



DRIVER & VEHICLE AGENCY

2008 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 sixth Vehicle Test (MOT) Evasion Survey carried out by the Driver and 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 2008 survey is 8.42% a reduction of 12.5% from the 2007 rate of 9.62%.
- Overall the reduction in the level of vehicle test evasion since the Agency's first survey was carried out in 2002 is 70.3%.
- Of the vehicles identified as being evaders at date of sighting, 37% were in possession of an MOT certificate within 4 months.
- The survey has again indicated the evasion level was higher in respect of vehicles that were required to get an MOT Certificate (4 yrs old) for the first time, although the level of evasion was significantly lower than previous years.
- The survey indicates that although the evasion level still increases from age eleven onwards, this increase is not as significant as it was in previous surveys.
- Class C unclassified rural roads (14.8%) remain the most likely to be non compliant although the level of non compliance on class A primary urban roads (13.7%) has increased significantly.
- Of the 8.42% of vehicles that were non compliant 35.38% did not have valid vehicle excise licence.
- The survey identified that 4.38 % of vehicles of MOT Age did not have a valid vehicle excise licence.

Implemented Initiatives

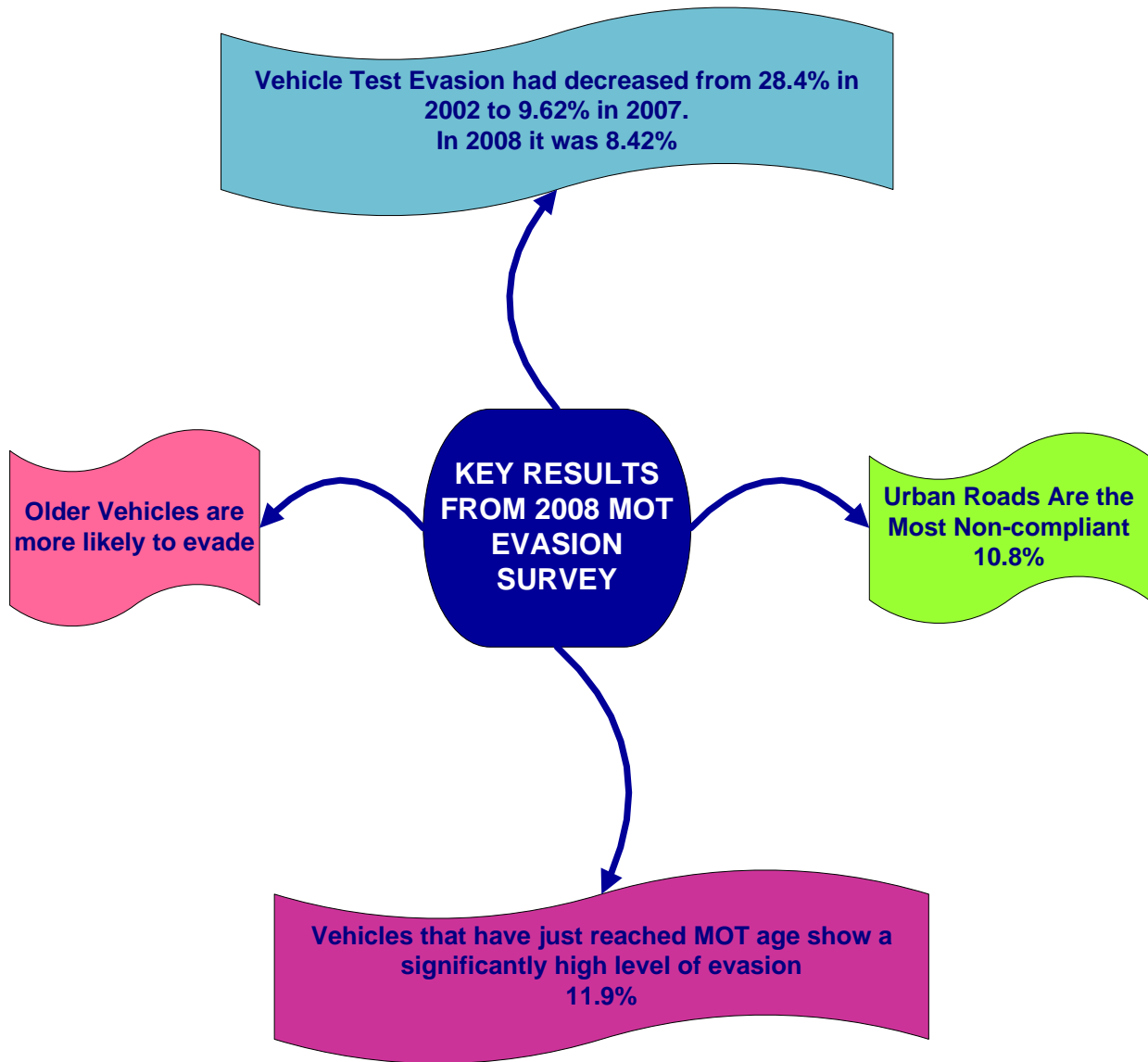
There have been a number of initiatives/issues that may have assisted the reduction of levels of evasion including:

