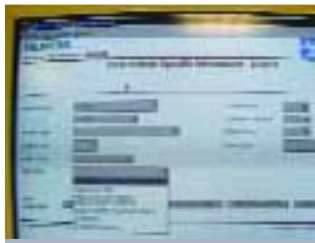




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# Going solo

The last issue of *Matters of Testing* introduced you to One Person Test Lanes. As the Conditions of Authorisation have been amended, you will soon be able to upgrade your equipment to conduct one-person testing. Richard Dixon looks at what this means for your garage.

Automated Test Lanes (ATLs) were introduced last September, starting the process of bringing the MOT scheme up to date. ATLs not only take a lot of the manual work out of conducting an MOT test – the wheel play detectors stress suspension components and rock the steering mechanically – but have the added bonus of allowing the test to be conducted by just one person, if the tester prefers.

### The problem

Many testing station owners with existing test lanes were aggrieved that they would have to replace perfectly good (and in some cases not very old) equipment, in order to enjoy the financial benefits one-person testing (OPT) could bring to their business.

Trade bodies lobbied VOSA and the Department for Transport, arguing that many testing stations had invested in equipment that had not yet been installed long enough to realise the original investment. These testing station owners therefore feel they're being deprived of the benefits OPT could bring, as it is not a viable business proposition to replace their existing equipment with a full ATL.

It was subsequently agreed that we would look into introducing a further tier of testing which would allow Authorised Examiners to install just the equipment to enable OPT.

### The agreement

For some time now VOSA has been considering a future strategy for the continued use of obsolete equipment within the scheme. It was agreed that VOSA would draft a strategy that would slowly phase out the use of obsolete equipment and introduce OPT.

We will keep you informed about any developments on the subject. For now, it is likely that OPTs will be introduced with the rest of the future testing strategy to follow.

### Approval procedures

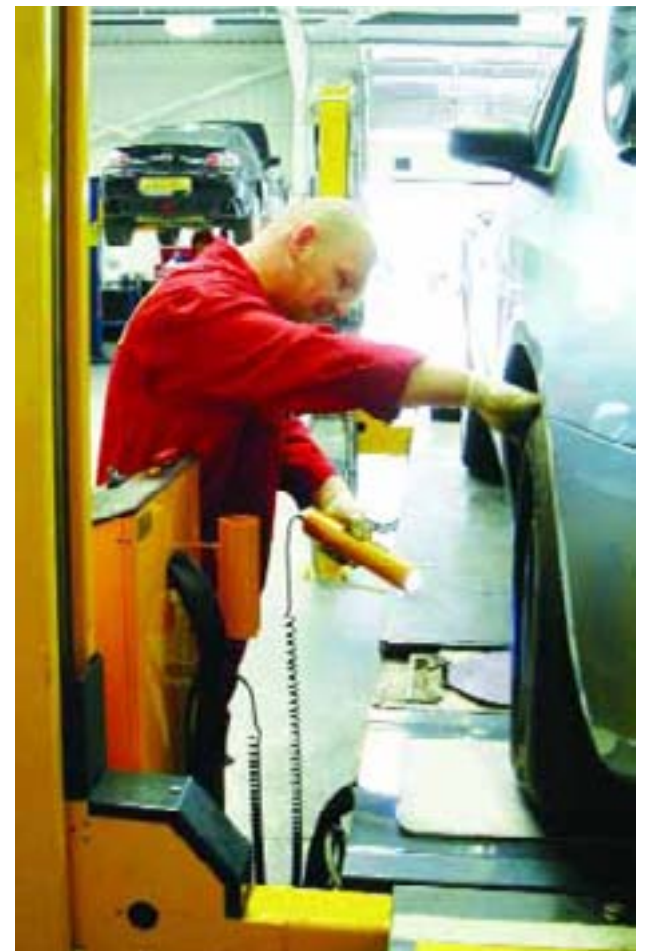
A Special Notice will be issued in early 2007 outlining approval procedures. However, it is likely that existing VTSS will be able to acquire the following equipment if they wish to upgrade to One Person Test Lanes (OPTLs):

- approved wheel play detectors;
- an approved brake pedal application device; and
- suitable mirrors for lighting checks.

As with ATLs, the installation of OPTLs will be voluntary so the choice is yours.

### An important point to remember

Written confirmation from the vehicle lift manufacturer (not the equipment installer) confirming the vehicle lift is suitable for the fitment of wheel play detectors must be obtained before authorisation to use this equipment is granted by VOSA. Not all vehicle lifts are suitable for the fitting of wheel play detectors because of the additional stresses they impose on their construction.



