

MOT TEST PREPARATION

In the UK, vehicles over three years old are subject to an annual Ministry Of Transport (MOT) test. The MOT test is a 'basic' check on the car to ensure that it is in sound condition and that it is in a roadworthy condition. All MOTs have to be taken at an authorized test centre.

We will try to outline most of the points taken into consideration for the MOT in this next section. We cannot guarantee to be 100% accurate and cannot guarantee that your car will pass after reading this guide, but we hope this is of some interest to people whose cars are ready for the MOT.

The Test includes inspection of:

Lighting Features:

External lighting.
Internal warning lights.
Reflectors.
headlamp alignment

Wheels and Tyres:

Tread depth.
Tyre size.
Wheel condition.
Rotational tyres are on the correct Axles

Steering and Suspension:

Steering rack. (and steering boxes)
Steering wheel.
Bearings.
Shocks.
Springs.
Bushes.
Suspension jointing.

Bodywork:

Panels.
Bumpers.
Chassis.
Doors.
Any damage to panels that will cause personal injury

Safety Items/ Equipment:

Seatbelts.
Seats.
ABS/airbag warning.

Exhaust Emissions:

Diesel/petrol engines.
CO levels.
HC levels.
Excessive smoke.

Drivers View:

Windscreen.
Mirrors.
General Items
Wipers.
Washer jets.
Horn.
Exhaust system.
Fuelling system.
Number plates.
VIN plate.

Braking systems:

Disks and drums.
Handbrake.
Brake pipes.
Brake cables.
Calipers/ cylinders.
ABS sensors.
Traction control (if applicable)

Lighting Equipment:

Basically, if an external light is fitted, then it has to work! Brake lights, indicators, side repeaters, fog lights, number plate lights, reversing lights, headlamps, hazard warning lights. Included in this is headlamp aim. Also check that headlights are fitted securely to the vehicle. Rear reflectors undamaged.

Internally; warning lights for the fog lights and hazard warning lights must work. However, if

your car was fitted without any of the above items at manufacture, then they are exempt from the test, unless you've fitted them yourself.

It has been pointed out that only the offside fog light is needed to work to get a pass, however this is no guarantee and is probably wisest to ensure that both rear fog lights (if fitted) are in working order.

Wheels And Tyres:

Wheels and tyres must be matched for tyre sizes across axles. Having one 205 and one 185 on the front will most likely constitute a fail. Tyres must also be free from excessive cracks and splits and have no bulges on them. They must also fit the wheel correctly. 205's on 5 inch alloys? Most likely a fail. Tread depth. Must be in excess of 1.6mm over 3/4's of the tyre, with the remaining tyre having visible tread. This is the extreme. Safest bet is to have at least 2mm of tread.

Road wheels must show no signs of serious damage. Badly dented or distorted rims can cause a fail. They must also fit the vehicle correctly; as must the tyres fit the wheel correctly.

Steering And Suspension:

Steering must be precise and accurate with no play between the steering wheel and the road wheels turning. Steering rack must be securely held in place and must be free from leaky gaitors. Power assisted racks must be free from oil leaks. The steering wheel itself must show no signs of being loose. There should be no excessive play on the steering wheel if moved up and down and from side to side.

Wheel bearing must be free from play. Excessive noise when the wheel is spun could also be a worn bearing.

Shock absorbers should be free from signs of oil leakage and must settle the car at its normal position when bounced. A worn shock can fail. Shocks must be mounted to the car securely.

Coil springs must be free from any cracks and not snapped. It must also be securely located. Springs should be free of corrosion.

Leaf springs; All leafs should be intact and free of cracks. Mounting bushes should not be deteriorated. The spring should be held firmly in place.

Suspension bushes/steering bushes must all hold their respective components in place firmly. Suspension joints must also be free moving yet firm. Leaking boots for ball joints can fail.

Drive shafts must be free from excessive play and be straight and undamaged. Gaiters must be free from any damage and must not leak oil or grease.

Braking System:

Disk/drums should be free from cracks and must not have any excessive pits or scratches. Badly worn braking equipment can cause accelerated braking life and can badly alter the car's braking ability. There should be no pulling of the car under braking. Badly balanced brakes can fail.

Handbrake operation should have minimal clicks when applied.

Brake pipes and cable should be free of corrosion and securely fitted in place. Pipes should show no signs of fluid leakage; cable should be located in mounting brackets. Flexible brake hoses should be free of signs of chaffing or splitting.