- Implementation of the MOT reminder system.
- Introduction of Mandatory Display of MOT certificates on vehicles.
- Introduction of more flexible ways of booking vehicle tests.
- The introduction of Continuous Registration on Vehicle Licensing.
- A continuing programme of roadside roadworthiness checks.
- Increased use of automatic number plate readers (ANPR) 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

- The introduction of powers to stop private vehicles for Agency Enforcement Staff in the 2007 Road Traffic Order.
- The use of additional paper and telephone reminders.
- The use of automatic number plate readers by DVA to identify MOT evaders.
- The feasibility of linking an MOT to the vehicle's date of first registration or the date of expiry of its last 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.
- Amalgamation of the Northern Ireland Vehicle Information System and the Great Britain Vehicle Identification System.



VEHICLE TEST EVASION SURVEY 2008

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 DVA is an executive agency within the Department of the Environment. DVA has responsibility for the registration, licensing and testing of vehicles and drivers in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The Driver Vehicle Agency -Testing (DVA) Compliance & Enforcement Strategies had identified a continuing need for detailed information on the level of non-compliance associated with its vehicle testing system. Previous evasion surveys carried out in 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 by the Agency had indicated the level of vehicle test evasion among the Northern Ireland fleet had reduced from a high of 28.4% in 2002 to 9.62% in 2007.
- 1.3 Other surveys/reports that have been undertaken to inform the Compliance and Enforcement Strategies include an investigation into vehicle test certificate renewal, the impact of non-compliance, a report on vehicle roadworthiness and two surveys into the level of non compliance within the HGV fleet and the first survey 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 Surveys by Driver Vehicle Agency - Licensing have indicated that the evasion rate for vehicle excise duty (VED) is approximately 2.6%. Currently Driver Vehicle Agency - 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 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 evasion surveys, a similar approach has been adopted. This included:

- Consultation with Agency Statistician to confirm the validity of the methodology and to determine the confidence level associated with the number of vehicle sightings analysed;
- Use of information received from the Department for Transport (DFT) June 2008 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 to identify the current test status of the vehicle sighting sample;
- Analysis and documentation of findings; and
- Further consultation with Agency Statistician to validate analysis.

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 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 2008 71,710 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 A sift of the 71,710 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 2004). 35,211 vehicles were identified that required an MOT certificate.

Survey Methodology

- 3.4 The Agency Statistician, seconded from Northern Ireland Statistical Research Authority (NISRA) provided input to the methodology and analysis of the information from the survey.
- 3.5 The Agency statistician indicated that a sample of 2,304 would provide a 95% confidence level with final results subject to a possible $\pm 1.1\%$ 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 670,000 full vehicle tests each year. The computer system associated with vehicle tests is known as BSP (Booking Services Project). The information contained in the BSP database includes:
- Registration mark of the vehicle;
 - Make, model, colour and cc 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 1.1 million licensed vehicles recorded on NIVIS. NIVIS holds the following information:
- Registration mark of the vehicle;
 - Make, model, colour and cc of the vehicle;
 - Owner history of the vehicle;
 - Tax status of the vehicle;

- Date of first registration; and
- Statutory off road declarations.

Capture of Data

- 3.8 An initial sample of 2,500 vehicles was planned; however additional checks reduced this to a sample size of 2,304 vehicles (approximately 6.6% 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 VOSA (Vehicle & Operator Services Agency) now holds complete MOT records to allow 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. This information was used to select all vehicles that required an MOT, on the date of sighting. This produced a list of 35,211 vehicles, 2500 records were then randomly selected from this list. The randomly selected list was then individually checked to identify only the vehicles within the parameter of the survey (i.e removal of taxi, bus and HGV records).

BSP Computer system

- 4.2 DVA Testing introduced their 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.

