

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DIESEL SMOKE AND STRICTER EMISSION TESTS

You are advised to read all Questions and Answers

- Q 1**  
A **Why is DVTA introducing this test?**  
It is a legal requirement for these tests to be conducted as part of the annual roadworthiness inspection.
- Q 2**  
A **When will this new test be introduced?**  
The new test will be introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006.
- Q 3**  
A **What will the new smoke test involve**  
The test will involve revving the engine up to the maximum permitted (governor cut-out speed) engine speed and immediately returning it to idle a number of times
- Q 4**  
A **Does every vehicle with a diesel engine require a metered smoke test?**  
Yes, compression ignition (diesel) engine vehicles' with four or more wheels first used on or after 1<sup>st</sup> August 1979 will require a metered smoke test.
- Q 5**  
A **How should I prepare my diesel vehicle**  
You should ensure the engine is properly maintained, the engine oil level is correct, where appropriate the camshaft drive belt has been replaced in accordance with the manufacturers recommendation, the engine governors have not been tampered with, and the engine is in a condition that the smoke test is unlikely to cause damage
- Q 6**  
A **What do I have to do before I bring my diesel vehicle for testing?**  
It is vital that the vehicle arrives at the test centre at normal operating temperature. **This can be achieved by ensuring the vehicle has been driven for some distance on the road and on arrival we recommend that the vehicle should be allowed to idle while waiting for the test to commence.**
- Q 7**  
A **Are there circumstances where the smoke test will not be conducted?**  
Yes. The smoke test will not be conducted if it is obvious the engine has a fault, is in poor condition or if the vehicle presenter refuses the test. In these circumstances the rest of the annual test will be conducted but the vehicle will be refused a test certificate.
- Q 8**  
A **Is there potential for the smoke test to damage my engine?**  
If your diesel vehicle has been properly maintained (see question 5), the test should have no adverse effect on your vehicle ([see downloadable leaflet](#))
- Q 9**  
A **What will the petrol emission test involve?**  
With the vehicle at normal operating temperature, the engine speed will be increased to around 2500rpm; the equipment will measure the amount of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons emitted. The lambda (air/fuel ratio) is also measured at this fast idle speed. The vehicle will then be allowed to return to its normal idle speed where the amount of carbon monoxide will be measured again.
- Q 10**  
A **What do I have to do to prepare my petrol-engine vehicle for the new stricter emission test?**  
We recommend that you have the emissions checked by a garage and the vehicle should be presented at the test centre at normal working temperature.
- Q 11**  
A **Does it matter if the tailpipe on my vehicle is broken?**  
The diesel smoke and emissions test cannot be conducted if the tailpipe is damaged or any accessory is fitted which prevents insertion of the analyser probe, therefore in these

circumstances this part of the annual test will not be carried out and your vehicle will not pass the test.

- Q 12**  
A **What happens if my exhaust is holed?**  
Where the examiner decides that the hole in the exhaust is significant enough to affect the results of the diesel smoke and emission test, then whichever test is required will not be conducted and the vehicle will be refused a test certificate.
- Q 13**  
A **What equipment is used to carry out these tests?**  
We use a calibrated exhaust gas analyser to measure the emissions from the exhaust of petrol vehicles and a calibrated smoke meter to measure the density of the smoke emitted by a diesel vehicle.
- Q 14**  
A **When I arrive for the tests should I keep the engine running?**  
Yes. The vehicle should be at normal operating temperature for both tests.
- Q 15**  
A **What are the benefits of conducting these tests?**  
These new tests should improve the environment by ensuring that vehicle emissions are controlled. It also ensures that your vehicle is operating efficiently.
- Q 16**  
A **Will the test time increase as a result of this test?**  
Yes, but this should be minimal.
- Q 17**  
A **Will there be an increase in the failure rate due to the introduction of these new tests?**  
Yes, but DVTA do not anticipate a significant increase in the fail rate.
- Q 18**  
A **If my vehicle fails the smoke test or the stricter emission test only, is this an automatic fail?**  
Yes, and your vehicle will require a retest.
- Q 19**  
A **Are there different retests available at a reduced cost and lower waiting times for vehicles that have failed on the diesel smoke or emission tests alone?**  
All retests attract the same fee and conditions. A reduced fee is payable if it is paid within 21 days of the initial test. A full fee will apply thereafter. We try to provide early retest appointments where possible.
- Q 20**  
A **Will there be an increase in the test fee?**  
The recent fee increase took account of this test, and no further increase in fees is required in the near future.
- Q 21**  
A **Will DVTA provide a list of garages that have the equipment to prepare my car?**  
DVTA are unable to advertise for garages, therefore we will only be able to refer you to Yellow Pages.