## MODERNISING MOT EQUIPMENT

A statement from the  
Department for Transport

We are pleased to be able to remove any current uncertainty and confusion about one-person testing and Automated Test Lanes (ATLs); and to introduce the concept of the phasing out of technology-expired testing equipment.

Soon existing testing stations will be permitted to undertake one-person testing of certain items of the MOT test provided they have approved equipment to perform tasks currently done by an assistant. Testing stations will not need to have all the equipment necessary to complete a one-person test if they want to keep the assistant for some parts of the test (eg just use wheel play detectors).

*continued on page 6*

## From the team

### Welcome to *Matters of Testing* 33

It's October already, where does the time go? There's so much going on at VOSA – from One Person Test Lanes (front page), to the return of VOSA's seminars (page 5). Don't forget to book your place; further details can be found on the flyer inside this issue.

I hope you find this issue useful – as ever keep your comments and ideas coming to us at the usual address.

Claire



#### Send your letters to:

Claire Buckley, *Matters of Testing*,  
VOSA, Berkeley House,  
Croydon Street,  
Bristol BS5 0DA

#### e-mail:

mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk

## Special Notices

### SN 5 – 2006 (All Classes)

#### Item Subject

- 1 Retest procedures
- 2 Spark ignition emission testing on and after 1 August 2006
- 3 Equipment calibration dates
- 4 Fallback procedure changes – VTS Device Printer Failure

### SN 6 – 2006 (All Classes)

#### Item Subject

- 1 Trial of a new process for urgent messages
- 2 MOT Test: Fees and appeals poster
- 3 New retest procedure
- 4 MOT Inspection Manuals and Testing Guide
- 5 Booking of refresher training courses
- 6 Reading messages on the VTS device

# 25 million MOTs and counting!

**It's been a little more than a year since its roll-out, but MOT Computerisation has already recorded its 25 millionth test. It's clear that the easy-to-use system is gaining remarkable popularity among users.**

MOT Computerisation reached another milestone recently when the 25 millionth test was recorded on the system some 14 months after its introduction. Nominated tester Graham Booth from Burns Garage, a VTS based in Rochdale, completed the 25 millionth test on 4 July, with the help of a silver Ford Maverick. A plaque was presented to the garage to mark the achievement.

A delighted Graham said: "I was absolutely gobsmacked when I found out. I didn't realise we got through that many tests so quickly, but it's nice to be recognised. All the lads around the garage are calling me 'Sir' and I'm thinking of getting a badge with *The 25 Million Dollar Man* printed on it."

#### Getting it right

Graham attributes the success of the system to its straightforwardness. "It helps that the system is so easy to use. If you give it the right information, it gives you the right information. Just follow the onscreen prompts and you can't go wrong."

The 25 million MOT records on the database are increasing by an incredible 130,000 tests



Tim Pink from Siemens and Melanie Yelland from VOSA present AE Jonathan Mills and NT Graham Booth (middle left and right) with the award.

every working day. The ten millionth test was only completed on 1 February this year, when a similar plaque was presented to Lyndon Transport Co Ltd, a VTS just outside Mansfield. It's a good indicator of just how rapidly the scheme is expanding.

#### People power

VOSA's Private Vehicle Director, Alex Fiddes, said: "VOSA and our partners Siemens are very proud to have reached this landmark. However, the real stars have been the staff in the MOT garages who have adapted quickly to the new system and done their very best to make it a success. This achievement is a great tribute to the hard work that people like Graham have put in, and the flexibility they have displayed."

## News in brief

#### You've got mail!

Since 31 July 2006, Special Notices (SNs) must be read and acknowledged via the VTS Device. You'll know you've got mail when you log on and see a yellow envelope in the corner of your screen. Your messages will have a deadline which is variable and set by VOSA depending upon their importance.

If the deadline is reached and you still haven't read the SN this envelope will turn red. If you haven't read your mail at this point the system will not let you go any further. However, all you need to do to get access to the system is simply read your mail and acknowledge the SN. There is no need to contact the service desk as your system will be back to normal.

#### Improving MOT Visits

In the July issue of *Matters of Testing* we reported that we were to trial a new way of carrying out routine visits.

We have now visited over 100 vehicle testing stations to understand if we can:

- plan our visits and use our Vehicle Examiner resource more efficiently;
- reduce the burden on the compliant VTS; and
- utilise information held in MOT Comp to assist in the enforcement of the scheme.

Once analysis of the results has been completed we will report the findings.

