

## AA Does U-Turn on Passengers

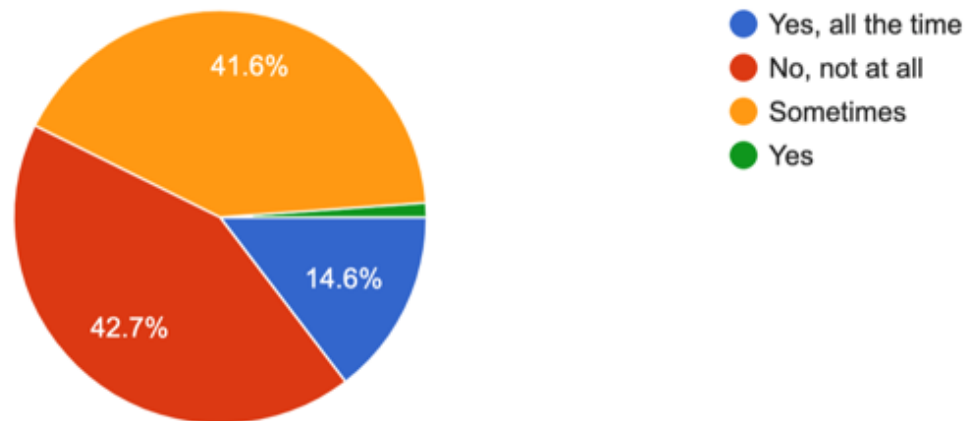
Many of you may have been made aware of the recent, unconfirmed, release from AA yesterday regarding them temporarily from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, until further notice, increasing the payment for call outs on "accompanied" recoveries (ie with passengers) by an additional £1.12. This can be claimed on every attended recovery where there is at least one passenger.

Also, they have stated that they will be ceasing the organising of taxis, trains, hire cars or any other onward transport from this week unless their customer has this added extra as part of their policy, and it is agreed with the customer at the point of breakdown. The AA will now be expecting their garage partners to be able to recover both vehicles and passengers within their safe systems of work e.g. utilizing face coverings etc.

The latest AVRO recovery industry survey results will be published in full but following the AA release, yesterday, we thought it pertinent to illustrate the actual recovery industry data so our partners and stakeholders are aware of the real situation in order to challenge the AA's assumptions.

AVRO members will be somewhat surprised that The AA have made the decision to offer a mere £1.12 per job that involves carrying passengers, especially when 43% of operators who responded to our survey maintained that they do not carry passengers at all.

### Do you carry passengers in your recovery vehicles



**The survey data suggests that only 15% of members would consider taking passengers, all of the time.**

So, following the introduction of the AA's latest policy, if confirmed, it is probable, that if an unfortunate AA customer breaks down, the chances are that they will be left at the roadside up to 85% of the time.

The AA refer to a 'safe system of work' so the carrying of passengers within a recovery vehicle should be possible under a 'safe system of work' by passengers wearing face masks. Any safe system of work must be based on the individual operator being both independent and in line with the risks identified by any operator, some will deem it possible to carry passengers by taking mitigating actions, others will not due to

circumstances and practicality. It is for each individual operator to determine their own health and safety.

In regard to safe systems of work, it must be noted that the AA released a safe system of work to their garage partners in March 2020 which was challenged by the industry, The HSE and Police Forces and was found not to be permitted under current legislation.

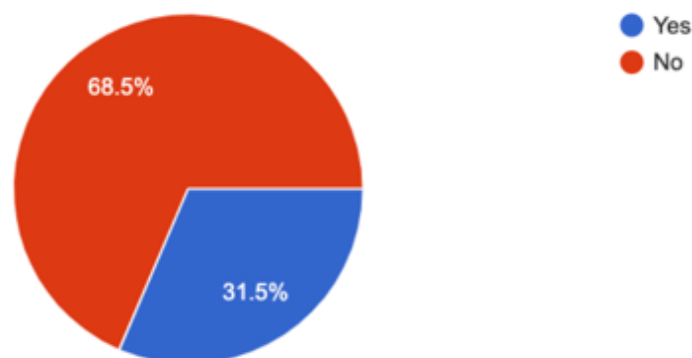
Other than the issuing of updated SURVIVE guidance, the AA has not communicated with its garage partners any further and the lack of consultation on this matter has been lacking. Especially when the communication from the AA in March 2020 to its garage partners stated clearly that the AA would not carry passengers in their vehicles under any circumstances. The AA have not detailed in their recent communication what action they have now taken to allow such a procedural change. With that the following must be asked:

- 1) Are the AA now carrying passengers in their own vehicles?
- 2) Do they now expect carrying of passengers in both crew cab recovery vehicles and patrol vehicles as well?
- 3) If so, what action has the AA taken to safely allow this, or what has changed in order for them to reverse their position?
- 4) Are all AA employees comfortable with any actions taken to allow the carriage of passengers?

### **Should AA customers be worried when they break down?**

If you look at the AVRO recovery industry survey results, only 31% of AVRO members have installed protective screening in the recovery cabs so the chances are that even if passengers were allowed in the cab, 69% of cabs have no screening, therefore there is a clear risk.

**Have you installed protective screening / curtain or other items and introduced additional PPE to reduce infection rates?**



### **Will £1.12 compensate me for taking a passenger?**

It is apparent that the AA have underestimated and oversimplified the cost and process for carrying passengers. They do not consider the process required to sanitise the cab before and after passengers. They have omitted any cost for the 'labour time' attributed to cleansing recovery vehicles. There is no consideration for the cost of cleaning chemicals and equipment or other essential PPE, such as visors and gloves.

AA's measly contribution of £1.12 per job towards PPE falls well short of the £25.00 per job AVRO have been lobbying for following our market research with hundreds of recovery operators who were good enough to share their data.

**Assumptions**

The AA's statement has assumed recovery operators should just accept their new process without any apparent consultation with their network. They appear to have just deserted their own customer base and dumped the responsibility and cost for their care onto their partners.