

The following represents guidance issued by VOSA. We recommend all operators follow the guidance, as a minimum standard and without fail, or adopt systems that equal or surpass the guidance.

Maintaining Vehicle Roadworthiness

Driver's Responsibilities

All drivers must complete the following checks prior and post taking any vehicle out. A daily walk round check must be undertaken by a responsible person before a vehicle is used.

Drivers must be able to report promptly any defects or symptoms of defects that could adversely affect the safe operation of vehicles. Reports must be made in writing and provision should be made to record details of any rectification work done.

Operator responsibilities

First-use inspections are essential for operators who lease, hire or borrow vehicles, including trailers, from other people. Inspections where vehicles and trailers have been off the road for some time are essential.

Operators must ensure that checks are made regularly of items, which affect roadworthiness. An operator is responsible for the condition of vehicles (which includes trailers) inspected and/or maintained for him by agents, contractors or hire companies.

Drivers must be given clear written instructions about their responsibilities.

Defect Reports

Drivers' defect reports, which record any faults, must be kept for at least 15 months.

Safety Inspections

Safety inspections must include those items covered by the appropriate Department for Transport annual test. They should be pre-planned preferably using a time based programme and must be regularly monitored particularly in the early stages.

There must be a system to ensure that unroadworthy vehicles are removed from service.

Any remedial work carried out arising from safety inspections must be the subject of a written record.

The safety inspection report must include:

- Vehicle details
- A list of all items to be inspected
- When and by whom the inspection is carried out
- The result of the inspection
- Details of any rectification work
- A declaration that defects have been rectified satisfactorily.

On some types of vehicle and operations, intermediate safety checks may be necessary.

Records of safety inspections must be kept for at least 15 months. Staff carrying out safety inspections must be competent to assess the significance of defects. Assistance must be available to operate the vehicle controls as necessary. Operators who undertake their own safety inspections must have adequate facilities and tools available. They must be appropriate to the size of fleet and type of vehicle operated. Operators should have access to a means of measuring brake efficiency and setting headlamp aim and measuring exhaust emissions.

Operators who contract out their safety inspections must draw up, and have approved, a formal written contract with an inspection agency or garage. Such operators should have a means of regularly monitoring the quality of work produced for them.

The dates when safety inspections are due must be the subject of forward planning. A maintenance planner or wall chart should be used to identify dates at least 6 months before safety inspections are due. Any system of maintaining the roadworthiness of vehicles should be effectively and continually monitored.

Any change by licensed operators to arrangements for safety inspections must be notified to the relevant Traffic Area Offices without delay.