# All change please

**MOT Computerisation has been running for some time now and the process has evolved. John Corcoran takes a look at how VSI has changed to keep pace.**

The biggest change to Vehicle Specific Information (VSI) is the emissions data displayed on the VSI screen. We have simplified the selection process and you no longer need to enter the engine code when searching VSI. The VSI screen now indicates whether a CAT (and other fitments such as ABS) is fitted (under other info; see photo) and you then decide the level of the test (such as default or specific) using the Inspection Manual and current Emissions book. It's the same procedure as before the introduction of MOT Computerisation. This change has dramatically reduced the number of selections displayed.

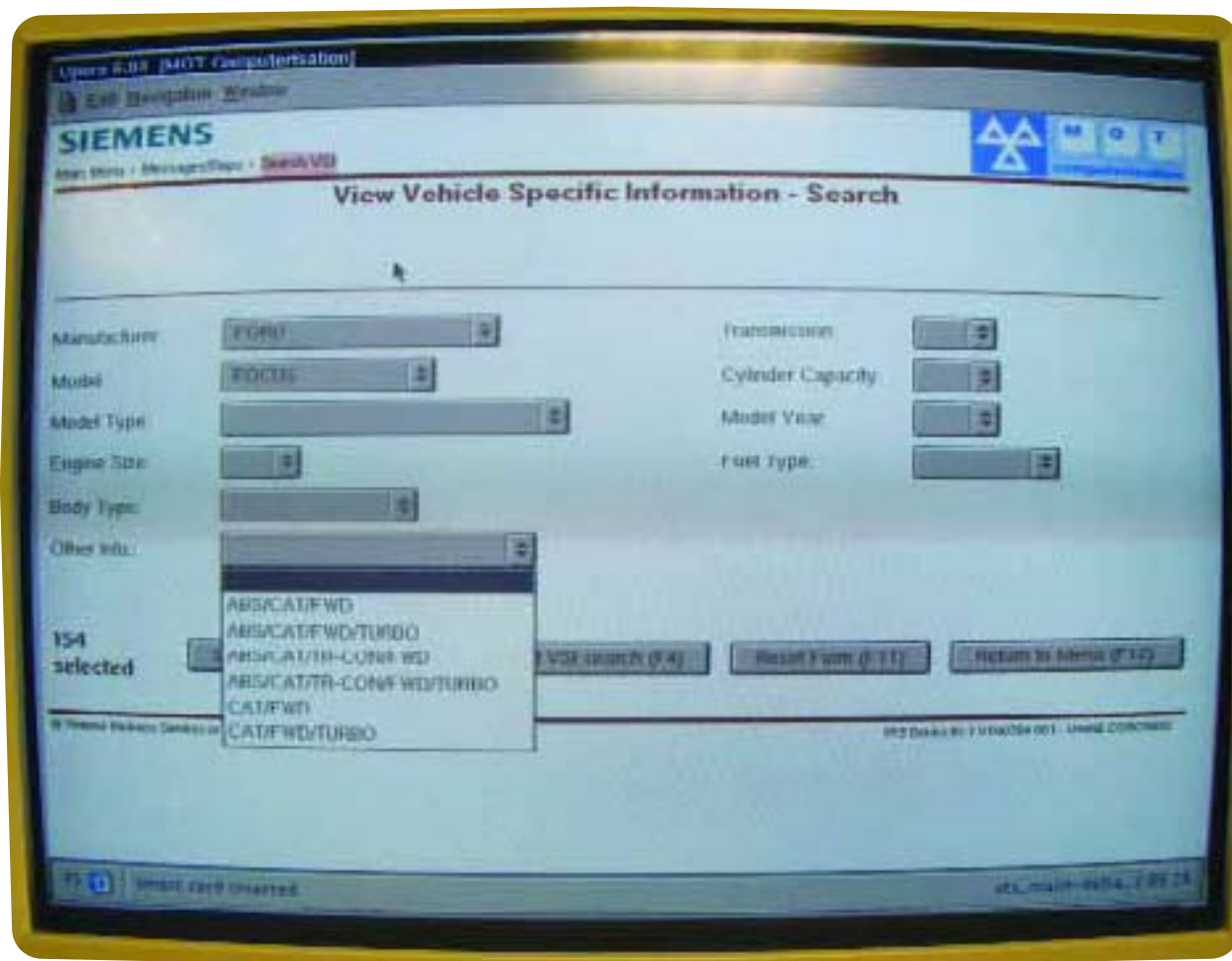
## Fast forward

The system also allows you to choose a specific year of first use, instead of a production period. These changes, along with the fact that testers are becoming more familiar with the process, have reduced the amount of time taken to register a test.

