



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

To: addressee

3 May 2018

Dear sir or madam,

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON CHANGES TO VEHICLE TESTING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

I am writing to you because you may be interested in changes to periodic vehicle testing which will take effect on 20 May 2018. The changes, which will affect cars, buses, goods vehicles, taxis and specialist non-agricultural tractors, are required in order to ensure that Northern Ireland remains aligned with both the rest of the United Kingdom and with the European Union in respect of roadworthiness testing. Although the majority of the changes are minor in nature, some specialist vehicles which are currently either exempt from testing or only require an MOT test, will now be required to pass a goods vehicle test.

The changes are listed below. A number of frequently asked questions and answers are included at the end of this letter, which will provide more detail on how the changes may affect you. Further information can be obtained by emailing

dvacustomerservices@infrastructure-ni.co.uk.

1. Changes to Vehicle Testing: 20 May 2018

The vehicle test will change in Northern Ireland on 20 May 2018. There are 6 main changes you need to know about:

1. New test items
2. A new way to categorise vehicle defects
3. Stricter emission limits for diesel vehicles
4. Additional vehicle types tested as goods vehicles
5. A new style Test Certificate
6. Other related matters (tractors, exemptions, historical vehicles, and further information)

2. New test items

The following new items which were not previously tested will now be included in the test:

REVERSING LAMPS – inspection applies to motor vehicles first used from 1 September 2009

DAYTIME RUNNING LAMPS – inspection applies to motor vehicles first used from 1 March 2018

FRONT FOG LAMPS – inspection applies to motor vehicles first used from 1 March 2018 where front fog lamps are fitted

BRAKE FLUID CONTAMINATION – inspection applies to motor vehicles tested from 20 May 2018, where the contents of the brake fluid reservoir may be visually assessed.

ENGINE MALFUNCTION INDICATOR LAMP – inspection applies to motor vehicles tested from 20 May 2018; a vehicle tested between 20 May 2018 and 19 May 2019 having an engine malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) illuminated will have a MINOR defect recorded on the test certificate (test pass). However, a vehicle having an engine MIL illuminated on or after 20 May 2019 will be issued with a Notification of Refusal (**test Fail**, MAJOR defect recorded).

3. Categorisation of vehicle defects

Defects will be categorised as follows:

MINOR – no significant effect on vehicle safety or the environment (test Pass)

MAJOR – may effect vehicle safety or impact on the environment (test Fail)

DANGEROUS - will have a direct and immediate risk to road safety or the environment (test Fail)

4. Stricter emission limits for diesel vehicles

There will be stricter limits for emissions from certain diesel engine vehicles: Diesel vehicles first used on or after 1 January 2014, will now have to comply with the smoke test limit value of 0.7m^{-1}

5. Additional vehicle types tested as goods vehicles

Vehicles constructed on a goods vehicle type chassis will be tested as goods vehicles from 20 May 2018. This includes the following vehicles that were previously exempt testing: mobile cranes, electrically propelled goods vehicles, and other vehicles designed and constructed with no capacity for carrying goods (e.g. equipped for educational purposes or display purposes only). In order to effectively manage this testing transition, **these vehicles will not require a goods vehicle test certificate until the next renewal date of the vehicle's Road Fund Licence (motor tax).**

Vehicles constructed on a goods vehicle type chassis that were previously subject to Motor Vehicle Testing (commonly referred to as MOT) including tower wagons, break-down vehicles and road construction vehicles, will be tested as goods vehicles from 20 May 2018. **These vehicles will require a good vehicle test certificate from the expiry date of their existing Motor Vehicle Test (MOT) certificate.** If not currently certified, these vehicles will require testing from 1 year old if considered a heavy goods vehicle, and from 3 years old if considered a light goods vehicle.

Heavy goods vehicles will in general require a speed limiter, spray suppression equipment, side guards and rear underrun protection.

6. New style Test Certificate

The current test certificates will change to a new style single page certificate that will display a list of the vehicle's MINOR defects (if any), and the vehicle's previous year and current odometer (mileage) reading.

7. Other related matters (tractors, exemptions, historical vehicles, re-tests, and further information)

Tractors – motor tractors with a design speed exceeding 40km per hour, fitted with HGV type brake and suspension systems on all wheels, and used for commercial haulage (not agriculture, horticulture or forestry) more than 15 miles from their operating base, must be tested as goods vehicles.

Exemptions – vehicles with a maximum design speed of less than 15.5 miles per hour will be exempt from testing.

Vehicles of historical Interest - the Department for Infrastructure plans to consult on introducing a test exemption for vehicles being 40 years old and older, later in the year. However, until further notice, vehicles will only be exempt mandatory testing in Northern Ireland if they are first used before 1960 and are operating on a non-commercial basis (Taxis, and Buses being Public Service Vehicles, will continue to be tested from first use).

Re-tests – Vehicles failing a periodic vehicle test must have the re-test completed within 60 days of the original full test (payments for re-tests must be made within 21 days of the original full test).

For additional information please contact dvacustomerservices@infrastructure-ni.co.uk .

CHANGES TO THE VEHICLE TEST FROM 20 MAY 2018 – Q&A

Q 1. Why are changes being made to the MOT test and other periodic vehicle tests offered by DVA?

A. A new European Roadworthiness Directive (2014/45/EU) is being implemented in NI in order to ensure that NI remains aligned with the rest of the UK and Europe in respect of roadworthiness testing.

Q 2. On what date will these changes be introduced?

A. The new European Roadworthiness Directive is being implemented in NI on the 20 May 2018. This Directive introduces changes to the vehicle test.

