



# Why are VOSA stopping motorists?

## Who are VOSA?

The Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA), is the Government agency responsible for road safety and environmental protection in Great Britain. It provides a range of licensing, testing and enforcement services with the aim of improving the roadworthiness standards of vehicles and ensuring the compliance of operators and drivers with road traffic legislation.

## What are VOSA's legal powers?

Police have, for many years now, been supporting VOSA examiners by stopping vehicles for spot checks to ensure vehicles comply with roadworthiness and road traffic legislation. The Police Reform Act 2002 allows Chief Officers to accredit other persons or organisations to stop vehicles. VOSA's accreditation, backed up by specialist training, allows its staff to stop vehicles without a police officer in support, and enables the Police to concentrate on their other priorities including road casualty reduction and tackling crime and disorder. Subject to Chief Officers' agreement VOSA's powers will gradually be rolled out throughout England and Wales.

## Why will VOSA be stopping motorists?

There are a number of reasons why we will be stopping motorists in checks across England and Wales. These checks will be focussed on vehicle maintenance and safety, exhaust emissions and, an increasingly common safety concern, excessively tinted windscreens and side windows.

## Vehicle Maintenance and Safety

Everyone who uses a vehicle on the road is required to keep it in a roadworthy condition in the interests of road safety and environmental protection. The fuel system, seat belts, steering, mirrors, brakes, tyres and lights can all be checked to ensure they meet current legal requirements.

## Exhaust Emissions Checks

One of the most important ways to protect the environment is to ensure that a vehicle meets exhaust emissions requirements for its age and class. Polluting vehicles, which fail this test, will be removed from the road. Emissions tests are carried out using equipment similar to that used in MOT garages.

## Tinted Windows

Excessively tinted windows restrict the drivers vision, especially in dark conditions and may prevent drivers from seeing other road users and pedestrians. For motor vehicles first registered before 1 April 1985 the windscreen and front side windows must allow at least 70% of light to be transmitted through them. For motor vehicles first registered on or after 1 April 1985 the light transmitted through the windscreen must be at least 75% while the side windows must transmit at least 70%.

## What are the consequences if my vehicle fails any tests?

If a serious defect is found with your vehicle a prohibition notice will be issued. The prohibition is a legally enforceable ban on driving the vehicle on the road. For very serious breaches the ban can be immediate, but where there is no immediate danger to other road users the ban can be delayed for up to 10 days. This gives you time to rectify the fault and arrange to have your vehicle re-examined (normally this will require you to obtain a new MOT certificate) before the prohibition can be removed.

## How do I contact VOSA?

If you would like to find out more about these vehicle checks you can contact us by calling our National Number **0870 606 0440** or by visiting our website at [www.vosa.gov.uk](http://www.vosa.gov.uk)