



CAR

DAILY VEHICLE PRE CHECKS INFORMATION

There are approximately **2.5 million vehicles** in national fleet in Ireland. As vehicles age they are subject to wear and tear and unless attended to at regular intervals, this will eventually result in unsafe vehicles and breakdowns. In addition, between **6-8% of collisions** causing injury in Ireland are **caused by vehicle defects**. Most defects that occur on vehicles are maintenance related and are therefore preventable.

What the Law Requires

Road Traffic legislation requires that vehicles are maintained in a roadworthy condition and safe when in use on a public road. So whether you own, lease, hire or borrow a vehicle for work purposes, you must make sure that it is safe for use and fit for the purpose for which it is intended.

Under Health and Safety Legislation, a vehicle is a place of work. The law requires that workplaces are maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to safety and health. Vehicles must be kept safe and fit for purpose and the driver must be able to get in and out of the vehicle safely. Employers must make sure that drivers are familiar with the vehicle they are driving and that they have been given appropriate instruction, information and training to carry out required pre-checks in the correct and safe manner.

Employers must also make sure that they have a defect reporting system in place so that when defects are found that they are rectified. Drivers should never be required to drive under conditions that are unsafe or that do not comply with the law.

Some of the common faults detected by RSA vehicle inspectors during roadside checks include braking defects, damaged wheels and tyres, faulty lights, leakages and visible suspension and chassis defects. The majority of these faults could have been found and fixed, if the driver had conducted a vehicle pre-check before use. The check only takes a few minutes. Make sure that obvious vehicle defects that could affect vehicle safety and the safety of others are identified. It makes sure that vehicles are not at risk of breakdown or being delayed at a roadside check. It makes sure that a reliable service can be delivered to customers and that workers can complete journeys safely and on time.

Business Benefits

The price of correcting unexpected vehicle failure is always higher than the cost of preventing that failure in the first place.

Well maintained vehicles give both business and safety benefits. Vehicles that are well maintained and regularly checked:

- are more reliable
- are cheaper to run
- have higher residual value

The direct business benefits are;

- less downtime
- better fuel efficiency
- more reliable customer service
- longer vehicle life span
- reduced transport costs
- better company/brand image



Safety benefits include:

- improved driver safety
- safer driver working environment (workplace)
- less collisions
- fewer injuries to the driver, passengers and other road users

Preventative Maintenance

All employers, fleet operators and owner drivers should have a vehicle preventative maintenance system in place. The aim of the system is to maintain a high standard of roadworthiness and identify any vehicle defects, damage or problems at an early stage before they become a safety issue or a major cost. Regular planned vehicle maintenance will make sure that vehicles are maintained on a year round basis and not just prepared once a year for their annual roadworthiness tests.

Vehicle pre-checks, are a crucial part of any vehicle preventative maintenance system. The driver is often the first person to notice that there is a problem and it's far easier to fix a problem in premises rather than out on the road. Driver pre-checks should be incorporated into daily work routines. It is recommended that employers prepare their own vehicle checklist to take account of the type and level of use of their vehicles. Every driver should carry out a check before they start their first journey in the vehicle each day. Where more than one driver is using a vehicle in a day, the second driver should conduct the same check before they use the vehicle.

As a driver, by law, you must make sure that any vehicle you drive on a public road is maintained and used so that it is unlikely to cause a danger to

anyone. If specific items are checked daily on vehicles, it will help to identify obvious vehicle defects. When conducting pre-checks, it's important for the driver to follow a routine so that they don't miss any items. When conducting the checks, wear a high visibility vest or jacket and look out for other vehicles. People being hit or run over by vehicles are one of the main causes of workplace fatalities.

Each driver must be satisfied that their vehicle is safe to operate and free from defects. Any defects found should be recorded and reported to the employer or the responsible person so that appropriate action can be taken. Any safety critical defects must be rectified before the vehicle is used on the road.

The Checks

It is suggested that the vehicle is checked in one direction covering the following main items:

- Lights, windows and mirrors
- Tyres
- Lights
- Fluids
- Instruments
- Car internal checks

Check that the vehicle is sitting square and not leaning to one side. Switch on the hazard lights to show that there is someone working around the vehicle and that the lights are working. Check that the driver's mirrors are clean, secure and not damaged. Check that wheels are in good condition, with no cracks or damage and that they are secure.

