

DRIVER & VEHICLE AGENCY

2010 VEHICLE TEST EVASION REPORT



“To contribute to road safety, law enforcement and a cleaner Environment by promoting compliance of drivers, vehicles and transport operators through testing, licensing, enforcement and education”.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the eighth Vehicle Test (MOT) Evasion Survey carried out by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA). The surveys have been conducted in response to the Agency's Compliance and Enforcement Strategies and as part of the Agency's strategic business objective "to improve compliance". Both strategies identified a need for the Agency to develop information sources regarding the measurement of levels of compliance with the vehicle testing system.

Vehicle Test Evasion Levels

- The level of vehicle test evasion indicated in the 2010 survey is 4.76%, a reduction from the 2009 rate of 4.87%.
- Overall the reduction in the level of vehicle test evasion since the Agency's first survey was carried out in 2002 is 83.2%.
- Of the vehicles identified as being evaders at date of sighting, 34.5% were in possession of an MOT certificate within four months.
- The survey has again indicated the evasion level (12.6%) was high in respect of vehicles that were required to get an MOT Certificate (four years old) for the first time, showing an increase on 2009.
- The survey indicates that although the evasion level still increases with age, this increase is not as significant as it was in previous surveys.
- Vehicles on class C unclassified rural roads (13.0%) remain the most likely to be non compliant although the level of non compliance on class A primary rural, class A non primary rural, class A primary urban, class B rural and class C unclassified rural have all shown slight increases.
- Of the 4.76% of vehicles that were non compliant, 9.9% did not have valid vehicle excise licences.
- The survey identified that 0.6% of vehicles of MOT age did not have valid vehicle excise licences.

Implemented Initiatives

Over the past eight years there have been a number of initiatives/issues that may have assisted in the reduction of levels of evasion including:

- implementation of the MOT reminder system;
- introduction of mandatory display of MOT certificates on vehicles;
- shorter waiting times for test appointments;
- introduction of more flexible ways of booking vehicle tests;
- the introduction of continuous registration for vehicle licensing;
- a continuing programme of roadside roadworthiness checks;
- increased use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) equipment by the PSNI and DVA;
- continuing emphasis on traffic issues by the PSNI.

Way Ahead

A number of initiatives have also been identified that could further reduce the level of evasion including:

- the use of additional paper and telephone reminders;
- the use of automatic number plate recognition equipment by DVA to identify MOT evaders;
- the feasibility of linking an MOT renewal to the vehicle's date of first registration or the date of expiry of its last MOT (continuous MOT);
- the introduction of a programme of roadside roadworthiness testing;
- introduction of an MOT enforcement unit;
- mandatory display of the MOT disc on vehicles could be made a fixed penalty offence.



VEHICLE TEST EVASION SURVEY 2010

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 DVA was created under the Review of Public Administration on 1 April 2007 by the merger of Driver and Vehicle Licensing NI and the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency. DVA is an executive agency within the Department of the Environment and has responsibility for the registration, licensing, testing and enforcement of vehicles and drivers in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The DVA Testing Compliance & Enforcement Strategies had identified a continuing need for detailed information on the level of non-compliance associated with its vehicle testing system. Evasion surveys have now been carried out in 2002 and annually since 2004. The 2009 survey by the Agency had indicated the level of vehicle test evasion within the Northern Ireland fleet had reduced from a high of 28.4% in 2002 to 4.87%. The 2010 survey had indicated that the level had further reduced to 4.76%.
- 1.3 Other surveys/reports that had been undertaken to inform the Compliance and Enforcement Strategies include an investigation into vehicle test certificate renewal, a report on the impact of non-compliance, a report on vehicle roadworthiness and three surveys into the level of non compliance within the HGV fleet, along with two surveys of Taxi fleet compliance on NI Roads. Copies of these reports can be accessed on the Agency website at www.dvani.gov.uk
- 1.4 A recent survey by DVA Licensing had indicated that the evasion rate for vehicle excise duty (VED) was approximately 1.2% in 2010. Currently DVA Licensing require vehicle owners to produce (where applicable) a valid vehicle test certificate when applying for VED.

