

Details Of Enquiry:

If a seating position is determined by the presence of seat mounting/anchorage points, and if those points are welded up/blanked off thus removing the seating position, Is it acceptable to have all the seat belt anchorages/seat belt assemblies still in place when a large passenger vehicle has had all the rear compartment seats removed in order for the vehicle to be presented for SVA as a goods vehicle? The vehicle in question is a Ford Econoline but could also be a Dodge day van. These vehicles are of the same family of types as existing goods vehicles.

Answer:

For the purposes of the test including seat belt assessments etc. a seating position is where there is provision for a seat due to the presence of seat anchorage points. If there is provision to refit the seat it must be included as a seating position. This is irrespective of any belts that may be fitted.

Recent advice from the DfT has indicated that a vehicle will only be considered a "van" (and as such subject to the goods vehicle criteria) if it was designed and constructed principally for the carriage of goods.

The removal of seats will only change the vehicle to a "van" if the vehicle was originally a "van" ie originally constructed principally as a goods vehicle or it can be demonstrated that the vehicle has been fully converted to a goods vehicle specification equivalent to that produced by the manufacturer. If this criteria can be met, the vehicle will be eligible to test as a goods vehicle.

(Goods vehicles converted to passenger vehicles will not need to meet a specification of the manufacturer's but will need to meet the more onerous approval requirements of a passenger vehicle)

Answer Given By: TSB/DfT

Date: April 2006

Further Action:

Amendment to IM.