Records Not Identified on NIVIS or BSP

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 The remaining unidentified records were checked by VOSA against their database for MOT compliance

5 SURVEY RESULTS

Overall Rate of Vehicle Test Evasion (Table 1)

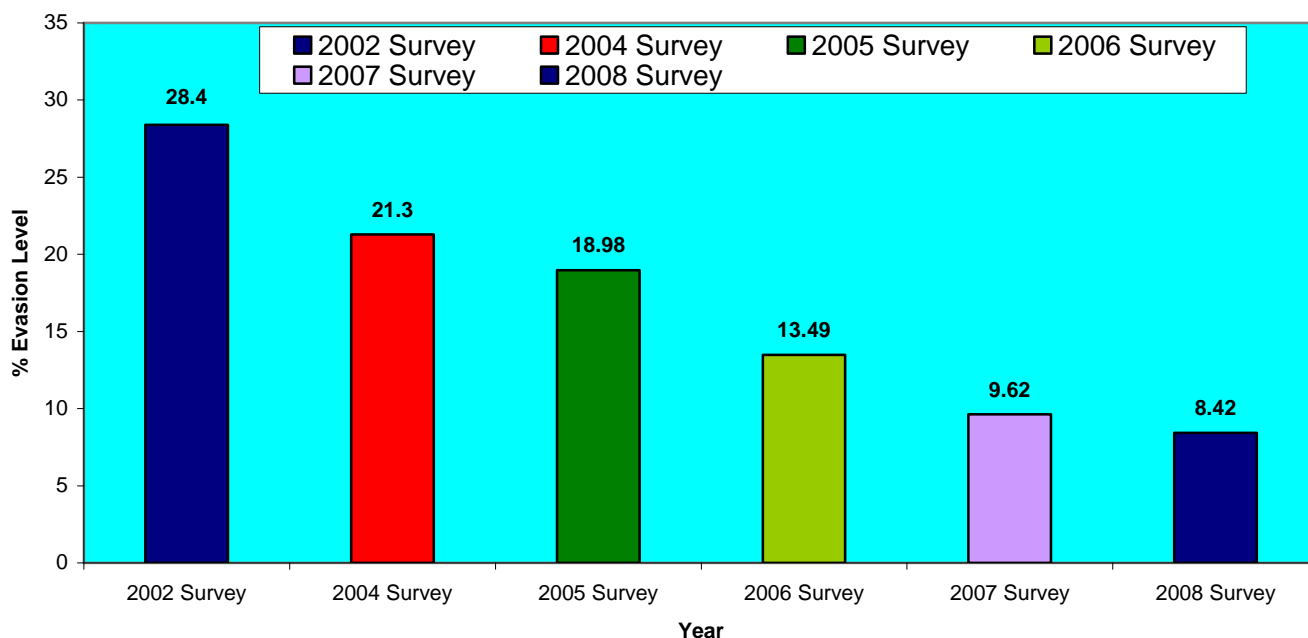
5.1 There has been a significant reduction in the rate of evasion in the vehicle test system.

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

	2002		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	%	No of Records	%	No of Records	%	No of Records	%	No of Records	%	No of Records	%	No of Records
Vehicles without a test certificate	28.4	164	21.3	389	18.98	501	13.49	343	9.62	194	8.42	194
Vehicles with a test certificate	71.6	413	78.7	1436	81.02	2139	86.51	2200	90.37	1822	91.58	2110
Total		577		1825		2640		2543		2016		2304

Overall Level of Vehicle test Evasion



Evasion by Licensing Status (Table 2)

5.2 Analysis of the MOT non compliant vehicles from the survey has identified that 65% of the vehicles were licensed and 35% did not have a valid Vehicle Excise Licence.

Table 2

		%	No of Sightings
MOT Non-Compliant Vehicles	Licensed	64.95	194
	Un-licensed	35.05	

MOT Compliant Vehicles	Licensed	98.48	2110
	Un-licensed	1.52	

Evasion by Age of Vehicle (Table 3)

