

CASE SUMMARY

Background:

The licence was granted on 13th July 1997.

This operator previously attended a Preliminary Hearing on 23rd February 2024 following 3 bridge strikes. A formal warning was issued, and assurances were given as to future prevention of bridge strikes including ensuring consistent route planning and ensuring that drivers do not use their own sat navs. These assurances appear not to have been met.

The operator has also received the following Warning Letters:

- 23/04/2021 - issued following bridge strike.
- 18/04/2005 - issued following prohibitions.

Basis of Referral and Areas for Consideration at Public Inquiry:

This Inquiry arises from a bridge strike involving vehicle, CN26 ABC, which occurred on 5 March 2026 at approximately 19:44 on the A15 at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire.

The vehicle, a MAN 6x2 tractor unit coupled to a 13.6-metre curtain-sided semi-trailer with a stated travelling height of 4.61 metres (15'1"), struck the lower section of a railway bridge after passing advance warning signage indicating restricted clearance.

The signed statement of the driver, Mr Laurie Driver (DOB 01/01/1970), indicates that:

- He had been employed for approximately three months at the time of the incident;
- He relied upon vehicle height information supplied and did not independently verify the travelling height prior to departure;
- No bridge-cleared or prescribed route was issued for the journey from Duxford to Scunthorpe;
- He utilised Google Maps for navigation;
- He was aware that the height was close to the restriction but proceeded beneath the structure;
- Multiple warning signs were passed prior to impact;
- The trailer sustained significant damage.

Although Network Rail confirmed that no structural damage was caused to the bridge, the railway and road were unable to be used for a matter of 6 hours, causing significant disruption to the network.

Additional information:

The operator has been requested to comply with the directions outlined in the annex of the call up letter (enclosed in this bundle) no later than 05 March 2026.

In addition, Laurie Driver is to have his vocational entitlement considered at this hearing.