

# Van Excellence – the accreditation process – as simple as 1-2-3



Since its launch in 2011 FTA's *Van Excellence* scheme has been going from strength to strength and currently boasts over 170 engaged operators running in excess of 180,000 vans.

The *Van Excellence* mantra being:

- recognise excellence in operations
- improve standards by providing best practice guidance
- dissuade legislators from imposing 'truck-like' legislation on van operators

Which is all well and good. But for those van operators who want to follow the dream what does becoming an accredited *Van Excellence* operator actually entail?

It is really quite straightforward, which has always been the aim of *Van Excellence* – to try and keep the accreditation process as simple as possible.

## Step 1 – Preparing for the audit

Ahead of the audit we will provide a copy of our pre-audit guidance notes. These describe the kind of evidence our teams are looking for you to assemble against each element of the *Van Excellence Code*.

The audit itself takes around half a day and can be carried out at a time and date to suit. We are entirely concerned with the van operators' processes – we need to satisfy ourselves that all involved with the van operations understand what is required of them (arrangements) and that these required processes are actually happening (performance). To do this we will need to view a sample of 10 sets of driver and vehicle records selected from a full list of drivers and vehicles we will ask you to provide.

We are happy to support and advise during your preparation and have a panel of already accredited operators who are also happy to mentor.

## Step 2 – The audit

Our aim is for the audit process to be constructive. By this we mean that whilst the process will, of course, be rigorous we accept that, particularly in year 1, there may be the odd minor non-compliance that needs to be addressed and we will provide advice and support to address these.

The auditors will inspect the available evidence to satisfy themselves that the operator has systems in place to meet the standards defined by the *Van Excellence Code*.

The *Van Excellence Code* can be viewed at [www.vanexcellence.co.uk](http://www.vanexcellence.co.uk) and covers the requirements for the vehicles, the drivers and the operation itself.

## Step 3 – The outcome

Once the audit has been carried out the van operator will be told how they have got on within 14 days of the audit being completed.

An audit feedback report will be sent to the van operator to inform them of the result, along with a copy of the report. If successful, there will be a welcome pack including the Certificate of Accreditation, sample vehicle decals and branding guidelines.



Once passed, this accreditation remains valid for one year from the first audit, and the van operator will be contacted at least eight weeks ahead of the anniversary date to arrange for re-accreditation.

To find out more about *Van Excellence* and the accreditation process go to: [www.vanexcellence.co.uk](http://www.vanexcellence.co.uk)



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