2 APPROACH

2.1 To enable suitable data comparisons to be made with the previous evasion surveys, a similar approach has been adopted. This included:

- consultation with the DVA Statistician to confirm the validity of the methodology, to determine the confidence level associated with the number of vehicle sightings analysed and to validate the final analysis;
- use of information received from the Department for Transport (DFT) June 2010 survey, on vehicles sighted on the road over a three week period, at various locations across Northern Ireland;
- sampling of data received from DFT;
- interrogation of the booking services project (BSP) computer system to identify the current test status of the vehicle sighting sample; and
- analysis and documentation of findings.

3 FACTFINDING

Information from the Department for Transport (DFT)

- 3.1 The Department for Transport exists to oversee the delivery of a reliable, safe and secure transport system that responds efficiently to the needs of individuals and business whilst safeguarding the environment and as such carries out a number of surveys to ascertain levels of non-compliance on the UK's roads.
- 3.2 In recent years DFT have conducted vehicle excise duty evasion surveys annually to provide statistical information on the current levels of tax evasion. In June 2010, 74,653 vehicle sightings were recorded on Northern Ireland roads at 20 different locations. Locations selected covered all road types. The information noted from each sighting included registration mark of the vehicle and the site location.
- 3.3 An initial sift of the 74,653 sightings recorded was completed to identify only vehicles that would require an MOT certificate (i.e. vehicles with a date of first registration prior to June 2006). 40,559 vehicles were then identified.

Survey Methodology

- 3.4 The DVA Statistician, seconded from Analytical Services Branch (ASB) provided input to the methodology and analysis of the information from the survey.
- 3.5 The DVA statistician indicated that a sample of 3,000 would provide a 95% confidence level with final results subject to a possible $\pm 1\%$ statistical error rate. Where the overall achieved sample has been disaggregated and analysed the statistical error rate will be greater.

Computer Records Available in the Agency

- 3.6 DVA Testing currently conducts approximately 921,906 full vehicle tests each year. The computer system associated with vehicle tests is known as BSP (Booking Services Project). The vehicle information contained in the BSP database includes:
- make, model, colour and cubic capacity of the vehicle;
 - MOT history of the vehicle;
 - date of first registration; and
 - registered keeper of the vehicle.
- 3.7 DVA Licensing maintains a database of all vehicles registered in Northern Ireland; this system is known as NIVIS (Northern Ireland Vehicle Information System). There are approximately 1.2 million vehicles re-licensed each year on NIVIS. The information held on NIVIS includes:
- make, model, colour and cubic capacity of the vehicle;
 - registered keeper and an owner history of the vehicle;
 - tax status of the vehicle;
 - date of first registration; and
 - statutory off road notifications (SORN).

Capture of Data

- 3.8 A sample of 3,000 vehicles was taken (approximately 7.77% of surveyed vehicles that required an MOT).

GB MOT's

- 3.9 Vehicle owners can renew their vehicle test certificate in Great Britain (GB). The MOT computer system in GB operated by the Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA) now holds complete MOT records from 2006 onwards. This allows our outstanding sample records to be checked for MOT compliance. Surveys prior to 2006 were unable to retrieve MOT compliance data from VOSA.

4 SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Northern Ireland Vehicle Information System (NIVIS)

- 4.1 DVA Licensing, Development & IS Division were able to deliver a desensitised extract from NIVIS showing the testing and licensing details of all the vehicles sighted in the Northern Ireland survey. Vehicles from outside the scope of this survey were removed (ie taxi, bus and HGV records or MOT vehicles under 4 years old). This produced a list of 38,621 eligible vehicles; 3000 records were then randomly selected from this list. The randomly selected records were then individually checked to verify their details and eligibility.

BSP Computer system

- 4.2 DVA Testing introduced the BSP computer system in 2002 and all its centres were operational by January 2004. BSP has allowed the Agency to record management information on vehicle and driver tests.
- 4.3 The vehicle record sample was checked against BSP, as it contains all the vehicle test records held by the Agency. Records were checked to ascertain whether a valid MOT certificate was in place at date of sighting.
- 4.4 All non-compliant records were analysed and those that had a likelihood of having been tested in GB, were checked by VOSA against their database for MOT compliance.