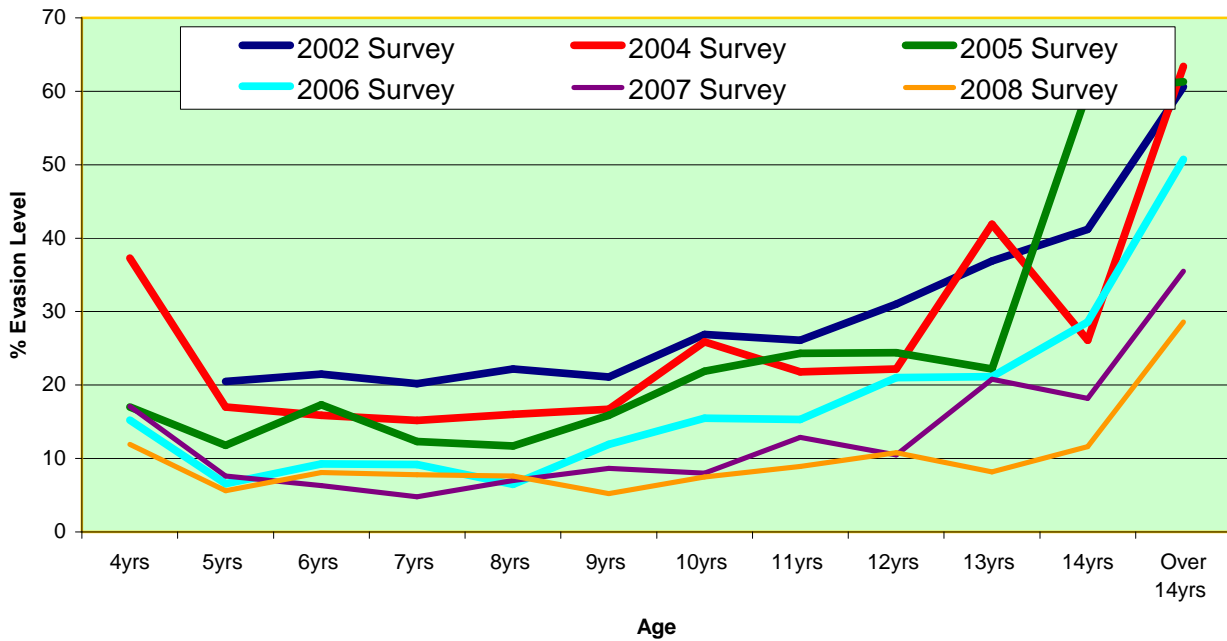
5.3 Analysis of the data has shown that the age of a vehicle is an important factor in the rate of Vehicle Test evasion. Results from the 2008 survey; show variable changes in the rates of evasion for most ages, while overall still following a similar trend to that identified by previous survey results.

5.4 Analysis indicates that although vehicles aged 4 years old still show a significant level of evasion, it has reduced from previous years. Evasion rates remain highest among older vehicles with evasion rates increasing from year 11 onwards however the level of evasion for vehicles over 11 years old is significantly down on previous years.

Table 3 – Comparison of Vehicle Age Evasion

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

MOT Evasion by age of Vehicle



Vehicle Test Evasion By Road Type (Table 4)

- 5.5 Analysis of the data has identified that vehicles on urban roads are still more likely to be non-compliant (10.8%) than those on rural roads (7%) or motorways (8.1%).
- 5.6 Although there has been an overall reduction in evasion with urban roads down 16.7%, and rural roads down 36.4%, the evasion rate on motorways has risen by 2.5% compared to 2007 levels.

Table 4

Type of Road	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Rural	27.0	23.1	22.3	13.6	11	7
Urban	22.2	19.2	19.7	8.8	12.97	10.8
Motorway	22.8	20.4	12.8	8.9	7.9	8.1