Is there any damage to the tyres such as bulges, cracks, cuts or tears? Are they correctly inflated



with appropriate tread depth? Tyres should have sufficient tread and should not be worn to the extent that the tread indicator contacts the road surface. Check tread depth with a simple gauge. The legal **minimum tyre tread depth** for vehicles is **1.6mm** but tyres should be replaced before this. Refer to the manufacturer's handbook for specific information about obtaining best performance from your vehicle.

Is the exhaust secure? Make sure that the fuel tank cap is securely in place and that the cap seal is in good condition and is not leaking. Walk around the vehicle in one direction and check that all required lights, reflectors and markings are fitted, clean and in good condition. Check the vehicle bodywork and wings for damage. Make sure that body panels are secure and not liable to fall off and create a hazard for other road users and that the bodywork has no sharp edges.

Make sure that the number plates are fitted in the correct position, clean and that the registration is clearly visible and appropriately lit.

If carrying a load or goods in or on [roof rack] the vehicle, check that it is adequately secured, unlikely to move, that the vehicle is not overloaded. Check the manufacturer's guidelines for maximum load capacity for the vehicle. Check the load restraints for damage, wear and tear such as fraying straps, cuts or tears and replace as necessary.

For overhanging loads, carried on roof rack, make sure that the load does not protrude more than 3 metres from the body of the vehicle and that it is marked with an appropriate and visible flag to warn other road users.

Where a trailer is in use, the registration number of the vehicle must be displayed at the rear of the trailer. Check that the trailer coupling is secure and that the electrics are connected and the lights and

indicators are working. Check that the safety chain is in place. Check that the hand brake is released and that the dolly wheel is raised and secured.

Make sure that all vehicle access is in good condition.

Check the door and mirrors on the passenger side. Check the windscreen washer reservoir cap for security. Lift the bonnet and check the engine fluid levels. Engine fluid levels should be between the minimum and maximum marks. Look underneath the vehicle for any signs of fluid leaks such as oil or coolant. Check the wipers for wear.

Check that valid tax, insurance and NCT discs (if required) are correctly displayed on the windscreen.

Make sure that the seat and steering wheel are set for comfort, posture and safety and that all controls can be easily reached. Check your driving lights.

Check that there is good visibility through all windows and mirrors and that there are no cracks or damage. For example, is vision obstructed by any stickers or pendants? Check that the car interior is clean and that there are no loose items which could cause you injury if vehicle had to brake in an emergency.

Check that the windscreen washer operates, the jets are aimed correctly and that the washer bottle level warning light is not showing. Check that the wipers work correctly and that the mirrors are all correctly aligned and the heater element operates. Do the demister, interior heater, interior lights and horn all operate correctly?

Check that all instruments, gauges and warning devices are operating correctly and following their correct sequence, including the ABS and EBS in car warning lights. If any warning lights remain on after start up, report them, and don't ignore them.



Apply the foot brake, release the parking brake and check that there is no pressure drop. Is there excessive smoke or noise from the exhaust?

Before driving off, check that the steering and brakes are working correctly.

Continue to monitor vehicle's roadworthiness as it is driven. Check that the speedometer is working and can be seen from the driving position. If applicable, make sure that the ABS or EBS lights do not remain on after their check sequence is complete.

Recording of Defects

Record and report any defects in accordance with employer's defect reporting systems. Remember any safety critical items must be repaired or the vehicle must be taken out of service. Records of all checks, repairs and services should be kept for the vehicle. Analysis of the records may highlight a pattern or history to the vehicle, re-occurring defects or poor maintenance repair standards.

Further information

The Health and Safety Authority, the Road Safety Authority and An Garda Síochána have developed a series of resources to help employers learn more about and manage vehicle risks. They include vehicle walk-around check posters, check lists and instructional videos.

The vehicle checks resources can be downloaded from the following websites:

An Garda Síochána: www.garda.ie
 Health & Safety Authority: www.hsa.ie
 Road Safety Authority: www.rsa.ie

Examples of the checks poster and checklist are attached on following pages.

Car & Small Passenger Vehicle Driver Walkaround Checks

In Car Checks

- Driving controls, seat & head rest positions adjusted correctly
- Safety belt(s) in correct position & working correctly
- Clean interior & no obstructions or loose material in the foot-well(s) or parcel shelf behind rear seats
- Turn on engine & check that all instrument gauges & warning lights working correctly
- Wipers, washers, horn, demister & temperature controls working correctly
- Steering & brakes working correctly
- Hi-visibility triangle & vest readily accessible in the car
- Pedals in good anti-slip condition

