

## **CHANGES TO THE VEHICLE BFG/MOT INSPECTION FROM 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2012**

Back in 2009, the European Commission introduced a Directive to standardise vehicle testing across member states. As a result a number of compulsory new testable items will be introduced, mainly due to the electronic safety systems fitted to modern vehicles. Over the last two years the Vehicle & Operator Services Agencies (VOSA) has been working to find practical ways to build these changes into the annual test. This information paper summarises some of the changes occurring as part of the BFG/MOT inspection from 1st January 2012.

### **Steering**

The law requires that vehicles are fitted with some sort of anti-theft mechanism as minimum security protection. Commonly, this is achieved by use of steering locks, transmission locks or gearshift locks. Where a steering lock mechanism is fitted as standard, testers must now check if one is present and operational.

### **Steering system**

Previously suspension ball joint dust covers that were missing or split was not a failure and only an Advisory. With the changes to the inspection manual these items will now be included in the test – so if a ball joint dust cover is missing or no longer keeps the dirt out, testers will be able to fail the vehicle.

Sub-section 2.2D of the Inspection Manual covers the steering lock-to-lock check, and will now also cover any significant oil leaks from the steering box and whether any 'fitted as standard' steering lock stops are missing.

### **Power steering**

Checks to power steering will now include a check of the fluid level. However, as there is no need to remove the reservoir cap, the check will only apply where the fluid level is visible in the reservoir. Any inappropriate repair or modification to a power steering component will result in a failure – so a pair of tights in place of the drive belt will not be acceptable! The serious misalignment or fouling of power steering components is also a Reason for Rejection (RfR).

The inspection of fluid pipes for damage and fouling will now also include excessive corrosion. If a malfunction indicator lamp – fitted to warn the driver of a problem with electronic power steering – is illuminated, indicating a failure in the system, this will be an RfR.

### **Suspension, wheel bearings and drive shafts**

Modified or repaired suspension components that are classed as unacceptable repairs to the tester will be an RfR.

All front drive shafts and those at the rear that form part of the suspension are already inspected, however, as a result of the Directive, a tester will also have to check, where fitted, support bearings for excessive wear, and drive shaft inner coupling gaiters that are missing. The RfR for gaiters has also been changed to cover all aspects of the gaiter failing to keep the dirt out.

Front to rear propshafts still remain outside the scope of the test

### **Parking brake lever mechanism and associated mountings**

Electronic Parking Brake (EPB) controls have been added to this section, and testers will have to make sure that all parking brake controls have not been 'inappropriately repaired or modified'. This has been defined as:

*'When the repair is obviously likely to adversely affect the roadworthiness of the vehicle or if any modification has seriously weakened the component'.*

If the vehicle is fitted with an EPB, testers must also check that the EPB warning lamp does not indicate a fault.

### **Service brake control**

As before, testers will have to check that the control has not been inappropriately repaired or modified.

### **Anti-lock braking systems**

Included under this section are checks to any Electronic Stability Control (ESC) system fitted – called variously ESC, Electronic Stability Programme (ESP), Dynamic Stability Control (DSC), etc. The new checks will cover the condition of ABS/ESC components (which are generally common to both systems), electrical wiring, the ESC switch, and the presence and operation of the ESC malfunction indicator lamp.

### **Mechanical brake components**

Additional checks of the security of brake cables, rods and joints must be made and testers will fail any mechanical brake component if it has been inappropriately repaired or modified. The condition and operation of brake slack adjusters – usually only fitted to very large vehicles with air braking systems – will also be checked.

### **Braking systems and additional braking devices**

All Braking Systems' will be checked for leaks, security, condition and operation. Checks for inappropriate repairs or modifications to braking system components will also be included. As well as brake valves, there will be additional checks on load-sensing valves. Originally only checking the linkage, testers will now check if the valve itself is also:

- Seized or inoperative.
- Defective so that its function is impaired.
- Incorrectly adjusted.

Testers already check the brake fluid level – but the brake fluid warning lamp being illuminated or inoperative will be a new RfR.

### **Brake performance**

Another new RfR coming in at the end of 2011 is if, during a brake decelerometer test, the vehicle deviates from a straight line when the parking brake is applied.

### **What does this mean to you as a motor vehicle owner?**

Vehicles presented at a BFG Examination Centre prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 with a fault in any of the above areas would have "PASSED" a BFG Roadworthiness Inspection and only have been issued with an "Advisory Notice". If a vehicle is presented on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 with the same fault it will no longer be issued with an "Advisory Notice", but instead will be an RfR.

Vehicle owners should ensure that all areas of the vehicle is kept to a high standard of repair and any faults are rectified prior to the annual BFG Roadworthiness Inspection. This will ensure that the vehicle is operated in a safe manner and it will reduce the inconvenience of it failing an inspection.

# Diagrams showing changes to the BFG/MOT Test in 2012



- Continuity of towbar 13 pin electric socket
- Inappropriate towbar repairs or modifications

- Gas leak detection spray to confirm an existence of a leak

- Rear passenger doors opening
- All door hinges, catches and pillars

- Catalytic converter missing

- Inappropriate brake system repairs or modification
- Defective ABS or ESC components

- Front and rear lights single operation
- Main beam warning light
- Steering lock mechanism
- Illumination of malfunction indicator light (MIL) for electronic power steering, electronic stability control, electronic park brake control, brake fluid warning lamp, tyre pressure monitoring system and air bag/pre-tensioner
- Driver's seat adjustment
- Speedometer



- Headlamp cleaning and self-levelling if high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps are fitted
- Products on the lens that reduce light output

- Battery and wiring
- Power steering oil level
- Damaged or corroded power steering pipes or hose
- Engine mountings

- Steering lock mechanism
- Steering joint dust covers
- Inappropriate steering repairs or modifications
- Inappropriate steering repairs or modifications
- Steering lock stops
- Steering box oil leakage
- Inappropriate suspension repairs or modifications
- Drive shaft support bearings and coupling gaiters