

What the MOT test includes

The MOT looks at some important items on your car to see that they meet key legal requirements at the time of test.

The body and vehicle structure - Is free from excessive corrosion or damage in specific areas and there are no sharp edges likely to cause injury.

The fuel System - Has no leaks and the fuel cap fastens and seals securely. The fuel cap will need to be opened so be sure the key is available.

The exhaust emissions - The vehicle meets the requirements for exhaust emissions, dependant on the age and fuel type of the vehicle.

The exhaust system - Is secure, complete, without serious leaks and silences effectively.

The seat belts - All belts installed are checked for type, condition, operation and security. All compulsory seat belts must be in place.

The doors - Latch securely in closed position. Front doors should open from inside and outside the vehicle. Rear doors may need to be opened to gain access to testable items.

The mirrors - The minimum numbers are on the vehicle, their condition and security.

Load security - Boot or tailgate can be secured in the closed position.

The brakes - Their condition, operation and performance (efficiency test). Note the removal of the road wheels is not part of the test.

The tyres and wheels - Their condition, security, size, type and tread depth. Spare tyres are not inspected.

The registration plates - Their condition, security, characters correctly formed and spaced.

The lights - Their condition, operation and security. Headlamps for aim.

The bonnet - Securely latches in the closed position.

The wipers and washers - Operate to give the driver a clear view ahead.

The windscreen - Its condition and the driver's view of the road.

The horn - Operates correctly and is of a suitable type.

The steering and suspension - Are of a satisfactory condition and operation.

Everyone who uses a vehicle on the road must keep it in a roadworthy condition. The MOT test checks that vehicles meet road safety and environmental standards. The first MOT test for a vehicle is required when it's three years old.

The MOT certificate

The MOT certificate confirms that at the time of the test, without dismantling it, the vehicle met the minimum acceptable environmental and road safety standards required by law. It doesn't mean that the vehicle is roadworthy for the length of time the certificate is valid. The MOT certificate is also no guarantee of the general mechanical condition of your vehicle. The test doesn't cover the condition of the engine, clutch or gearbox.

How vehicles are tested

MOT test stations have designated test bays where they conduct the test, using a range of equipment that meets the required specification for MOT testing. The standard test procedures are laid out in an inspection manual that the test station should make available on request. If your vehicle has failed the test, you'll be given a failure document with reference to this manual. You can watch the test from a designated viewing area but you are not allowed to interrupt the tester while he is working. All MOT testers have been on a training course with the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and their test results are checked regularly.

Who supervises the scheme?

VOSA is the government agency responsible for supervising the MOT scheme. It does this by:

- Authorising MOT test stations and 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 and facilities are maintained
- Giving advice and taking disciplinary action where tests are not being carried out to the required standards
- Dealing with appeals and complaints from MOT customers