Brake calipers should operate smoothly without any binding. They should also be clean of any brake fluid. Master and slave cylinders should be clear of any brake fluid leaks.

Bodywork:

All body panels should be securely fixed in place and free of sharp or jagged edges. Any edge that could harm or cause danger to another road user can be seen as a fail. Structural parts of the car, chassis rails for example, should be free of excessive rust and corrosion. The body of the vehicle, where applicable, should be securely fixed to the chassis. Bumpers must be securely fixed in place and again be free from sharp edges.

Doors must all be able to be opened from both the outside and inside. They must also latch securely when closed.

Safety Equipment:

Safety Equipment covers seat mountings, seatbelts, pretensioners, ABS and airbag. ABS and airbag warning lights must both be working correctly. The driver's and front passenger's seats have to be securely mounted with no unwanted movement. The test will also check to see if the seats can be secured in an upright position.

Seatbelts must be securely fitted at their respective mounting points. The webbing should be free of cuts and fraying. The inertia reel should lock when tugged sharply and, when buckled, the seatbelt should not come away from its locked position until the release button is pressed. Applies to both front and rear seatbelts, where fitted.

Exhaust Emissions:

The emission part of the test is with respect to the amount of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and smoke that is pumped into the atmosphere. Limits vary for vehicle age. The newer the car, the tighter the emission limits.

Diesel and petrol engine vehicles have different checks.

It is likely that a car which pumps out blue/black smoke for greater than five seconds at idle, after having been revved for a few seconds, will fail.

Petrol Vehicles:

CO levels.

When	CO % @ idle
Vehicles first used after August 1986	3.5
Vehicles first used before August 1986	4.5
Catalyst equipped cars after August 1992	~0.5

HC levels.

The maximum HC emission allowed is 1200 parts per million (ppm). This test will first be checked at idle. If 1200ppm is exceeded the HC test can be re-done with the engine at approximately 2000 rpm. If, at this faster idle, the result is lower than 1200ppm then you can be passed.

CO levels and HC levels both have to be acceptable to get an MOT pass.

Diesel Vehicles:

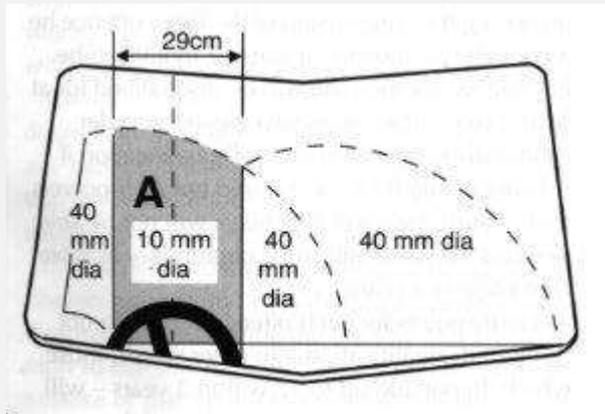
This test involves the vehicle's engine being run at its maximum unloaded speed several times while the tester checks for exhaust smoke density.

It is advisable that the engine timing belt is thoroughly checked before the MOT test. Replacement of a new belt if unsure about its condition.

Driver's View:

The driver's view must not be hindered in anyway, so out go the fluffy dice and baby on board stickers, at least for the test!

The windscreen must be free of cracks and damage, although small stones chips can be ignored as long as they are not obscuring the driver's field of view. Area 'A' (see diagram) is the 'critical' area. Within this area any chip or crack that obscures the driver's view has to be below a maximum diameter of 10mm. The remaining area that is of concern for the MOT tester is that which the wipers sweep across. Within this region the cracks and spots must not exceed a diameter of 40mm



Interior and external mirrors must be securely and correctly fitted, and must be there if fitted as standard. They should not be damaged as to hinder rearward vision and must operate correctly.

Both front doors must be able to be opened from within the vehicle.

General Items:

Items such as windscreen wipers, which should be of the correct size, be able to cleanly clean the windscreen and the rubber strips should be free of rips and tears. The washer jets should be free flowing and able to squirt efficiently onto the windscreen. Make sure that you top all water reservoirs up. An empty washer bottle will be a fail. Applies for both front and back of car.

Horn must work and be audible.

The exhaust system must be securely held in place by its mounting bolts and rubbers. It must not be knocking the bodywork and must be free of leaks and excessive rust. It should not be too noisy.

The fuel system must be intact and showing no signs of leakage. Likewise the fuel tank must be securely strapped into place, again free of leaks. The filler cap must be of a secure fit and must seal.