

CHANGES TO THE MOT TEST EFFECTIVE FROM 20 MARCH 2013

1 Why do we have an MOT?

We've had tests since the 12th September 1960. Everyone who uses a vehicle on the road is required to keep it in a roadworthy condition at all times. Roadworthiness and environmental control systems are checked by the test we call the MOT. The first test is required once a car or motorcycle is three years old (there are different rules if you use a car as a taxi or if it has more than 8 passenger seats).

The MOT test looks at some important items on your car to see that they meet the key legal minimum requirements at the time of test. You should be aware that the MOT certificate is not a guarantee of the general mechanical condition of a vehicle.

2 Why are you making these changes?

Road safety is important to us and all road users. Many modern vehicles have new safety critical components and it is important that these perform their function. We also have to comply with European directives.

3 When will the changes come into affect?

Most of the changes have been in operation since January 2012. We introduced the new items in an advisory capacity to help MOT garages become familiar with the changes and to help educate vehicle owners about the implications for them when the MOT test changed. During this period testers have been asked to advise any customer presenting a vehicle with the new faults that in future it would fail its MOT.

The new changes will come into effect on the 20 March 2013.

4 Why do we need to fall in line with the EU?

It is important that vehicles can move freely and road safety is important throughout the EU therefore we need similar standards. We seek to assist the 'single market' so it is useful that MOTs are closely aligned so that EU citizens are treated equally and it becomes easier for people to make cross-border journeys.

5 Doesn't EU regulation just complicate the MOT test?

No. It isn't EU regulation that complicates the MOT test but the introduction of new and complex vehicle technology. It is very likely that the UK would have had to update the MOT test to include new safety items anyway to keep pace with modern vehicles.

6 Who will be affected by the changes to the MOT test?

All vehicle users when their vehicles are presented for MOT (this includes heavy trucks and buses);

All test centres. There are over 37,000,000 tests (pass and fail) conducted each year by 55,000 testers at nearly 22,000 MOT garages. VOSA also tests nearly 750,000 heavy vehicles every year using our own site network and over 300 privately owned authorised test centres.

7 What are the new elements to the MOT test?

For Class 4, 5 and 7 vehicles:

- Headlamp levelling and cleaning devices when fitted for HID or LED headlamps
- Main beam 'tell-tale' warning

- Battery (including batteries for electric or hybrid vehicles)
- Electrical wiring and connectors
- Trailer electrical socket security and damage
- Operation of 13-pin trailer electrical sockets using an approved trailer socket tester
- Operation of the steering lock (where fitted) including a malfunction warning in respect of an electronic steering lock
- Electronic power steering malfunction indicator lamp
- Electronic parking brake control and malfunction indicator lamp
- Electronic Stability Control (ESC) components, including the switch (if fitted) and malfunction warning
- Brake fluid warning lamp illuminated or inoperative
- Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS)
- SRS components including airbags, seat belt pre-tensioners, seat belt load limiters and SRS malfunction warning lamp
- Engine mountings
- Speedometer
- Indirect vision devices (where they replace obligatory mirrors)

Additional new items for Class 5 vehicles only:

- Electronic braking system warning device
- Entrance/Exit Steps and doors
- Door remote and emergency controls
- Door open warning devices
- Stairs
- Emergency exit signs, windows and 'break glass' hammers

7 What is the definition of the class of vehicle?

MOT Test Vehicle Classes

Class 1 & 2 (class 1 engine size up to 200cm³)

Motorbicycles

Motorbicycles with sidecar



Class 3

3 Wheeled Vehicles (up to 450kg unladen weight)



Class 4

Cars (up to 8 passenger seats) **and Motor Caravans**



3 Wheeled Vehicles (over 450kg unladen weight)

Quads (max unladen weight 400kg – for goods vehicles 550kg and max net power of 15kw)

Dual Purpose Vehicles

Private Hire Vehicles and PSVs (up to 8 seats)



Goods Vehicles (up to 3000kg DGW)

Ambulances and Taxis (Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles may be subject to additional local requirements)

Private Passenger Vehicles and Ambulances
(9-12 Passenger Seats)

Class 4A

Includes seat belt installation check
(9-12 Passenger Seats)

Class 5

Private Passenger (13-16 Passenger Seats)

Vehicles and Ambulances (More than 16 Passenger Seats)

Playbuses (13 or more Passenger Seats)

Class 5A

Includes seat belt (13-16 Passenger Seats)

Installation check (More than 16 Passenger Seats)

Class 7

Goods Vehicles (over 3000kg up to 3500kg DGW)



8 Isn't this just another excuse for the government to get older cars off the road?

No. Many modern vehicles have the new safety critical components which will be affected by the changes to the MOT test and it is important that these perform their function. In fact vehicles made before 1960 do not require a current MOT test certificate.