Records Not Identified on NIVIS or BSP

- 4.5 A number of records were identified that did not appear on either NIVIS or BSP. Additional checks of these records identified that some of these had been subject to a cherished transfer and that new registration marks applied to these particular vehicles. The new registration marks were subjected to the same checks as all the other records.

5 SURVEY RESULTS

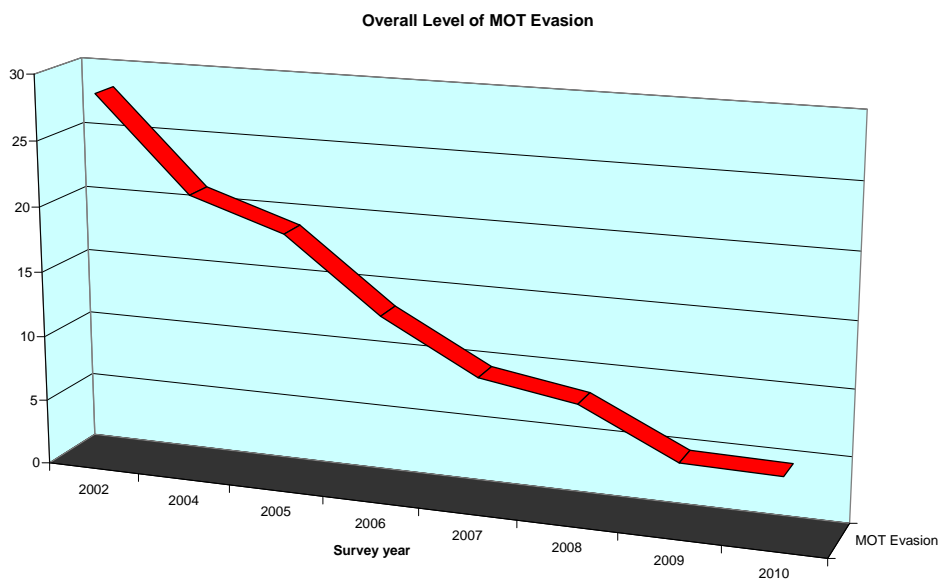
Overall Rate of Vehicle Test Evasion (Table 1)

5.1 Since 2002 there has been a significant reduction in the rate of evasion in the vehicle test system. Table 1 shows the rates of vehicle test evasion for each of the surveys carried out by the Agency.

Table 1 - Vehicle Test Evasion Rate at Date of Sighting

		Vehicles without a test certificate	Vehicles with a test certificate	Total
2002	%	28.4	71.6	
	No of Records	164	413	577
2004	%	21.3	78.7	
	No of Records	389	1436	1825
2005	%	18.98	81.02	
	No of Records	501	2139	2640
2006	%	13.49	86.51	
	No of Records	343	2200	2543
2007	%	9.62	90.37	
	No of Records	194	2110	2304
2008	%	8.42	91.58	
	No of Records	194	2110	2304
2009	%	4.87	95.14	
	No of Records	146	2854	3000
2010	%	4.76	95.24	

	No of Records	142	2841	2983
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Evasion by Licensing Status (Table 2)

5.2 Analysis of the MOT non compliant vehicles from the survey has identified that approximately 90% of the vehicles were licensed and 10% did not have a valid Vehicle Excise Licence.

