

FOR SURE!

Two large French fleets have just selected the Trailer Control Module+ (TrCM+) and a French accident prevention and insurance association also endorses the system.



WITH A TOTAL OF ABOUT 6,000 vehicles, the fleet manager knows accidents don't happen by chance: 'We know well enough the causes of accidents', explains Christian Bertholier of the transport and logistics company GEODIS BM, established in the French alpine city of Chambéry, adding: 'We expect a lot from the new Trailer Control Module+'. Incidents due to inappropriate coupling of air hoses or failure to set the parking brake are amongst the most common causes of accidents, and not only at GEODIS BM. For Bertholier, who handles vehicle fleet purchasing among other things, there is no grey area: 'Trailer Control Module+ will be our standard in the future'.

Meanwhile in the town of Saint Genis Laval 80 kilometres away, Isabelle Vigier, fleet manager for the local branch of temperature-controlled specialist TFE (which operates some 3,700 vehicles), totally agrees with her colleague regarding TrCM+. She also indicates that trailers will be equipped with this additional safety feature in the future. TFE semi-trailers can operate up to 23 hours per day, whilst the trailer may switch tractors up to

20 times a day. This means that 20 times a day, something that shouldn't go wrong could go wrong, and may occur again and again. Accidentally connecting the feed line when the parking brake is not activated causes the semi-trailer brakes to release and the trailer may start moving by itself.

'A number of deaths have occurred because of that', points out Daniel Clément of the professional association CRAM Rhône-Alpes (Caisse Régionale d'Assurance Maladie), explaining why CRAM now endorses TrCM+. But that is not all: the possibility of making TrCM+ the topic of a new safety campaign is being considered.

Few drivers are well-informed on the subject: 'Only 25 percent are aware there is a parking brake on their trailer', discovered Clément. 'Furthermore, out of these 25 percent, three-quarters cannot even show where it is located on the vehicle'. For Clément, the usual placement on the left at the rear



IT HAPPENS SO FAST

Just two mistakes need to occur in succession to cause serious danger. Error one is failure to activate the parking brake after uncoupling. Error two is connection of air lines in the wrong sequence during the coupling process, i.e. starting with the red coupling head instead of the yellow one. If this happens, compressed air flows immediately from the tractor vehicle into the feed line of the trailer and releases its service brake. The driver can still respond by removing the red coupling head without delay. However, it gets particularly tricky if the service brake has lost air while idle, which has resulted in the activation of the spring brake. But one should not trust the ensuing stillness. There will be a delay before the spring brake releases itself, as soon as the necessary air pressure is reached in the system.

of the vehicle is 'not the optimal location' either. In any case, CRAM makes it a condition for the promotion of TrCM+ that the control unit be positioned in close proximity to the crank, which is used to down-crank the stands in the uncoupling process: 'We save the drivers additional toing and froing, and bring the parking brake more strongly to their attention'.

If the driver, nonetheless, forgets to activate the parking brake after uncoupling, the TrCM+ Parking Hold Function proves valuable and prevents any danger. As soon as the red coupling head is connected before the yellow one, the parking valve starts bleeding air and the spring brake nails down the vehicle for the

time being. The green light indicating that it is safe to proceed will only come on if the driver pushes down the red button in accordance with the instructions at the end of the procedure, and therefore releases the spring brake actuator at the same time. ■



DANIEL CLÉMENT:
'FEW DRIVERS ARE WELL-INFORMED ON THE SUBJECT OF PARKING BRAKES.'