9 Why do we have to comply with Europe?

Certain areas of activity such as transport safety are regarded as being under the jurisdiction of the Commission. We are obliged under certain treaties to implement directives and regulations.

10 Will my test fee go up?

No. The additional test items will not significantly lengthen the test time and new test equipment costs are minimal.

11 Why has it taken so long to introduce this?

The bedding-in period was envisaged not to last beyond April 2012 but the legal process to change our domestic legislation to align with the EU's has taken longer than anticipated. All new legislation has to go through the Parliamentary process that transposes EU directives into UK laws.

12 What happens if a customer thinks their vehicle has been incorrectly failed?

This doesn't change existing arrangements. If any customer believes that their vehicle has been incorrectly failed they should first discuss the situation with the testing station to give them an opportunity to explain why the vehicle has failed and make redress if they've made an error.

If the customer is still unhappy and it is within 14 days of the failure they can obtain an appeal form (a VT17) from the testing station or from VOSA's website (www.vosa.gov.uk) and submit it to VOSA with the appeal fee.

VOSA will then arrange to re-examine the vehicle and if the testing station is proven wrong the fee is returned, a pass is recorded on the database and a certificate is issued. This is the statutory appeal process.

One further point to make is that the MOT test covers a prescribed number of systems and components and not everything is checked. This is part of the reason why new items are being added. If a fault occurs on a vehicle that is not part of the MOT test, it remains a fault and the driver should rectify it as soon as possible.

Even though it may not count towards an MOT failure it could still be an offence under other road laws and result in a fine and penalty points on your driving licence. It is unlawful to drive a vehicle knowing it to be faulty and it may create insurance issues in the event of an accident if any known defects are considered contributory to the cause or extent of the accident.

13 How do people contact VOSA?

People can call the VOSA helpline on 0300 123 9000

14 If a car shows a "warning message" instead of a "warning lamp" becoming illuminated, would this be a fail?

No. Under type approval, safety and environmental systems are required to illuminate a "Malfunction Indicator Lamp" (MIL) to indicate a serious malfunction. These are simplistic and easy for drivers to recognise, understand and act on. Dashboard warning messages

are likely to be supplementary and provide additional helpful information as will access to the On Board Diagnostic information to identify faults during the repair process.

15 How are vehicles tested?

MOT test stations have designated test bays where approved testers conduct the test, using a range of equipment which meets the required specification for MOT testing.

The standard test procedures are laid out in an inspection manual which the test station should make available on request. If your vehicle has failed the test, you will be given a failure document that refers to this manual. You can watch the test from a designated viewing area but you are not allowed to interrupt the tester while working.

All MOT testers have been on a training course with the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and their test standards are checked regularly.

16 Who supervises the scheme?

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) is the government agency responsible for supervising the MOT scheme. It does this by:

- Authorising MOT Test Stations & approving MOT testers
- Setting standards for testing and requirements for authorisation for the MOT test station and testers
- Training Authorised Examiners and MOT testers
- Visiting MOT test stations and carrying out checks to ensure testing standards & facilities are maintained.
- Giving advice/taking disciplinary action where tests are not being carried out to the required standards
- Dealing with appeals and complaints from MOT customers

17 Will expensive repairs force vehicles to be scrapped?

The new MOT test may identify defects in complex systems that will be expensive to repair (e.g. faulty electronic control units) to allow an MOT test pass. But it must be remembered that if a vehicle has a defect in a safety or environmental system then the law requires that it is rectified if it is to be used on the UK's road network. The new MOT items do not change that requirement but obviously motorists will no longer be able to ignore defects that could compromise safety.