads

EVAL Bath Chronicle 31/7 pg 4

POLICE officers put the brakes on rogue coach operators as a national road safety campaign was stepped up.

The campaign to crackdown on defective coaches targeted three times as many coaches this year, with 231 vehicles checked over nine days.

And this time officers uncovered 17 coaches with such serious defects they were deemed too dangerous to travel onwards until they were put right.

By Sarah Kibble Chronicle correspondent

problems out or face further action.

Chief Inspector Tony Oliver of Avon and Somerset's road policing unit said: "It is worrying that we found around 900 coach passengers had been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regulations."

"The checks have been welcomed by the vast majority of operators who

overwhelmingly in support of the scheme and welcomed the crime prevention advice we gave them.

"We will continue in our efforts to ensure that coach passengers travelling on Avon and Somerset's roads arrive at their destinations safely."

The number of drivers exceeding their permitted driving hours has also risen this year.

Nine operators are under further investigation for

Tourist coaches targeted

COACH operators who flout safety regulations are putting passengers in danger, say Avon and Somerset police.

Officers from the force's road policing unit are stepping up checks on coach operators this summer under the codename Operation Tourist.

The checks will be held at random locations in the force area during the peak holiday season.

Superintendent Lawrie Lewis, head of the unit, said: "The majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks. But last year, some 20 per cent of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way."

Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the defects the officers discovered.

Supt Lewis said: "It doesn't take too much imagination to think of the potentially lethal consequences of this type of fault."

Coach operators found breaking the law face having their coaches taken off the road immediately as well as prosecution.

Passengers who find themselves delayed while the operation is in progress are being asked to be patient.

Supt Lewis said: "We carry out these essential checks as swiftly as possible with our partners from the Vehicle Inspectorate. We understand this can be frustrating for the passengers and appeal to them to bear with us."

Crime prevention advice aimed specifically at travellers will be provided during the short delay.

Tourist coaches targeted

COACH operators who flout safety regulations are putting passengers in danger, say Avon and Somerset police.

Officers from the force's road policing unit are stepping up checks on coach operators this summer under the codename Operation Tourist.

The checks will be held at random locations in the force area during the peak holiday season.

Superintendent Lawrie Lewis, head of the unit, said: "The majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks. But last year, some 20 per cent of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way."

Faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits were just some of the defects the officers discovered.

Supt Lewis said: "It doesn't take too much imagination to think of the potentially lethal consequences of this type of fault."

Coach operators found breaking the law face having their coaches taken off the road immediately as well as prosecution.

Passengers who find themselves delayed while the operation is in progress are being asked to be patient.

Supt Lewis said: "We carry out these essential checks as swiftly as possible with our partners from the Vehicle Inspectorate. We understand this can be frustrating for the passengers and appeal to them to bear with us."

Crime prevention advice aimed specifically at travellers will be provided during the short delay.

Crackdown on defective coaches

Police officers will be stepping up checks on coach operators who flout safety regulations, Avon and Somerset Police are stepping up checks on coach operators this summer in a campaign named Operation Tourist. Officers from the force's road policing unit will be carrying out random checks during the peak holiday season.

15/19 3/7
"The majority of tour operators ensure their fleets are well maintained and generally welcome these checks. But last year, some 20 per cent of the coaches we stopped were found to be defective in some way - including faulty steering, damaged brake pipes and blocked emergency exits."

Coach operators found breaking the law can see their vehicle taken off the road immediately, as well as face being prosecuted.

15/19 3/7
Bath Chron
Passengers who find themselves delayed because of the checks are being asked to be patient.

Supt Lewis added: "We carry out these essential checks as swiftly as possible with our partners from the Vehicle Inspectorate."

"We understand this can be frustrating for the passengers and appeal to them to bear with us."

"We want to ensure that passengers arrive safely at their destination."

SOME PASSENGERS PUT AT RISK

Police spot checks on M5 coaches

Chief Inspector Tony Oliver said: "It is worrying we have found around 900 coach passengers had been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regulations."

"The checks have been welcomed by the vast majority of operators who keep their fleets safe and well maintained. This operation is aimed at clamping down on those rogue operators who give the coach industry a bad name."

"Passengers were overwhelmingly in support of the scheme and welcomed the crime prevention advice we gave them while they waited."

"We will continue in our efforts to ensure coach passengers travelling on Avon and Somerset's roads arrive at their destination safely."

ONE in five coaches travelling through Sedgemoor during the holiday season are defective, starting police figures have revealed.

Nine coach operators are being investigated further for allegedly operating illegally and 17 coaches were found to have serious faults by police involved in a recent crackdown.

Around 900 passengers travelling on 231 coaches were considered to be "in danger" by road policing officers working on Operation Tourist.

A number of operators were issued with police warnings to rectify the problem within ten days or face further action.

Avon and Somerset Police stopped 231 coaches at a Sedgemoor M5 service station during a nine-day period this month.

And figures just released show a startling percentage of coaches were not considered roadworthy by the police.

Dangerous brakes, tyres and faulty emergency doors forced police to stop a number of coaches from continuing their journeys through Sedgemoor to holiday destinations throughout the south west.

We found around 900 coach passengers have been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regulations.

The number of drivers exceeding their permitted driving hours has also risen slightly this year.

These offences raise real concerns about fatigue related collisions.

Nine operators are now under further investigation for allegedly operating illegally.

Coach crackdown sparks safety fears

POLICE checks on coaches in Avon and Somerset this summer have revealed that nearly 1,000 passengers have been put at risk.

Some 17 coaches were pulled off the road immediately with serious defects after police stopped 231 vehicles last month as part of Operation Tourist.

A prohibition order was slapped on one in five coaches.

It's worrying that we found about 900 coach passengers had been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regulations."

The number of drivers going over their permitted driving hours has also risen slightly, causing concern about fatigue-related collisions.

Nine operators are under further investigation for allegedly operating illegally.

safe and well-maintained," said Ch Insp Oliver.

"This operation is aimed at clamping down on rogue operators who give the coach industry a bad name."

"Passengers were overwhelmingly in support of the scheme and welcomed the crime prevention advice we gave them while they waited."

9/8 p.15

SOME PASSENGERS PUT AT RISK

Coach passengers out at risk, by operators

THREE times as many coaches were stopped this summer by police officers as a national road safety campaign stepped up a gear.

Road policing officers, working in partnership with the Vehicle Inspectorate, checked 231 coaches over a nine day period last month as part of Operation Tourist.

The random stop checks were carried out on roads across the Avon & Somerset force area, including the M5 motorway, to check that each vehicle was safe and road worthy.

Out of the 231 vehicles stopped, 17 had defects that were considered so serious that coaches were stopped from travelling onwards until the faults were put right.

Defects uncovered included brakes, tyres and emergency doors.

One in five of the coaches checked was found to have defects which attracted a prohibition notice.

This means the coach operator can continue the journey but has ten days to rectify the problem or face further action.

Chief Inspector Tony Oliver of the

we found around 900 coach passengers have been put at risk this year by coach operators flouting the regulations.

The number of drivers exceeding their permitted driving hours has also risen slightly this year.

These offences raise real concerns about fatigue related collisions.

Nine operators are now under further investigation for allegedly operating illegally.