Some testers have found that once they've confirmed the vehicle, the vehicle information provided is sometimes incorrect or not available on the system. Some errors have since been corrected and new data has been uploaded onto the system.

## Getting it right

This is an ongoing process and you can help by reporting any errors or missing information on vehicles and models to us so that we can put it right. You can do this by getting in touch with the VOSA Service Desk (see contact details below) to



check if there is a system or data error. If this cannot be resolved, it will be escalated and an incident number raised which is proof of your enquiry.

Once an incident number has been raised it kicks off an investigation by engineers based in HQ. If the incident report does not contain sufficient information, the engineer may contact the VTS/NT to discuss the report in more detail. Do bear in mind that investigations can take time, as the process often requires contacting the manufacturer for further information or advice.

## Case in point

A recent report informed us that the system was displaying the wrong suspension diagram and jacking position for a Chrysler

Cherokee. Contact with the manufacturers' engineers revealed that the diagram was correct for earlier Cherokees, but not for later models. However, as the change point was in between the construction periods displayed in the system, it was decided that we would show both types of suspension layout, while allowing the tester to choose against the vehicle presented for test.

From another incident, we are also able to provide advice on ball joint lift after a Chrysler agent expressed concerns over the high incidence of failures. It will help to bear in mind that VSI is there as an aid to testing and does not override the manual or replace your skills and knowledge. If it is clear that VSI is displaying incorrect data and you have the correct information from a credible source, then use it just like you did before MOT Computerisation kicked in. But don't forget to tell us about it as well, to help us put it right.

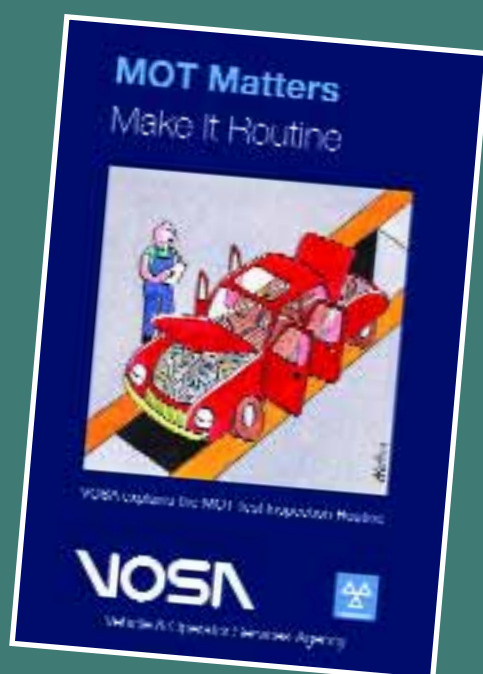
**Check out Testing tips (on page 8), which covers some more queries in detail.**

## Our latest DVD

*Make it Routine*, the DVD that comes with this issue, covers the recommended MOT inspection routine. It also stresses the importance of a robust procedure for every test, regardless of your equipment layout.

In the process of making this DVD we visited British Airways Maintenance at Cardiff International Airport to see their inspection procedures for aircraft. An impressive operation, it is obvious they cannot afford to miss anything during even the most basic of inspections. A little bit like having your MOT done!

*Make it Routine* also covers the recommended procedure for the Automated Test Lane, where this differs from conventional lanes.



Help us to provide correct information on the MOT Computerisation database. You can do this by getting in touch with us to report errors or missing information on vehicles and models, so that we can put it right. Call the VOSA Service Desk on 0845 071 1973 and choose option 4 from the menu to make a report (this is also the option for reporting smart card faults).

# BIKES, trikes and quads



## Is it a bike? Is it a trike?

Revolutionary and exciting, the Carver One and Piaggio MP3 bring with them some of the coolest and most innovative design on three wheels. We look at the implications these unique vehicles will have for your work.



One of the highlights of the 2006 Motor Show at ExCel was the Carver One tilting three-wheeler. Designed by aeronautical engineers, the central cockpit on this car/bike hybrid automatically tilts up to 45 degrees left or right as you drive round corners. Despite

having three wheels, it falls into Class IV due to having an unladen weight of around 670kg.

The Carver One uses a mechanical-hydraulic system, which adjusts the amount of steering and lean angle according to speed, acceleration and steering input. It also uses passive rear wheel steering. However, when parked or moving at low speeds, the machine remains upright and should therefore not cause problems when conducting an MOT inspection, including a roller brake test.

### When three becomes two

Another new three-wheeled machine coming along soon is the Piaggio MP3 – and no, it doesn't play music! Although this new machine clearly has three wheels, regulations permit any two wheels across an axle to be

regarded as one wheel if the distance between the wheel centres is less than 460mm. The MP3 is therefore Type Approved as a two-wheeler, so it's a motorcycle and falls into Class I or II, depending on the engine size.

