

REMEDIAL WORKS ON TX4 TAXIS

TX4

TX4 under bonnet fires no sooner hit the headlines than lots of different rumours began. Obviously the fires caused great concern amongst owners and proprietors. LTI Vehicles were holding a press conference update to talk about other matters such as progress in China, but once the directors of both LTI Vehicles and Manganese Bronze Holdings, the parent company, took questions, it became evident just how much concern there was. Those trade editors and journalists present were assured that engineering investigations were already underway and that once these had been concluded and the root cause of the fires determined, the company would be in a position to make a decision about the course of action. Independent fire investigators were already working on the possible causes. However, following another incident, the PCO took the view that the TX4 taxis within a certain VIN range should be taken out of service.

WORKING TOGETHER

John Russell, Group Chief Executive of Manganese Bronze, spoke about the investigations. At the press conference, he had told reporters that it was important that the root cause was found and this was the primary concern. Once the PCO had taken the view that it was necessary to suspend the cab licences of all TX4s with a 56 registration or a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) between 200001 and 201000 from service, LTI wanted to ensure that those vehicles concerned were back on the road as soon as possible. This week John Russell spoke to our reporter. He said: “We decided to put in place a whole raft of measures to ensure that the TX4 under bonnet fire risk was eliminated. Under normal circumstances, when a vehicle is subject to a recall, the manufacturer knows the root cause of the problem before recalling the vehicles and putting the problem right. In this case, the PCO as the licensing authority, together with other authorities who look to the PCO decisions for guidance, decided the vehicles should be taken out of service. LTI Vehicles are still working hard at this time to get to the root cause of the problem, but the work now being carried out by our authorised service dealers has been put on place to re-assure both drivers and passengers alike that the TX4 is a safe vehicle.”

VOSA RECALLS

There are many different vehicle recalls each year and these are all listed on the VOSA website. It is normal practice that the vehicles are recalled once the cause of the problem has been established. Recall campaigns are launched and monitored as agreed in the various voluntary Codes of Practice which come from discussions between the Department for Transport and representative bodies of the Motor Industry. VOSA say: “These codes set out the guidelines on procedures for the recall of vehicles and components that have safety related defects, due to a feature of design or construction, and which are liable to cause significant risk of injury to the driver, occupants of the vehicle or other road users. It is the responsibility of the manufacturer to inform VOSA when substantial evidence of a safety defect that requires remedial action, has been confirmed. Additionally, evidence may be presented to the manufacturer by VOSA as a result of investigations into accidents, and safety defects which have been brought to their attention from other sources.” The TX4 is certainly not alone in having been recalled due to fire risk; earlier this year, some VW Jetta and Golf estate models were recalled because there was a risk of fire.

COMPENSATION CLAIMS

Drivers and proprietors of TX4's suspended from being used in passenger service have been asked to keep detailed records of any losses they may



have incurred. The key to any compensation claims will be finding out the root cause so that the claims can be channelled to the correct company. John Russell would like to reassure drivers that LTI Vehicles are continuing work to ensure the cause is found as quickly as possible. At the time of our interview, John Russell was hopeful this would be in the very near future. “Of course one of the difficulties with a vehicle that has been involved in a fire is that some of the evidence of the cause may have been destroyed,” continued John. “The investigations carried out by ourselves and those carried out by the PCO have been independent of each other but both are working together to ensure the root cause is determined.”

Once the work has been carried out on the TX4s, a certificate is given to the owner and this must be kept with the relevant paperwork for the vehicle. “The basket of measures we have put in place is designed to assure drivers that their taxi is safe,” John continued. “There may be concerns that residuals may fall as a result, but once all the TX4 fleet has been rectified and certificates issued, this should not be an issue.” It will be some weeks before every TX4 has been through the remedial work, but the models which did catch light were all early models. LTI continues to create the capability and capacity to get the remedial work completed for the whole fleet as soon as possible. Drivers may not be aware that this work is a major job which requires the engine to be taken out of the vehicle before the bulkhead Noise Vibration and Harshness pad is replaced with one of a new design and material.

The Exhaust Gas Recirculation pipe is also replaced, a heat shield installed over the Exhaust Gas Recirculation pipe. After thoroughly checking all pipe runs and wiring for evidence of unusual wear, and replacing where necessary, a fire suppression system is fitted.

GETTING BACK TO WORK

The first of the work was completed at M&O London during the week ending 10th October and it will continue until the whole fleet is completed. “There were some technical differences on the early build TX4s,” John commented. “At this point in time because of the investigations I cannot discuss exactly what these are, but we are confident that we have the correct solutions in place.” Once the work has been completed and the certificate issued, the taxi is then able to return to work immediately.