Table 2

		%	No of Sightings
MOT Non-Compliant Vehicles	Licensed	90.1	142
	Un-licensed	9.9	

MOT Compliant Vehicles	Licensed	99.4	2841
	Un-licensed	0.6	

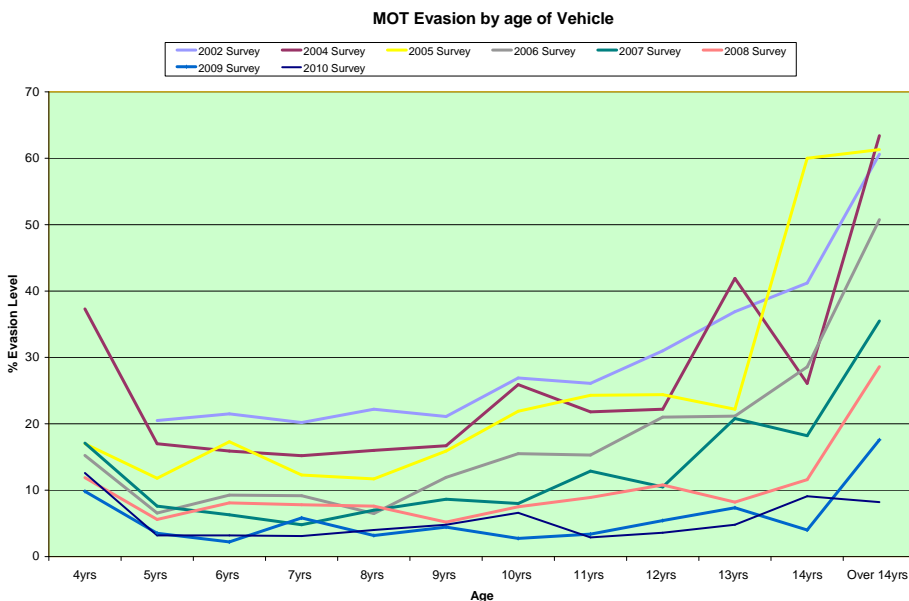
Evasion by Age of Vehicle (Table 3)

5.3 Analysis of the data had shown that the age of a vehicle is an important factor in the rate of vehicle test evasion. Results from the 2010 survey show the rates of evasion for all ages had reduced. However, the levels still follow a similar trend to that identified by previous survey results.

5.4 Analysis indicated that although vehicles aged four years old still showed a significant level of evasion it had reduced from previous years. Evasion rates remained highest among older vehicles with evasion rates increasing from year 11 onwards. However, the level of evasion for vehicles over 11 years old was significantly down on previous years.

Table 3 – Comparison of Vehicle Age Evasion by Survey Year

Year	4yrs	5yrs	6yrs	7yrs	8yrs	9yrs	10yrs	11yrs	12yrs	13yrs	14yrs	>14yrs
2002	---	20.5	21.5	20.2	22.2	21.1	26.9	26.1	31.0	36.9	41.2	60.6
2004	37.3	17.0	15.9	15.2	16.0	16.7	25.9	21.8	22.2	41.9	26.1	63.4
2005	17.0	11.8	17.3	12.3	11.7	15.9	21.9	24.3	24.4	22.2	60.0	61.3
2006	15.2	6.6	9.3	9.2	6.5	11.9	15.5	15.3	21.0	21.2	28.6	50.7
2007	17.1	7.6	6.3	4.8	7.0	8.6	8.0	12.9	10.5	20.8	18.2	35.5
2008	11.9	5.6	8.1	7.8	7.6	5.2	7.5	8.9	10.8	8.2	11.6	28.6
2009	9.8	3.5	2.2	5.8	3.2	4.4	2.7	3.4	5.4	7.4	4.0	17.6
2010	12.6	3.2	3.2	3.1	4.0	4.8	6.6	2.9	3.6	4.8	9.1	8.2



Vehicle Test Evasion by Road Type (Table 4)

5.5 Analysis of the data had identified that vehicles on motorways are more likely to be non-compliant (5.6%) than those on rural roads (5.05%) or urban roads (4.55%).

5.6 Although there had been an overall reduction in evasion, with urban roads down 5.6%, and motorways down 33.1%, the evasion rate on rural roads had risen by 12.5% compared to 2009 levels.