The two front wheels of the MP3 tilt independently, using a parallelogram front suspension arrangement that is attached to the frame. The tilt mechanism consists of four control arms with four hinges fixed to a central tube, and two guide tubes on either side of the parallelogram, connected to the arms via suspension pins and ball bearings.

### A matter of width

Each of the three wheels is fitted with a disc brake, which in itself is no problem. However, a standard motorcycle roller brake tester will not be wide enough to accommodate both front wheels. This may be a good reason to buy one of the new motorcycle decelerometers when they are approved.

We hope to be conducting some research into testing both of these vehicles in the near future, and will keep you posted on any of our findings.

## Highland fling



Scottish VTS Council members

**VTS Councils have been successfully running in England for a couple of years now and VOSA has been keen to arrange a venue in Scotland. Initial interest was sluggish but Richard Dixon reports that take-up has improved.**

Mike Leonard and Stuart Kinghorne, two dedicated Scottish Authorised Examiners (AEs), have been attending VTS Councils in venues as far south as Gatwick. As a result, VOSA had been discussing the possibility of holding one in Scotland. The burning question,

however, was if enough interest could be raised to guarantee healthy participation.

With MOT Computerisation fully rolled out, and the success of the pilot councils, VOSA had the opportunity to use the computerisation messaging to gather some interest. This was with a view to arranging a venue in Scotland and possibly extending the venues south of the border.

### Rapid response

The response was rapid and more than encouraging. With the help of Mike and

Stuart acting as contact points we gathered more than enough interest to arrange a council meeting in Scotland.

As a result, a meeting was held in June at the Bridge of Allan, near Stirling, paving the way for a closer relationship between VOSA and the Scottish MOT trade. As with all Council meetings the evening was conducted on a totally informal basis with an initial introduction by VOSA, moving on to discussions concerning MOT issues. Both VOSA and the delegates found the evening useful and informative to the extent that it was a unanimous decision to continue with future meetings.

### Further progress

As well as the great response from Scotland, we've also received a large amount of national interest and further venues are now being considered. If you've expressed an interest in participating, don't worry, you have not been forgotten.

Decisions on further venues will be made in the New Year when the VOSA Testing Standards team plans future activities. Spaces will be limited, so while some of you may be disappointed, names of interested parties will be kept on file, giving you the opportunity to attend at a future date.

We would like to thank all the AEs and NTs who have shown interest in this highly successful initiative.

# The paper chase

**Do you often find yourself buried under a mountain of excess documentation? Fear not, new changes are under way to solve the problem.**

VOSA often receives queries as to what you should do with all the 'extra' documentation that you get sent, for example MOT computerisation paperwork which includes



test certificates, inspection checklists and lots more. A recent report on the ordering patterns of testing sites aimed to identify additional documentation that was being ordered, in addition to what is received with test slots (K-pack).

Results showed that sites fall into one of three categories. Those that:

- had never ordered additional documentation;
- ordered additional documentation on one occasion only; and
- ordered additional documentation on more than one occasion.

Why are some sites ordering extra when others aren't? There may be two reasons for this: one is that the K-pack slot is not correctly balanced and second, some sites may not know what it contains. The K-pack includes documentation that, before Computerisation kicked in, had to be ordered separately.

Currently, for each 100 test slots purchased, sites are provided with the following quantities:

- **VT20** 100 (MOT test certificates);
- **VT30** 50 (Refusal of an MOT test certificate);
- **VT40** 150 (MOT inspection checklists); and
- **VT32** 50 (Advisory notices).

However, we have realised that 100 VT20s does not allow for any spoilt, replacement or duplicate certificates. Also, as the average fail rate is around 27 per cent, 50 VT30s could probably be too many. To reflect this, the following proposals have been put forward for the K-pack to consist of:

- **VT20** 120 (MOT test certificates);
- **VT30** 40 (Refusal of an MOT test certificate);
- **VT40** 140 (MOT inspection checklists); and
- **VT32** 50 (Advisory notices).

This quantity will be sent out for 100 test slots, while sites retain the option to order additional documentation from the Siemens catalogue.

Do remember:

- Before ordering any new documentation check how many test slots you have left on the system first, as you may only need a few new slots to fulfil requirements.
- If you order your documentation centrally, ensure that the person responsible is aware of the revised test slot content, and that VT30s do not need to be ordered separately anymore.
- If you cannot use up your surplus stock, dispose of them at your nearest recycling bank.

