

Advice and Information

Vehicle Maintenance

MOT

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Introduction

Compulsory vehicle testing (the MOT test) was introduced in Great Britain in 1960 and extended to Northern Ireland in 1975. The purpose of the MOT is to ensure that vehicles over a set age are checked, at least once a year, to confirm they comply with minimum roadworthiness and environmental standards. Operators are committing an offence if they use a vehicle that does not have a current, valid MOT certificate.

Small Vehicles

Cars, MPVs, light goods vehicles and passenger vehicles with up to 8 passenger seats (excluding the driver) require an MOT inspection 3 years after their initial registration (4 in Northern Ireland). In Northern Ireland small vehicles cannot be operated using section 10B permits.

Minibuses

Minibuses (vehicles that have between 9 - 16 passenger seats (excluding the driver)) require an MOT inspection one year after initial registration. This is a point that many minibus users and some garages get wrong.

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Minibus MOT Classes

There are three different classes of MOT test for vehicles. As the tests are different it is important you undertake the correct one to ensure you have a valid certificate.

Class IV - This class is for small vehicles and minibuses (operated under section 19 or 10B permits) with up to 12 passenger seats (excluding the driver, i.e. a "13-seater"). Class IV tests are carried out at any appointed garage.

Class V - Minibuses (operated under section 10B / 19 / 22 permit) that have between 13 and 16 passenger seats (excluding the driver). Large buses (operated under Permit) that have more than 16 passenger seats and all those operating under section 22 permits (Community Bus Permits - irrespective of seating capacity) require a Class V MOT. These tests must be undertaken at designated premises (DPs) or approved testing facilities (ATFs) which are authorised by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to carry out commercial vehicle tests.

Class VI - This is the test for Public Service Vehicles (PSV). It has a different certificate and it is always carried out at a government testing station. No permit minibus requires a Class VI test – but if you

had a Type Approval Certificate or Certificate of Initial Fitness (see below) with your new vehicle, you may elect to go for a Class VI voluntarily. These tests must be undertaken at designated premises (DPs) or approved testing facilities (ATFs) which are authorised by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to carry out commercial vehicle tests.

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Type Approval

All new vehicles must conform to Type Approval requirements. When you purchase or lease a minibus from new they should come with this certification. Most minibus convertors should supply type approval certificates when they deliver their vehicles.

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Certificates of Initial Fitness (CoIF)

Minibuses intended for commercial service may need to have a CoIF if they have been converted from a van and the convertor did not apply for type approval certification at that time, or the type approval certificates have been lost. This is a special certificate to show that the vehicle was built or adapted to PSV standards. These vehicles require a Class VI MOT every year. No vehicle intended for community use requires a CoIF - but you may opt to obtain one. With a suitable vehicle this would open up the possibility of selling it to a commercial operator when you come to replace it.

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The Test

Preparation

Although it is an offence to continue to use a vehicle without a current, valid MOT, exceptionally you may drive to a pre-arranged test appointment or to a garage for repairs for the test.

Vehicles should be presented with sufficient fuel and in a clean and tidy condition. Over and above ensuring the interior and exterior are clean, you may wish to consider power washing/steam cleaning the underside if excessively dirty or oily.

Test items

The Class IV test is the standard car and light vehicle test. The 'Class V' test essentially checks the same items:

- Brakes, (including anti-lock systems) steering, and wheels and hubs
- Suspension, tyres, seat belt condition, number plates
- Washers, wipers, mirrors, horn and hazard lights
- Lights, warning lamps, indicators and reflectors
- Windscreen, drivers view of road and doors
- Condition (but not installation) of seat belts
- Chassis, corrosion, condition and security of body
- Fuel and exhaust systems and exhaust emissions
- Security and condition of electrical wiring and equipment
- Speedometer, driving controls, seat security
- Build-up of pressure/vacuum systems and warning devices (if applicable)
- Exterior of body including access to doors
- Size, type, condition and load ratings of tyres
- Condition and security of bumpers and spare wheel carrier

The Class VI test also includes amongst items:

- Condition of interior of body, passenger entrance/exits, steps and platforms
- Tachographs

The test does not cover the condition of engines, clutch or gearboxes.

What if Our Minibus Fails?

Minor repairs may be undertaken at the test station without incurring a further fee on re-testing. If your minibus fails the test on certain specified items (as detailed by the inspector) it may be returned to the test station on the same or the next working day to have that item re-examined without incurring a further fee.

If your minibus fails and has to be removed from the test station for repairs to non-specified items or cannot be re-tested within the time limit you will have to book and pay for a further test. The person submitting the minibus for its MOT, if it fails, must remove it within two working days after the test unless permission has been granted, from the authorised examiner, to leave it at the test station.