Table 4

Type of Road	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rural	27.0	23.1	22.3	13.6	11	7	4.42	5.05
Urban	22.2	19.2	19.7	8.8	12.97	10.8	4.82	4.55
Motorway	22.8	20.4	12.8	8.9	7.9	8.1	8.37	5.6

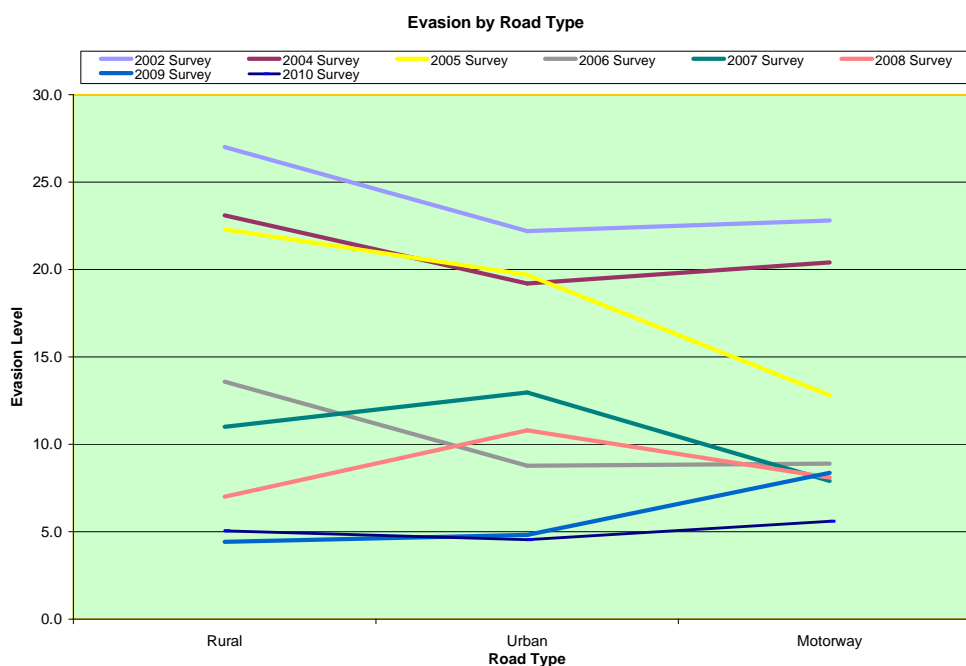
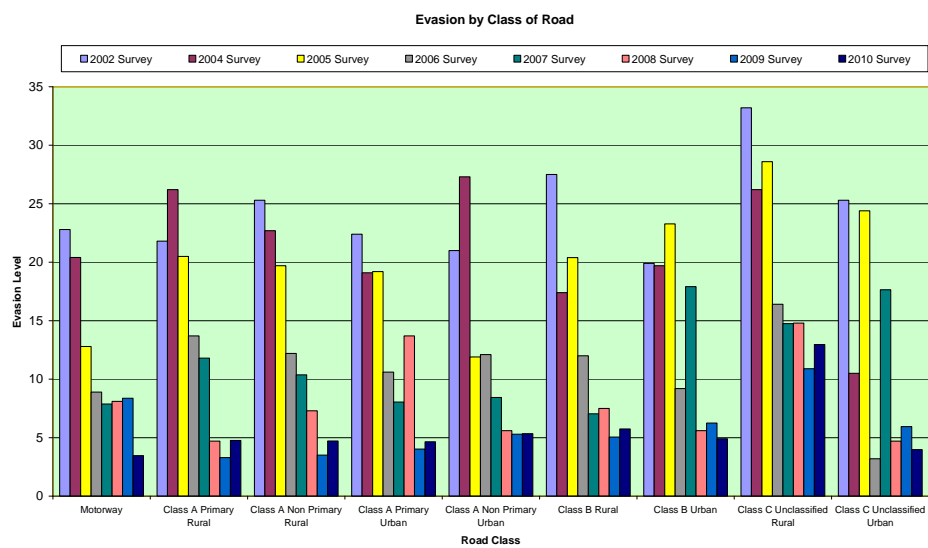