## Get ahead at VOSA's annual seminars

**October can only mean one thing – time to book your place on one of VOSA's annual seminars.**

The annual round of seminars begins in Swansea on 8 January 2007, with a huge choice of 101 events scheduled to take place in venues from the Shetland Islands to the Isle of Wight. The final seminar is in Cardiff on 28 March 2007.

### What's it all about?

One of the key topics to be covered is the trial of targeted enforcement that we are currently carrying out at a number of garages. VOSA has already introduced a similar risk-based system into the heavy goods and public service vehicle enforcement strategies, and we are now investigating the potential benefits for the MOT scheme.

We will of course be providing you with updates of ongoing projects that have become a regular feature of our presentation. These include new vehicle and equipment technologies affecting testing, and looking at one-person testing for VTSs that are not using the ATL technology. There will also be hints and tips on MOT Computerisation

system shortcuts, computer equipment refreshers and Value Added Services updates.

### Why should you attend?

As well as keeping you informed about current issues and future changes, it will be a great opportunity for you to give us feedback or ask questions on any issues or concerns you may have. We also want you to share your ideas for the future of the MOT scheme.

### Who will I meet?

Seminars are a great opportunity to talk to colleagues from other local businesses and chat to VOSA staff in an informal atmosphere. All areas of the scheme are represented, from Authorised Examiners and Site Managers to testers and administration staff, as well as Trade Associations and Garage Equipment Manufacturers.

### What happens at these seminars?

We hold the seminars at three or four-star hotels and conference venues. A buffet will be waiting for you on arrival, with the

seminar starting promptly at 19.30. After a coffee break there is a question and answer session where everyone has the opportunity to ask questions and pass on their views to us. These sessions are often lively and views are expressed freely. At each seminar we aim to have a representative from our Policy Team, as well as staff from your local area who will answer your questions and listen to your ideas and suggestions for the future.

### How do I book my place?

Enrolling on one of the seminars couldn't be easier. Check the insert inside this issue to find a venue and date that suits you, then either telephone our credit card hotline on 0117 954 3444 or fill in the form at the bottom of the insert and return it together with your payment. Seminars still only cost £22 per person, including VAT.

# Show me the money

The Department for Transport has completed a consultation on the maximum amount a garage can charge to carry out an MOT. We look at the proposed changes and the fact that the MOT is still very good value for money.



In July this year the Department for Transport (DfT) issued a consultation document seeking views on proposed increases to maximum MOT fees. The last comprehensive test timing exercise for all vehicle classes was undertaken in 2000. Since then there have been some significant changes to the test.

## Time it right

The fee increase reflects the slightly longer time MOT tests are currently taking as testers log vehicles and enter results into the system. Considerations have also been made for inflation and the number of catalyst equipped vehicles that may need comprehensive emissions checks. If the public consultation has been positive, the new fees could be in place by the time you read this.

VOSA staff and members of the trade who took part in the retiming exercise established that a normal test for cars takes an average of just over 58 minutes – about 6 minutes more than in the earlier survey. The timing sample for other vehicle types was too small to apply with confidence, so the calculated percentage increase for cars has been applied across all test classes.

Class	Current fee	Revised fee	Increase
I/II (solo motorbikes)	£23.80	£27.15	£3.35
II (and motorbikes with sidecar)	£30.40	£34.65	£4.25
III (3-wheel vehicles)	£30.40	£34.65	£4.25
IV (cars)	£44.15	£50.35	£6.20
IV (passenger vehicles with 9–12 passenger seats)	£46.15	£52.60	£6.45
V (buses with 13–16 passenger seats)	£47.95	£54.65	£6.70
V (buses with 17+ passenger seats)	£65.00	£74.10	£9.10
VII (goods vehicles between 3 and 3.5 tonnes)	£47.20	£53.80	£6.60

## Making cents

The proposed increase will take the maximum level of fee for a car (MOT test Class IV) from £44.15 to £50.35. This represents an increase of £6.20. The DfT estimates that MOT testing costs the motorist, on average, around 82p per minute which is still fairly good value for money when you consider the investment needed in staff, premises and equipment by garages. The Government does not intend to increase the maximum price again until April 2008 at the earliest.

There is also a small increase of 27 pence in the MOT test fee slot (this used to be the 'pad fee'). This increase will enable VOSA to pay the external service provider for the now fully computerised administration system which links all testing stations with a central MOT database. Some of the cost of introducing computerisation has been included in pad fee

increases in earlier years. This increase will bring the test fee slot total up to the level that was forecast when the computer system was fully rolled out. Taking all the elements of the increase together represents an overall rise in fees of 14 per cent.