Q 3. What NI Regulations are being amended to implement these changes?

A. The following NI Regulations are being amended in order to implement the new Directive:

- **Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003**
- **Goods Vehicle (Testing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003**
- **Public Service Vehicles Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985**
- **Taxi Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**
- **Motor Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999**
- **Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000**

Q 4. What vehicles are being affected by the changes to the test?

A. The test requirements for cars, goods vehicles, buses, taxis and non-agricultural motor tractors will change following the implementation of the new Roadworthiness Directive

Q 5. My agricultural tractor is exempt from testing – is that going to change?

A. The majority of agricultural tractors will continue to be exempt from testing. Some fast tractors which are used mainly for commercial use will require a goods vehicle certificate.

Q 6. Are all fast tractors suitable for certification as goods vehicles?

A. No. Only motor tractors which are fitted with HGV type brake and suspension systems on all wheels will be able to pass a goods vehicle test.

Q 7. I have a fast tractor – does it need to be tested?

A. Motor tractors which:

- have a design speed exceeding 40km per hour;
- are used mainly for commercial haulage (i.e. haulage outside of normal agriculture, horticulture or forestry activity); and
- are used more than 15 miles from their operating base,

will be required to have a goods vehicle test.

Q 8. What new test items are being added?

A. The following items will be added to the vehicle tests:

- Reversing lamps (fitted to motor vehicles first used from 1 September 2009)
- Daytime running lamps, and front fog lamps (only where fitted), on motor vehicles first used from 1 March 2018
- A brake fluid contamination check (where visible in the reservoir)
- A check of the Engine Management Indicator Lamp (MIL). Where this is illuminated and does not go out when the engine is started, the examiner will issue a Warning Notice. But from 20 May 2019 this fault will be considered a 'Major' defect and will result in the vehicle failing the test.

Q 9. Following a test failure, is there a limit on the period by which payment must be made for a re-test?

A. Payment for re-tests must be made not more than 21 days from the date of the original full vehicle test (this requirement has not changed).

Q 10. Following a test failure, is there a limit on the period for having the re-test successfully completed?

A. Yes, all vehicle re-tests must be successfully concluded not more than 60 days from the date of the original full vehicle test; otherwise a full test and full fee is required.

Q 11. Are some vehicles losing an existing exemption from testing in NI?

A. Vehicles constructed on a goods vehicle chassis and having no load carrying capacity will no longer be exempt from testing. The following vehicles will require a goods vehicle test certificate:

- Mobile cranes, where mounted on a goods vehicle chassis
- Display vehicles
- Vehicles equipped for medical, dental, health, veterinary, experimental laboratory, educational, or clerical purposes, and
- Engineering plant, where mounted on a goods vehicle chassis
- Electrically propelled goods vehicles

Q 12. My vehicle was previously exempt from testing but now requires a goods vehicle test: do I have to get this done immediately?

A. You will not be subject to enforcement action for not having a valid goods vehicle test certificate until the expiry date of your vehicle's current Road Fund Licence (motor tax). This agreed relaxation will allow for a smooth transition to mandatory testing. However the vehicle must always be maintained in a roadworthy condition.

Q 13. Are there any new vehicle test exemptions being introduced?

A. Yes, vehicles with a maximum design speed of less than 15.5 miles per hour, and those classed as Showman's vehicles, will be exempt from testing

Q 14. Will the existing exemptions for old or historic vehicles change?

A. The Department will soon consult on exempting 'Vehicles of Historical Interest' (VHI) from testing. These "VHIs" are motor vehicles over 40 years old which have not been substantially modified. However, there will be no change to the existing exemption requirements in Northern Ireland until the outcome of the consultation.

Q 15. My specialist vehicle is currently required to have an MOT certificate – is that going to change?

A. A number of specialist vehicles previously subject to MOT testing (and therefore subject to test at 4 years old) will now have to get a goods vehicle certificate. The main types of specialist vehicles are Tower wagons, Break-down vehicles and Road construction vehicles. Goods vehicles certificates are required when a vehicle is one year old (GVW over 3,500kgs), and 3 year old (GVW 3,500kgs or less).

Q 16. My vehicle was previously subject to MOT testing but now requires a goods vehicle test: do I have to get this done immediately?

A. You will not be subject to enforcement action for not having a valid goods vehicle test certificate until the expiry date of your vehicle's current Road Fund Licence (motor tax). This agreed relaxation will allow for a smooth transition to mandatory testing. However if your vehicle has a current MOT certificate in force, it will not require a goods vehicle test until the MOT certificate is expired.

Q 17. How will the test requirements for Goods Vehicles differ from the requirements for MOT testing?

A. In addition to the standard MOT requirements, Goods Vehicles are generally required to have a manufacturer's plate, a speedlimiter, spray suppression equipment, side guards and rear underrun protection.

Q 18. What changes are being made to the Vehicle Test Certificates?

A. The new style vehicle test certificates will be on a single page and will display some additional information, including the vehicle's previous year's odometer (mileage) reading, and those defects that are categorised as 'Minor'

Q 19. What changes are being made to the Notification of Refusal?

A. The main change to the Notification of Refusal is the display of the defects categorised as 'Minor', 'Major' and 'Dangerous'. Vehicles should be taken off the road until the repairs have been made. It is against the law to drive a vehicle on the road which is unroadworthy.

Q 20. Where can I get additional information about the changes to vehicle testing in NI?

A. Additional information relating to the changes to the vehicle test can be obtained by phoning 0300 200 7861 during business hours.