Mirrors & Windows

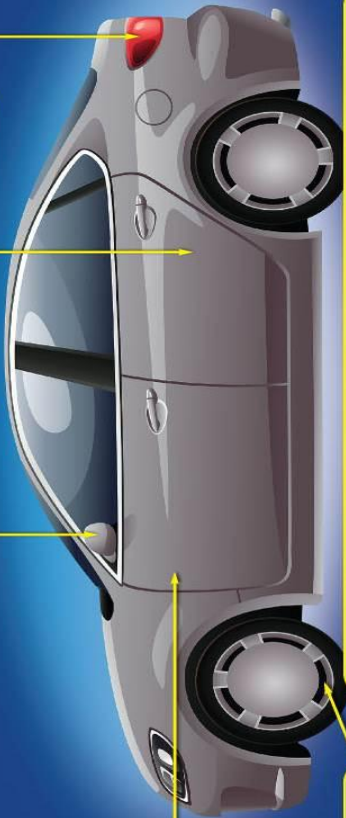
- Mirrors secure & aligned correctly
- Clean & in good condition
- View not obstructed. E.g. by stickers etc.
- Windows opening & closing properly

Lights, Indicators, Hazard Lights & Reflectors

- All in place
- No breaks or cracks
- Working properly
- Clean
- Correct colour

Access

- Door locks working properly
- Doors opening & closing correctly



Wheels & Tyres

- Tyres correctly inflated
- Tyres correct tread depth
- Tyres undamaged: no bulges, tears or abrasions
- All wheel nuts in place, correctly fitted & secure
- Wheel nut indicators correctly aligned (if in use)
- Tyre has 'E' mark

Load Security & Restraint

- Vehicle loaded within load limits of vehicle
- Load distributed evenly
- Articles in vehicle stored securely (in boot) and restrained if necessary
- Load restraint equipment suited to load & in good condition
- No loose articles on seats
- Articles on roof securely tied down
- Overhanging articles on roof visible to other road users. e.g. hi-visibility warning flag
- Estate cars: barrier in place to protect driver and/or front passenger when goods are being carried in rear goods space

External Checks

- Vehicle sitting square and not leaning to one side
- Check underside of vehicle for fluid leaks
- Bumpers (Front & Rear) in good condition
- Exhaust: No excessive noise or smoke
- Number plates (Front & Rear): of correct type, in correct position, visible & clean
- Fuel cap seat: in place, in good condition & no leaks
- Wiper blades in good condition
- Valid insurance, NCT & Tax discs displayed
- Check engine oil, coolant, water, windscreen wash & brake fluid for levels and leaks

Car & Small Passenger Vehicle Driver Walk-Around Check Sheet				
Vehicle Registration Number		Mileage		OK 
				Defect 
Check Items				
External Vehicle Checks				
1	Vehicle sitting square and not leaning to one side. No leaks underneath vehicle			
2	Wheels in good condition and secure. All wheel nuts in place correctly fitted and secure			
3	Tyres undamaged with correct inflation, tread depth and "E" mark			
4	Bumpers, body work and exhaust secure and in good condition			
5	Wiper blades in good condition			
6	Number plates (front & rear), correct type and position, clean and visible			
7	Lights, indicators, reflectors and hazard lights all in place, clean, correct colour, with no breaks or cracks			
8	Mirrors secure, clean and in good condition			
9	Doors open, close and lock correctly			
10	Valid insurance, NCT (where required) and tax discs displayed			
11	Engine oil, coolant, water, windscreen washer reservoir, brake fluid and fuel levels checked and no leaks. Fuel cap seal in place, in good condition and no leaks			
In-Vehicle Checks				
12	Interior clean with no obstructions or loose material in the footwell(s), seats or parcel shelf behind rear seats			
13	Hi-visibility triangle and vest readily accessible in the vehicle			
14	Windows clean, in good condition, open and close properly and view not obstructed			
15	Pedals have good anti-slip condition			
16	Driving controls, seat and head rest positions adjusted correctly			
17	Mirrors correctly aligned			
18	Safety belts adjusted and working correctly			
19	All instrument gauges and warning lights working correctly			
20	Wipers, washers, horn, demister and temperature controls working correctly			
Prior to Driving				
21	No excessive play in the steering wheel and brake pedal			
22	No excessive smoke or noise from exhaust			
23	Check goods/materials carried in vehicle [vehicle cabin or boot] are placed and secured appropriately			
On-the-Road				
24	All warning lights off			
Defect Details				
Signed		Date		

NOTE: This is a sample driver walk-around car and small passenger vehicle checklist.
It is recommended that operators prepare their own driver walk-around checklists to account for the type and use of their own vehicles.