

With a commitment from the UK government to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, it's time for the road transport and logistics industry to start the switch to alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs).

Here are 10 top tips from RTITB for transport and distribution organisations thinking about the transition to AFVs.

1. Start planning your transition to AFV – Don't panic, but do start now! Have a plan and target to work to. In a presentation at a recent [Logistics UK Future Logistics Conference 2021](#), manufacturer Renault Trucks UK & Ireland suggests it's at least a 12-16 month conversation from start to purchase.

2. Make your AFV transition step by step – Take small steps and look for areas in your business where the change is simplest (note, we didn't say simple!). For example, if your company carries out urban deliveries could you get some of those over to AFV as a first step? Conversely don't avoid making a change because it's difficult – change is inevitable so it's better to get ahead!

3. Do your research – Speak to different AFV manufacturers and reach out to their customers too. Speaking to other businesses that have already started to introduce AFVs to their fleets provides an invaluable opportunity to learn from them – and their mistakes.

4. Collaborate – You can't make a successful and smooth transition to AFVs without collaboration. Push for as much support as you need from your manufacturer. You'll also need training, funding and internal champions as you make the switch.

5. Make decisions based on facts – Think about how best to utilise your budget, and don't just assume that because you currently have 20 HGVs, you will need to buy 20 new HGVs with alternative fuels. You will very likely need a range of different vehicles (and possibly a mix of fuel types) in order to cater to different job types, charging availability, and delivery times. For example, you may find smaller vans are more cost-effective for meeting your needs. Make sure you get your specification right before investing.

6. Consider the whole life cost of your AFV fleet – There is no getting away from the fact the upfront costs of new AFVs will be higher (though they are slowly coming down as adoption spreads), but they should be much cheaper to run across their lifetime. As an industry, we need to be prepared to change our mindsets, and look at whole life costs when purchasing vehicles.

7. Identify your internal champions/ambassadors – Find the drivers that are keen to make the change to AFVs and move them over first. They will be more accepting of the challenges associated with being the 'guinea pigs', and ultimately will help win over the rest of your workforce. They can also help you to refine the experience for your drivers who are more reluctant to change.

8. If you're going with BEVs – think about charging – There are several things to consider with Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) due to the charging demands. For instance, do you own your building? If you lease, how long is left? Do you want to start digging up ground to put in immovable charging infrastructure?

When specifying a vehicle, you should also understand the parameters used to get the distance on single charge figures, but don't focus solely on these as many factors play a part. What will you be using the vehicle for? What charging opportunities will be open to you, and at what times of the day?

9. Know what driver training is required to transition to AFVs – The transition to AFVs will of course require additional driver training. Currently, the only guidance that exists applies to car drivers (Category B), for vehicles from 3.5 – 4.25 tonnes, specifying a requirement for five hours specific training and a recommendation for practice driving on the road after. However, it is almost certain that similar

requirements will be put into place for HGV / LGV drivers. As technologies evolve, keep abreast of changing training requirements to keep your business compliant and your drivers safe.

10. Talk to RTITB about AFV Driver training materials – RTITB will be developing new training material/modules for its [RTITB Driver CPC consortium members](#) to keep in line with the changes in our industry. The specific content is to be confirmed, but as always it will be up to date with requirements and legislation, frequently updated, and designed to be engaging and enjoyable for drivers.

For those already keen to start exploring AFVs and how the role of an LGV driver or PCV driver is changing, members of the [RTITB Driver CPC Consortium](#) already have access to our module 'Looking into the Future of Logistics', which introduces this alongside topics such as autonomous vehicles and assistive technologies.