TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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GENERAL

The primary purpose of the manual is to support DVA staff in conducting the annual inspections of vehicles.

The manual is not a legal interpretation of Regulations, therefore is to be taken as guidance only, and does not cover all the requirements of all Vehicles inspected. In addition to the Vehicle Inspection Manuals, Vehicle Examiners may consult appropriate legislation before issuing or refusing a Vehicle Test Certificate. Legislation consulted may include:-

- Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Goods Vehicles (Testing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Public Service Vehicles Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985
- Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995
- Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- The Road Vehicles (Display of Registration Marks) Regulations 2001
- Passenger and Goods Vehicles (Recording Equipment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996
- Motor Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999

All the above legislation is available from ‘The Stationary Office’, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD.

PROCEDURES

The procedures given assume that only parts of a vehicle, which can readily be seen without dismantling, are to be examined. However, where it is not possible to inspect safety critical items and a defect is suspected, the examiner may remove wheel trims or panels. It is also important to note that any wheel trim or panel removed must be replaced or checked by the customer.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

It must be emphasised that these are minimum acceptable standards, which do not necessarily allow for further deterioration when the vehicle is in service.

ACCEPTANCE FOR TEST

Conditions for accepting vehicles for test include: -

- A suitable drawing vehicle must accompany a trailer.

- The vehicle chassis number or trailer identification mark must be permanently fixed to the vehicle in an accessible, easy to read, position.

- The vehicle/trailer must be clean enough to allow the component parts to be inspected.

- The vehicle/trailer must not present a health & safety hazard to inspect.

Vehicles normally fitted with permanent bodies, and which have had them removed fall outside the classification of a goods vehicle and should not be accepted for test. This does not include bin carriers, skeletal vehicles for carrying containers or demountable-bodied vehicles.

LIMITS OF WEAR AND TOLERANCE

Because it is not practicable to lay down limits of wear or tolerance for components of all types of vehicles, an examiner is expected to use his/her experience and judgement in assessing the condition of a component, the following points should be considered when making an assessment.

- Whether the component has reached the stage where it is obviously likely to affect adversely the roadworthiness of the vehicle.

- Whether the component has clearly reached the stage where repair, replacement or adjustment is necessary to ensure the road safety of the vehicle.

- Whether the condition of the component appears to break the law.

ARTICULATED VEHICLE

An articulated vehicle is a motor car or heavy motor car with a trailer so attached that part of the trailer is superimposed on the drawing vehicle and, when the trailer is uniformly loaded, not less than 20% of the weight of its load is borne by the drawing vehicle.

CRACKED

A flaw or split in a component.

DAMAGE

When assessing the extent of damage it is important to consider whether the performance of the component/ system will be impaired or if the component/system is likely to fail prematurely.

Damage fulfilling either of these criteria is not acceptable and will be a reason for failure.

INAPPROPRIATE MODIFICATION

A modification to a component which stops or severely affects the functionality of the component (also see unsafe modification).

UNSAFE MODIFICATION

A modification that adversely affects the roadworthiness of the vehicle and is likely to cause injury.

FRONT STEERED AXLE

Any axle(s) deemed to be forward of the chassis midpoint and directly controlled by the motor vehicle steering system.

DETERIORATED

This will be a reason for failure if the component or system is weakened to such an extent that it can no longer adequately perform its function.

EXCESSIVE TRAVEL

An abnormal amount of movement, which clearly indicates that a component has reached a stage when it requires remedial action to enable it to either: -

a. Operate effectively as designed, or

b. Prevent it from reaching the end of its permitted travel, or

c. Prevent it from exceeding manufacturers known maximum permitted limits.

EXCESSIVE WEAR

A component, which is worn to such an extent, that it is either: -

a. Likely to fail, or

b. Clearly not functioning effectively as designed, or

c. Visibly worn beyond manufacturers known permitted limits, or

d. Likely to affect the operation or condition of another safety related component.

FIRST USE DATES

The terms "before" and "from" when referring to first use dates. The term "from" should be taken to be the same as on or after a certain date.

Where there is a first use date quoted for a motor vehicle this will not normally apply if the vehicle was built more than 6 months before that date.

FOULING

This will only be a Reason for Failure if contact of two parts is likely to cause damage to, or restrict the movement of, a component.

FRACTURED/BROKEN

Gap, opening or rupture where separation has taken place.

INSECURE

The term "insecure" will be used to describe a defective condition. This term should be taken by vehicle examiners to mean either: -

a. That a component on the vehicle has relative movement (looseness) either at its fixings or in relation to an associated component where there should be none, or

b. That a component is not safely or completely attached either at its fixing or to an associated component.

All components on a vehicle need to be safely attached while it is in use on the road, however, how safe a component needs to be attached depends on its function.

Areas of the vehicle which are considered critical in terms of the ability of the vehicle to endanger the driver, any passengers and other users of the road, can tolerate fewer fixings which are broken, loose, missing or otherwise ineffective than those in a less critical part of the vehicle.

The proportion will depend on factors such as the design of the component etc, but as a general rule, no more than 20% (1 in 5) of the fixing devices should be loose etc. More than this proportion means that the remaining fixing devices could be over-stressed and could therefore fail at any time. Examples of critical systems include (this is not and exhaustive list): -

a. Steering

b. Brakes,

c. Suspension linkages,

d. Leaf spring anchors,

e. Trailer couplings,

f. Live (i.e. moving) transmission components,

g. Wheels and hubs.

The proportion suggested above does not apply to: -

- Components in a critical area or system secured by a **single** fixing device. If this device is loose, broken etc then the component is to be considered insecure.

- Components in a critical area or system where detailed instructions are given (e.g. wheel studs/nuts). In such cases, these instructions must be used in preference.

Components that are not part of a critical system e.g. some body panels can tolerate a higher proportion of their fixings either loose, broken etc. Again the proportion will depend on the design of the component but as a general rule no more than 33% (1 in 3) of the fixing devices should be loose, broken missing or otherwise ineffective.

A component secured by a non-standard temporary means should be judged as if the temporary fixing was not fitted.

OBLIGATORY

Required to be fitted by law.

SEMI-TRAILER

A trailer, which is constructed or adapted to form part of an articulated vehicle.

TRAILER

Where the term trailer is used in these notes it refers to all types of trailers and semi-trailers.

DEFICIENCY CATEGORISATION

Deficiencies found during the test shall be categorised in one of the following groups:

- Minor – deficiencies having no significant effect on the safety of the vehicle/trailer or impact on the environment and other minor noncompliances. If only defects of a minor nature are present, a test certificate will still be issued.
- Major – deficiencies that may prejudice the safety of the vehicle/ trailer, have an impact on the environment, put other road users at risk or other more significant non-compliances.
- Dangerous – deficiencies constituting a direct and immediate risk to road safety or having an impact on the environment.

HEALTH & SAFETY

It is the duty of all staff to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of all other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. No staff shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of

health, safety or welfare e.g. fire extinguishers, personal protection equipment etc. Staff has a duty of care not only to themselves and all other persons but also to the property of the Agency and the public.

Prior to entering the brake test equipment the examiner must ensure that the customer wears their seat belt. Also make the customer aware that the vehicle may undergo sudden movements.

Note:

1. Whilst we will attempt to be comprehensive and cover all reasons for failure, which could be dangerous, it is inevitable that due to changes in design, or other reasons, from time to time dangerous defects may be found which are not described in any of the reasons for failure. If a defect of this type were found, which is such that the use of the vehicle on the road would involve a danger of injury to any person, this would justify a failure. It is not intended that this item should be used as a matter of routine but only for exceptional cases.