



Accessible Information Regulations

September 2024

Regulations

These have previously been discussed in PTIC, rather than cover them in detail again please refer to previous meeting papers or see the RTIG briefing note

<https://rtig.org.uk/system/files/documents/RTIGT058-1.1%20Accessible%20Information%20Regulations%20-%20Briefing%20Note.pdf>

Rail Replacement

Following a number of supply chain issues a short term exemptions for rail replacement operators has been agreed, this delays the requirement to implement the technology aspects of the regulations until July 2026 to align with PSVAR exemptions.

The exemption offer

The government wants to ensure that railway passengers are not disadvantaged by a lack of vehicles compliant with AIR available to provide rail replacement services and has agreed to provide a time-limited exemption from the technical requirements of the Regulations for vehicles operated by eligible operators. To be eligible an operator must:

- Operate rail replacement services, or expect to operate rail replacement services before 31st July 2026; and
- Either have not applied for the Accessible Information Grants or had their application for Accessible Information Grant funding rejected.

Further, any vehicles to be exempted:

- Must be coaches (Public Service Vehicles designed and constructed for the carriage of seated passengers only, which is of category M2 or M3 as defined in Article 4 of Regulation 2018/858 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on the approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles and their trailers, and of systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles).

If granted an exemption, prescribed operators will be exempt from the following requirements:

1. The requirement to meet certain standards with respect to audible information, including the frequency range, minimum and maximum volume of announcements, and the requirement to provide information via audible induction loops for passengers who use hearing aids;
2. The requirement to meet certain standards with respect to visible information, including the proportion of passenger seats which must be in direct line-of-sight of information, minimum text size and the requirement not to provide information solely using capital letters; and

3. The requirement to provide an “alert” before certain information, such as when the vehicle deviates from its standard route or when the service terminates.

All remaining aspects of AIR will still apply to operators. Those include:

1. The requirement to provide information indicating the route and destination of the service, each upcoming scheduled stopping point, the termination of the service, the beginning of diversions and the beginning and end of “hail and ride” sections of route;
2. The requirement for required information to be provided at specific points in a journey, albeit subject to slight modification to make it easier for onboard staff to provide such information manually when not driving;
3. The requirement to provide information consistently using both audible and visible media;and
4. the requirement that information provision cannot rely on passengers possessing their own smartphone.

The exemption will expire on 31st July 2026.

Exchange of Route Information

A challenge for the delivery of rail replacement services is the ability for the audio visual to be programmed with the information it needs.

The route a vehicle is tasked with is often not know until shortly before the journey.

At the moment there is no agreed format for the sharing of data necessary to support audio visual information systems.

A working group, let be RTIG will be formed to define a format which can be used to share the necessary information. This will include route and audio information and is envisaged at this stage that the route data will be based on TransXChange to enable alignment with existing standards.

The key suppliers in the market have agreed to be involved.