

Tech Talk

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE PHIRM



MoT CHANGES

In case you hadn't heard already, the MoT regulations are changing for this year – unfortunately, it's not good news and many of our favourite modifications will now fail the annual test – as if it wasn't a scary enough experience as it is! From the beginning of this year, the new regulations have been in place, but most failures under the new rules (only if it fails one of the new rules and isn't deemed unsafe because of that failure) will only be given an advisory – come the beginning of April, though, and the full force of the new regs will be felt.

So which of the changes will affect us? Well, several changes have been made to address systems that are fitted to many new cars, thus keeping the MoT up-to-date, while others are to address previous pitfalls in the test – while some, in our opinion, seem pretty bloody pointless and annoying.

- 1** First up is the new warning light checks. Brake fluid level, tyre pressure monitoring system, airbag warning, seatbelt pre-tensioner, steering and suspension and headlight main beam warning lights will all come under the tester's eye, resulting in a fail if they're illuminated. You can't just get away with removing the bulb, either, as the light must come on and go out with the ignition.



- 2** ABS checks have been commonplace before but will now include testing Electronic Stability Control – again, simply removing or modifying the system won't help to get the MoT man on side. Also, and this one makes little sense to us, the steering lock will be tested if fitted – if it was there from the factory, it must be present and functioning correctly to pass the test.



- 3** Some parts of the test do make sense to us and are good steps by VOSA in our opinion. For example, dust covers and boots will be examined to check that aren't split, damaged or missing – if they allow dirt to enter any joints, you'll be looking at a failure. The power steering fluid must also be above the minimum level marker on the reservoir – common sense stuff.

- 4** Tinted lights will now be an issue, for most lights at least. Products used or fitted to the lenses or bulbs that reduce the intensity or change the colour of your sidelights, number plate bulbs, brake lights, indicators or rear foglights will now result in an MoT failure.



- 5** Factory-fitted Xenons/HIDs will, as before, have to have their washer and self-levelling systems in a fully functioning state, but what has changed is the way this is applied to aftermarket fitted systems. Previously, as they didn't have a factory-fitted washing or levelling systems, they couldn't be checked, but now it will be expected that these will have properly working washer and levelling systems fitted – this will almost certainly mean that many of us won't be able to run HIDs without some serious modification.



- 8** Inoperative or incomplete speedometers, rear doors that can't be opened from the outside and chafed or damaged fuel lines will now also be inspected and can result in a fail, while finally, de-cats will now be out of the question as the car now not only has to pass an emissions test, but will be inspected to check that the catalytic converter is present, if it had one from the factory.



- 6** Airbags are another area that now have stricter rules surrounding them. Whereas previously you'd generally be fine as long as the airbag light wasn't illuminated, the test now goes further – if your car had an airbag as standard, it must have an airbag fitted and operational – if an airbag system is missing or defective the car will fail the test. The same goes for pre-tensioners which, if fitted from the factory, will be checked to see that they are there and haven't been previously deployed.

- 7** The seats themselves will also come under scrutiny – the driver's seat must be adjustable into at least two positions, and if the seat is electric, the motors must be working.



So there we go – some changes will make sense and have been long-awaited, while others are going to put a serious downer on anyone's plans for race steering wheels, bucket seats, harnesses, de-cat pipes, smoked indicators or headlights and much more, which in many ways we think is unfair. After all, a properly installed bucket seat and harness is much more likely to offer you protection in the event of a crash, for example. So if you have something to say, whether for or against these new regulations, send us an email at pvw@unity-media.com – as ever we'd love to hear your views.

Disclaimer – If you're unsure on any of the above or for clarification on any of the new rules, get in touch with VOSA at www.dft.gov.uk/vosa

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