Table 5 – Vehicle Test Evasion by Road Type

Type of Road	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Motorway	22.8	20.4	12.8	8.9	7.9	8.1	8.4	3.5
Class A Primary Rural	21.8	26.2	20.5	13.7	11.8	4.7	3.3	4.8
Class A Non Primary Rural	25.3	22.7	19.7	12.2	10.4	7.3	3.5	4.7
Class A Primary Urban	22.4	19.1	19.2	10.6	8.0	13.7	4.0	4.6
Class A Non Primary Urban	21	27.3	11.9	12.1	8.4	5.6	5.3	5.3
Class B Rural	27.5	17.4	20.4	12.0	7.0	7.5	5.1	5.7
Class B Urban	19.9	19.7	23.3	9.2	17.9	5.6	6.3	4.9
Class C Unclassified Rural	33.2	26.2	28.6	16.4	14.8	14.8	10.9	13
Class C Unclassified Urban	25.3	10.5	24.4	3.2	17.6	4.7	5.9	4

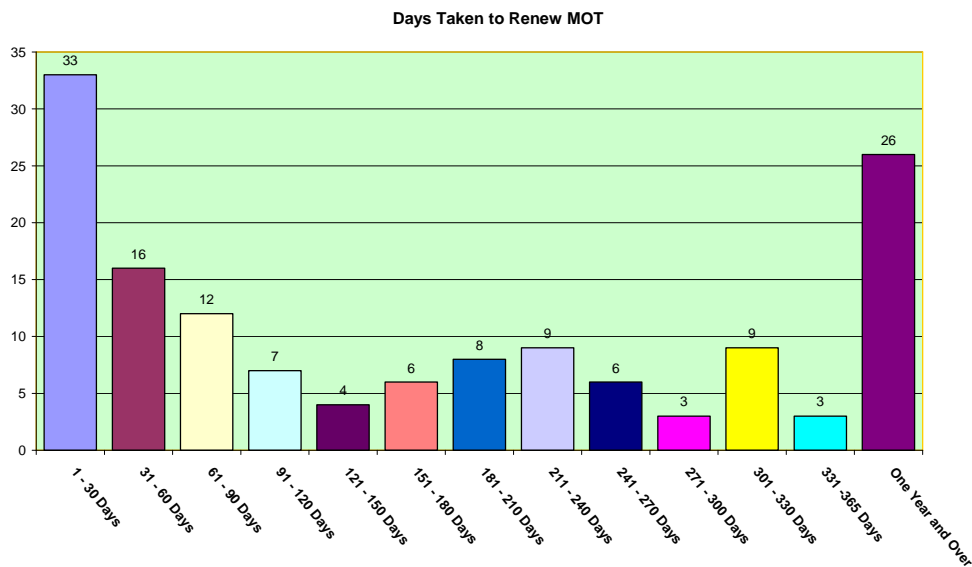


GB MOT's

5.7 A total of 19 vehicles had a valid GB MOT in place, 0.64% of the overall sample. This included 15 GB vehicles (79%) that had just been registered in NI for the first time, and two vehicles with a GB certificate that were already registered in NI. This would indicate that approximately 0.07% of NI vehicles were taken to GB to obtain a certificate.

MOT Evaders

5.8 A total of 142 vehicles from the sample (4.76%) were identified as having no vehicle test certificate at the date of sighting. A number of these vehicles obtained a certificate after the date of sighting. The chart below indicates the breakdown of time taken to renew the certificate.



Survey Locations (Table 6)

5.9 20 locations were used to collect data for the survey. ANPR was used to collect data at all of the sites.

Table 6
List Of Locations

	Description	Road type	Road no.
1	M1 Blacks Rd - Saintfield Rd	Motorway	M1
2	Lurgan – Portadown	Class A Primary Rural	A3
3	Loughbrickland - Newry	Class A Primary Rural	A1
4	Foyle Bridge	Class A Non- Primary Rural	A515
5	Ballycastle - Cushendall	Class A Non- Primary Rural	A2
6	Castlewellan - Newcastle	Class A Non- Primary Rural	A50
7	Hollywood Bypass	Class A Primary Urban	A2
8	Cookstown Rd, Omagh	Class A Primary Urban	A505
9	Newtownards - Portaferry	Class A Non-Primary Urban	A20
10	M2 – Antrim	Class B Rural	B95
11	Coleraine – Portstewart	Class B Rural	B185
12	Junction with B47 Cookstown	Class B Rural	B162
13	Dungiven – Garvagh	Class B Rural	B64
14	Hillhall Rd – Lisburn	Class B Rural	B23
15	Ahoghill	Class C/Unc Rural	-
16	East of Keady	Class C/Unc Rural	-
17	Tempo Off B80	Class C/Unc Rural	-
18	Groomsport	Class C/Unc Rural	-
19	Larne Junction with B152	Class B Urban	B120
20	Girona Avenue, Portrush	Class C/Unc Urban	-

