



Operator control made easy: Award for the MAN operator's manual

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Little noticed by the driver, yet an award winner: the operator's manual for the new MAN Truck Generation. The "tekompokuppreis 2020" recognises the manual's success in meeting the objective of "Simplifying Business", providing drivers with optimal help and support.

- **Top marks for the "Illustrations" section and in the documentation/product cross-check category**
- **Awarded by tekomp, the world's largest trade and professional association for technical communication**
- **Manual designed for future digital usage formats beyond the print version**
- **Another award for the new MAN Truck Generation, adding to the MAN TGX being named "Truck of the Year 2021"**

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Operator's manuals tend to lie around in the glove box, mostly ignored, for years on end. At 714 pages in DIN A5 landscape format, roughly four centimetres thick, and weighing 540 grams, it actually ought to attract more attention. The law requires that an operator's manual be included with every truck. And when it is consulted, it's usually in an emergency, searching for a quick solution. Whether identifying how to open the front panel, finding the filler neck to top up the windscreen washer fluid, or checking how to activate the daytime driving lights, a well-structured contents listing and the keyword index are invaluable aids. Colour-coding then helps locate the relevant section. In its appraisal, tekomp cited that easy navigation as one of the reasons why it awarded its 2020 Documentation Prize to the operator's manual for the new MAN TGX series. With some 9,500 members, tekomp is the world's largest trade and professional association for technical communication.

The tekomp appraisers not only leafed through and read the manual, they also wetted its cover with a few drops of water as a practical test. After all, it's quite likely that the driver might sometimes be trying to look something up while standing in front of his truck in the rain. Their conclusion: "The cover

MAN Truck & Bus is one of Europe's leading commercial vehicle manufacturers and transport solution providers, with an annual revenue of some 11 billion euros (2019). The company's product portfolio includes vans, trucks, buses/coaches and diesel and gas engines along with services related to passenger and cargo transport. MAN Truck & Bus is a company of TRATON SE and employs more than 37,000 people worldwide.



appears to be water-resistant under test.” But it’s much more important that the text and illustrations should actually provide the assistance needed. To that end, the two tekomp appraisers – with no prior knowledge of trucks, and so taking nothing as read – got into the vehicle and set about comparing its real-world features against the documentation. “Concise, correct, precise” was their verdict.

Operator’s manuals are obviously only useful if they are understood. That’s why MAN offers its truck manuals in 34 different languages. In addition to English and German, they include more exotic languages such as Korean and Russian, as well as Hebrew, which is read from right to left. MAN supplies its trucks, buses and vans to countries on almost every continent except North America and Antarctica.

Operator’s manuals are not just collections of instructions, hints and tips. Their authors are guided by rules and standards, such as DIN EN 82079 (“Preparation of instructions for use”), VDI Directive 4500 pages 1-4, as well as various standards and regulations governing product liability. This requires expertise which at MAN is provided by the Customer and Service Documentation department.

It took two years to compile nine completely new manuals. The first step for the department’s staff was to devise the technical structure and content breakdown. “Preparations are under way for a web edition, an app, and integration into the truck’s on-board infotainment system,” explains department head Stefan Gobitz-Pfeifer. “It’s no longer just a simple book that’s placed inside the vehicle on delivery. Drivers will in future be proactively assisted in their jobs by electronic media.” That’s why specialist service providers and authoring system programmers were also brought on-board. The operator’s manual ultimately had to be printed and ready when the first new TGX was delivered to the customer.

Every year, tekomp appraises dozens of manuals, some consisting of just one sheet, some complete books, as well as in electronic form. In a multi-layered process, two appraisers consider a wide range of criteria across seven categories in relation to each manual. The categories are: design and layout; illustrations; safety notices and instructions; navigation; structuring and text; scope; and a cross-check between the documentation and the real-world product. This ultimately results in an overall rating based on the German school marking system of scores from 1.0 (best) to 6.0 (worst). The tekomp rating of the MAN operator’s manual was 1.9. Its top marks were achieved for the “Illustrations” section, which scored 1.1, and in the documentation/product cross-check category, at 1.7.



MAN's guiding motto in developing its new truck series was "Simplifying Business": making the driver's job as easy as possible. And that objective has been met, even when the driver needs to consult the manual in times of stress. The tekomp award proves it.

	<p>P_TG_EOD_Manual-tekomp_01.jpg</p> <p>The operator's manual is included with every new MAN truck. It tends to lie around in the glove box, mostly ignored, yet its quality has been recognised by the prestigious tekomp award.</p>
	<p>P_TG_EOD_Manual-tekomp_02.jpg</p> <p>Outstanding award: The tekomp technical communication body has awarded a prize to the operator's manual for the new MAN TGX generation. It means the 714-page manual is entitled to bear the tekomp logo.</p>
	<p>P_TG_EOD_Manual-tekomp_03.jpg</p> <p>Colour-coding in the contents listing and on each page provides help to quickly locate the relevant section of the operator's manual for the new MAN TGX. The manual's user-friendly guidance was a key factor in the outstanding tekomp rating.</p>



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Detailed drawings and clear labelling in the manual help drivers find their way around the new MAN TGX. The graphics were rated very highly by tekomp.



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From spring 2021 onwards, the operator's manual supplied by MAN with every new TGX will bear the logo of the tekomp association. The logo symbolises MAN's receipt of a prestigious award from the trade association for its manual.



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Detailed drawings and clear labelling in the manual help drivers find their way around the new MAN TGX. The graphics were rated very highly by tekomp.



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Where are which fuses located in the new MAN TGX? The operator's manual included with every vehicle provides the answer.