## Real value

One contributor to our MORI survey recently made the point that, bearing in mind the fact that an MOT is an essential road safety check, it was far better value for money than the average call-out charge for a washing machine repair service! Another likened it to about the same cost as a single tank of fuel.

You will be informed when the new maximum fees will come into place when you receive the Special Notice and Amended Fees poster. Until then the current MOT fees apply.

## MODERNISING MOT EQUIPMENT *continued from front page*

However, we would, at the same time, like to take the opportunity to set out our longer term vision for ensuring that equipment in testing stations remains up to date, fit for purpose and capable of providing a consistent standard of testing throughout the scheme. The key proposals are:

- All **new** Class 4 and 7 testing stations from 1 April 2007 must be equipped with the full ATL equipment if they wish to operate one-person testing.
- All testing stations should be advised that the VOSA list of approved equipment will, in future, need to be maintained and upgraded to remove technology-expired equipment and standards (in order to ensure that modern vehicles can be checked in an appropriate and consistent way).
- The intention is to delete from the list of approved equipment manually

operated roller brake testers (RBT) that are not capable of automatic operation and calculation of results. From 2015 these RBTs will no longer be acceptable for use.

- By the end of 2011 all headlamp aim test equipment will need to meet the 2005 specification, so in about 5 years' time it will no longer be permissible for testing stations to use headlamp aim equipment that does not comply with the 2005 specification.

This is our best estimate for now of what the future will be like and it is intended to help testing stations make informed decisions about future equipment purchases. This is only a forecast, however, and final details will be formally consulted upon when we are closer to the cut-off dates referred to.

# Horror story

**At first glance this issue's story is not as horrific as some of the worn and damaged components we have shown in the past, but it could have had serious consequences.**

It's obvious that the track rod end is not secure in the steering arm and Tim Woods from the A1 MOT Centre in Taunton reports a lack of thread on the retaining nut. It could be that the retaining nut has come loose because the thread was damaged during repairs or as a result of the nut not being correctly fitted or tightened. Any repairs could have resulted from the issue of a VT30, but not necessarily for a steering component (the track rod end in the picture does not appear to be new). The VT30 could have been issued for a worn suspension joint or CV boot, and this is an important consideration when carrying out a partial retest.

The new retest procedures require you to check all associated items, but some



mechanics may disconnect or remove components that others might not. As a result it is recommended you do a careful check on all components that could be disturbed during repairs.

The time limit for a partial retest is before the end of the tenth working day after the day of test. Taking into consideration that weekends and bank holidays are not considered working days, it could effectively be 14 days or more before the vehicle is returned for retest, having travelled quite a distance in that time.

To take account of this, the new procedures also include a check for further deterioration on any testable item that was advised on during the original check. A vehicle should fail if the item has deteriorated below the appropriate standard. This is something that repairers may not be aware of and it could be worthwhile advising presenters of this.

Our thanks to Tim Woods for sending this picture in to *MOT*. Keep them coming.



John Nelson

## The end of an era

**It is with deep regret that VOSA announces the sad loss of John Nelson, the former Chief Executive of the Garage Equipment Association (GEA), who passed away in July after a very short period of retirement. Richard Dixon reports.**

The GEA works closely with VOSA on many issues including equipment specifications and installation requirements, and John Nelson played a major part in this. He will be well remembered as a member of the original working group set up to agree specifications and installation requirements for Automated Test Lane equipment.

John also battled constantly to ensure VOSA was fair to the industry. At the same time he took up VOSA's issues with his membership and the garage industry, when he considered these were justified.

### A true gentleman

John headed the GEA for more than ten years, taking up the post in 1995 after an early career in teaching before moving on to a 'proper job' in the garage equipment manufacturing industry. In his time with the GEA, he built up a solid working relationship with VOSA – not always agreeing with its policies, but addressing differences of opinion in a gentlemanly manner. The professional approach John demonstrated led to VOSA awarding the GEA responsibility for equipment approval

and conformity of production in 1996 – a responsibility that they still hold to this day.

### New beginnings

John will be greatly missed both by VOSA and throughout the garage industry. As a fair and respected gentleman, he will be a hard act to follow. However, Dave Garratt, the GEA's new Chief Executive, is fast following in John's footsteps and ensuring the good working relationship with VOSA continues.

Also following on from John, Dave champions his members' adherence to the GEA code of practice. He is also always willing to listen to complaints concerning his members, both from VOSA and from any of you out there who feel you have an issue with the conduct of a GEA member.