Appealing

If you disagree with the test result and think your minibus has wrongly failed, you must complete an appeal form (VT17), which you can get at any MOT test station or from the Driver Vehicle and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), and return it to DVSA within 14 working days. DVSA should then offer you an appointment within 5 working days to have your vehicle rechecked. If your appeal is successful, you may be eligible for a refund of your test fee and the garage where you had your original test will be investigated. The address of your local DVSA office should be displayed in the MOT testing station.

If you have concerns over the standard of MOT inspection and you consider the vehicle should not have passed, you should contact DVSA office within 28 days (3 months for rust or corrosion related problems) for further information. It is important that your vehicle is not repaired before any appeal test is carried out.

Complaining about the Conduct of the Test

Should you have any complaints about the way your test was conducted you must contact your local DVSA office. The name and address of your local DVSA office should be on displayed at the test station or contact:

enquiries@dvs.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 9000

Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 6pm

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Certificates

Certificate Expiry Dates

Your test certificate is valid for 12 months from the date of issue. New certificates, if obtained no more than one month before the expiry of your current MOT, can be dated to come into effect when your existing MOT ends (that is the certificates will run consecutively). To take advantage of this you will have to show your current certificate to the vehicle tester.

Lost or Damaged Certificates

If you have lost or damaged your certificate, duplicates can usually be obtained from the MOT station that carried out the test. If the MOT station has closed, you should contact the your local DVSA Office for assistance. A charge may be raised: however, it should be no more than £10.

Checking the Validity of Certificates

If you think an MOT certificate is not genuine, to confirm its authenticity contact the DVSA on

enquiries@dvs.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 9000

Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 6pm

Correcting Errors on Certificates

If you find an error on the test certificate, whilst having your vehicle tested, you should obtain a replacement, with the correct details, from the MOT station that carried out the original test. The

exception to this is if there is a problem over the expiry date. In this instance it should be referred to the local DVSA office.

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Beyond the Test

The MOT shows that your vehicle met the minimum acceptable standards on the day of the test only. However, your minibus can be stopped at any time and spot-checked for defects by DVSA officers and the police. If it is found to be unfit to be on the road, it could be prevented from being driven further. To ensure that this does not happen and your vehicle continues to be legal and roadworthy throughout the year, your MOT should form part of your overall vehicle maintenance regime.

This regime is fully explained in two CTA advice leaflets:

- [Vehicle Maintenance - Requirements \(GB\)](#) based on the system recommended in the DVSA's Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness
- [Vehicle Maintenance - Requirements \(NI\)](#) based on the system recommended in the DVA's Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness for operators in Northern Ireland.

Your system should include:

- Drivers daily walk round checks
- Regular supervisor's checks
- Safety inspections (no more than 10 weeks apart)
- Manufacturer's recommended servicing and maintenance
- The MOT
- Systems and procedures to ensure that faults can be reported and appropriately actioned

Remember operating your vehicle without a current, valid MOT or in a non-roadworthy condition is an offence (for both the organisation and the driver). The CTA Advice Service can assist should you require further help or information.

About the Community Transport Association

The Community Transport Association is a national charity that represents and supports providers of community transport: thousands of other local charities and community groups across the UK that all provide transport services that fulfil a social purpose and community benefit. We are for, and about, accessible and inclusive transport.

We help our members remain relevant and responsive to key areas of public policy and to make a big difference for the people and families in the communities in which they work. Our vision is of a world where people can shape and create their own accessible and inclusive transport solutions and our mission is to achieve this through championing accessible and inclusive transport, connecting people and ideas and by strengthening our members and raising standards.

Keep up to date with CTA via our website or by signing up to our monthly [News Brief](#).

About CTA's Advice Service

The CTA's Advice Service is available to CTA members, community and other voluntary groups, local authorities and other statutory bodies. It offers information and support on any aspect of non-profit transport operations. The CTA's Advice Service covers the whole of the UK and is supported by national governments. We will only ever explain the most accurate and commonly accepted interpretation of regulations and best practice. We do this by providing support and information on a wide range of community transport related topics such as permits and licensing regulations and by signposting to other agencies. The Advice Service does not exist to provide legal advice on any topics. If you are still unsure you will need to seek [legal advice](#).

For more information, contact

advice@ctauk.org | 0345 130 6195 | www.ctauk.org

This leaflet has been primarily produced for members of the CTA. If your organisation has benefited from using it but isn't a member please consider joining us, for more details please see: <https://ctauk.org/why-become-a-cta-member>.

Disclaimer:

The Community Transport Association has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, but it should be noted that this is only a guide, and should be treated as such.