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Subject: Update from TRL on investigation into near-silent vehicles

Ken,

[...]

DfT has tasked TRL to investigate the accident statistics to determine whether there is a problem, if so, determine its severity, and whether near silent vehicles are more difficult to hear than their equivalents powered by internal combustion engines. TRL will test a range of electric / hybrid vehicles and compare their noise output with that from their equivalents powered by internal combustion engines.

The vehicles fitted with internal combustion engines to be assessed include a small city-type car, a vehicle representative of a quiet mid-range saloon and a 3.5 tonne van.

The vehicles that are electric or hybrid will include a small electric city-type car, a hybrid mid-range saloon, an electric 3.5 tonne van, and an electric quadricycle.

The vehicles will be driven at pull-away from rest and constant speed pass-by representative of urban driving (20-40 km/h) and low-speed manoeuvring (5 km/h).

The sound emissions will be recorded and then played to trained assessors under controlled conditions.

Progress to date comprises an analysis of accident databases and collecting noise data from three vehicles, 2 conventionally powered, and one hybrid electric vehicle. In all, seven vehicles will be tested.

Sorry for not being able to come along, c'est la vie.

Eur Ing Robert Falk  
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