GEA's new Chief Executive, Dave Garratt

## The GEA

The main objective of the GEA is to ensure, as far as possible, the proper conduct of its members in the garage equipment industry. Members agree and work to a code of practice and are disciplined if they are found guilty of breaking that code.

For example, if you have purchased equipment from a member and have an issue that cannot be resolved, the GEA will investigate and arbitrate for a satisfactory conclusion at no cost to you.

The GEA is also constantly in communication with VOSA, ensuring that changes to the MOT scheme do not unfairly prejudice either their members or the garage industry as a whole.

The GEA has its own website ([www.gea.co.uk](http://www.gea.co.uk)) containing comprehensive information on approved MOT test equipment, members' contact details and lots of other garage industry information you are sure to find useful.

# Testing tips

## Types of suspension

The suspension diagrams in VSI are the same as those at the end of Section 2 of the *Inspection Manual*. The diagrams may not exactly match the suspension configuration on the actual vehicle, but it will be the closest match possible. The important thing is where to jack the vehicle.

This normally depends on where the spring acts and jacking positions relieve the ball joints of spring pressure. There are configurations which cannot be programmed into VSI as we haven't diagrams that can be readily programmed into the system, and we are using a diagram of a suspension that works in a similar way.

The Toyota Hi-Ace is a typical example of this. It utilises a torsion bar operating through the upper suspension arm but we only have a diagram for the lower arm. We do though have a diagram of a spring (and shock absorber) acting on the upper arm, which has the same effect as a torsion bar, and have utilised this diagram with an additional covering statement. It is likely that this will happen with VSI for other vehicles as well.

## Brake weights

We still receive quite a few queries about brake weights, often because the nominated

tester (NT) feels VSI is wrong and sometimes because it is not available.

We have investigated several incidents and have sometimes found that the NT has selected the wrong model. However, this is easy to say in hindsight. If you believe the weight in VSI is wrong, first check to ensure that you have selected the correct vehicle as some manufacturers may use a range of similar model trim codes for their vehicle.

Then if you are sure it's incorrect, check against any other reliable information such as wall charts (which you can still have if you prefer) or other recognised technical data. Finally, if the weight is not available, carry out a performance check using the RBT and an efficiency check using a decelerometer, as per Section 3.7 of the *Inspection Manual*.

Note though that the brake weight is the unladen weight (not the GVW on the manufacturer's plate) plus approximately 140 kg for driver, fuel, etc, so it may vary slightly from some data supplied by other sources. This may also need to be taken into account when determining if a vehicle meets the dual-purpose criteria and determining the brake weight of other vehicles not listed in VSI.



## VIN

Recording and entering a VIN is fairly simple or so it would seem. We have instances where the VIN does not match that on the vehicle because it has been entered incorrectly. We have had examples of numbers being entered in the wrong order or indeed too many/too few digits. The warning messages are there to give you the opportunity to carefully check the vehicle details and take a little extra time to make sure they are correct. Confirming incorrect details will raise a new vehicle record on the system that will not be displayed if a presenter (or potential buyer) requests a history check using the vehicle's correct details.

## Electronic park brakes

Several manufacturers such as BMW, Renault and Jaguar now utilise electronic operations for the park brake. Though these park brakes are progressive, their operation is constant until fully applied. This can cause the vehicle to pull out of the rollers quite sharply, so ensure that the area around the vehicle is clear. It is important to know that many of these systems will utilise the service brake if the vehicle is being driven above a set speed so should not be tested using a plate brake tester or a decelerometer. These vehicles have not presented any real problems to date but manufacturers may have different methods of application. We have already covered some vehicles in *Matters of Testing*, and in some instances extra information has been added on VSI to help you (you may have to scroll down the screen to see this). If you are still unsure of how to operate the park brake, consult the vehicle's handbook or call the help number at the bottom of the VSI screen.



Electronic park brake, Renault Scenic

## COMPETITION

# TIME

£20  
prize

Something a bit different for you this time. Fill in the squares in the grid so that every row and column and each of the nine 3x3 squares contain all the digits from one to nine.

As usual send your answers with your full name and address to Matters of Testing, VOSA, Berkeley House, Croydon Street, Bristol BS5 0DA. The winner will receive a £20 WHSmith voucher.

		7		5		8		
	2		4		6		5	
6		5	2		3	7		4
	9	2		8		5	6	
7		4	1		5	3		9
	7		3		2		9	
		3		1		6		

## Last issue's competition

The missing word was safety. The £20 WHSmith voucher goes to Gary Crisp from Dixon Citroën, Hull. Congratulations!

An executive agency of the  
Department for  
**Transport**