6 COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications of Evasion

- 6.1 Road Safety/Environment - An Agency report on the impact of non-compliance identified that those cars that evade the vehicle test are more likely to have mechanical defects than vehicles that are tested. They are also more likely to be involved in vehicle crime.
- 6.2 Potential Revenue Increase - The current level of evasion in the Northern Ireland vehicle fleet is estimated to be 4.76%. One of the implications of bringing the level of non-compliance down is that extra vehicles will then be tested, allowing additional revenue to be raised; this ensures that fixed overheads such as the cost of buildings can be spread over more tests thus providing DVA with the flexibility to keep the cost of tests at a relatively low level. However, this will place further pressure on testing capacity.

Continuous Registration

- 6.3 From 1st December 2002, legislation pertaining to vehicle licensing in Northern Ireland changed. If a vehicle licence (motor tax) is not being renewed, because the vehicle is being taken off the road, then a statutory off road notice (SORN) must be notified to DVA Licensing. Where vehicle owners fail to notify DVA Licensing, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.
- 6.4 The impact of continuous registration on MOT compliance includes:
- increased level of MOT applications, due to the requirement that a valid MOT must be in place at time of licensing;
 - increased public perception on the requirement to have valid MOT and tax disc.

Displayable MOT discs

- 6.5 When the Agency introduced its new MOT testing equipment in March 2001, it was agreed that the MOT certificate provided to vehicle owners should be in a two-part format with part two being in a displayable format similar to a vehicle tax disc. Introduction of mandatory display of MOT discs was brought in from 1st May 2008 and failure to display the disc could result in a level 1 fine of up to £200. An internal assessment of the impact of the introduction of mandatory display was undertaken with a report produced. The assessment indicated there was an increase in the number of applications being received by the Agency for vehicle tests just prior to and after the introduction of mandatory display of MOT certificates.

Roadside Vehicle Inspections

- 6.6 The Agency had completed a roadworthiness project (Operation Road Test) to identify the level of defects present in vehicles stopped at the roadside. The Agency had carried out 16 such roadside operations throughout Northern Ireland; in addition they have also participated in a number of roadside inspections aimed at modified cars in conjunction with the PSNI. The benefits to MOT compliance of such operations include:
- increased public awareness of the requirement to keep vehicles in a roadworthy condition, thereby encouraging owners to be compliant;
 - additional publicity associated with carrying out roadside operations.

Increased use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Equipment

- 6.7 DVA Licensing currently operate a number of ANPR vehicles on a full time basis. The benefits to MOT compliance of such operations include:
- increased public awareness of additional enforcement on the roads;
 - increased compliance with VED will impact on MOT compliance as both are linked.

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Traffic Resources

- 6.8 Over the past few years as part of its policing plan the PSNI has introduced additional resources to the area of road safety. The benefits to MOT compliance of such operations include:
- a greater likelihood of MOT evaders being caught and prosecuted;
 - awareness by the public that non-compliance will be addressed.

7 TARGETS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

- 7.1 The target set as a result of the 2002 evasion survey was a 25% reduction in the vehicle test evasion rate within three years. That target was met. A further reduction on the 2004 figure of 21.3% to 16% in 2007 was then considered following the completion of the 2004 evasion survey. That target was also achieved, one year early, in 2006.
- 7.2 In 2007 DVA had set a new business objective to reduce the level of non compliance by 50% from the rate of evasion in 2007 (9.62%) to 4.81% in 2011. This target has now also been met.

Annexe A

Diagrammatic Representation of Data Extraction Process