Evasion by Road Type

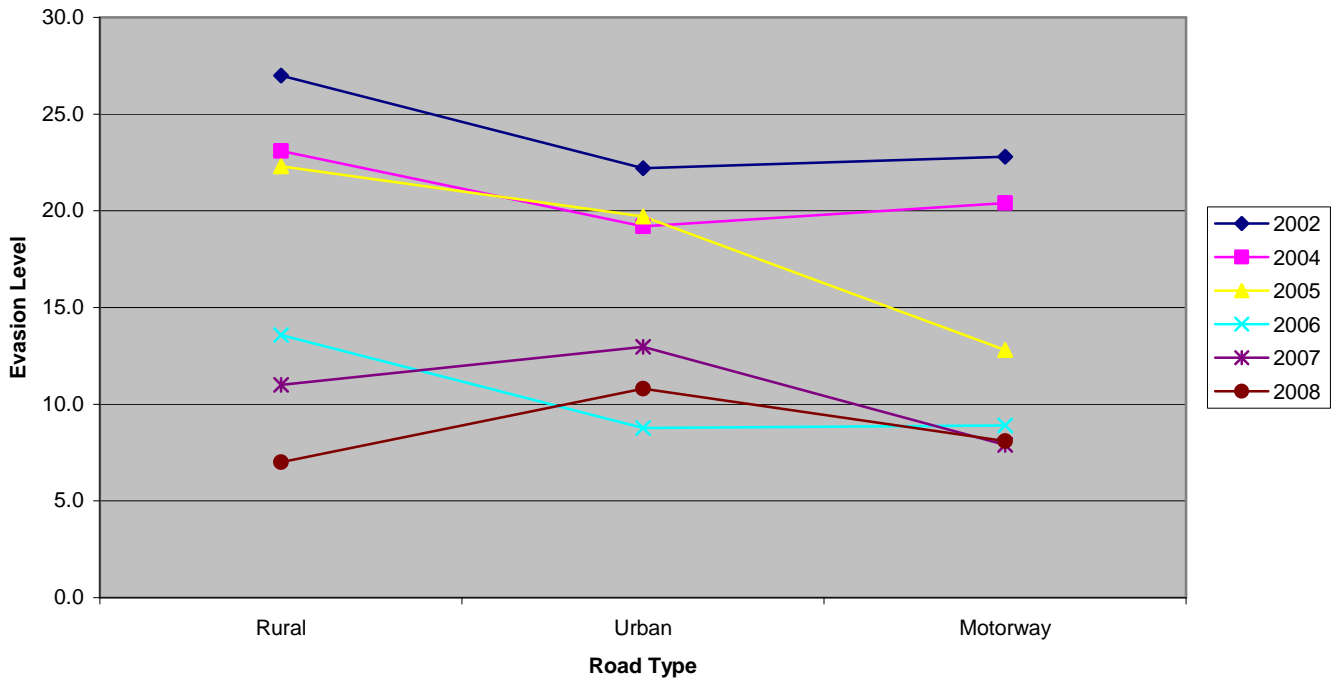
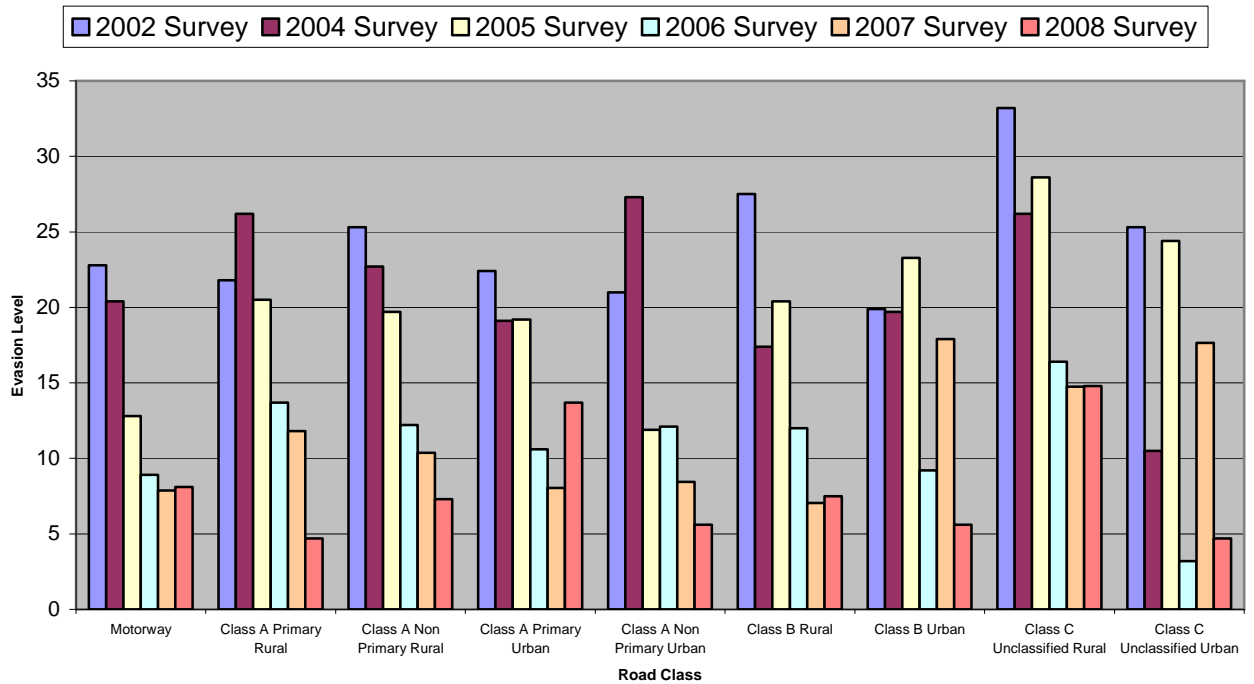


Table 5 – Vehicle Test Evasion by Road Type

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

Evasion by Class of Road



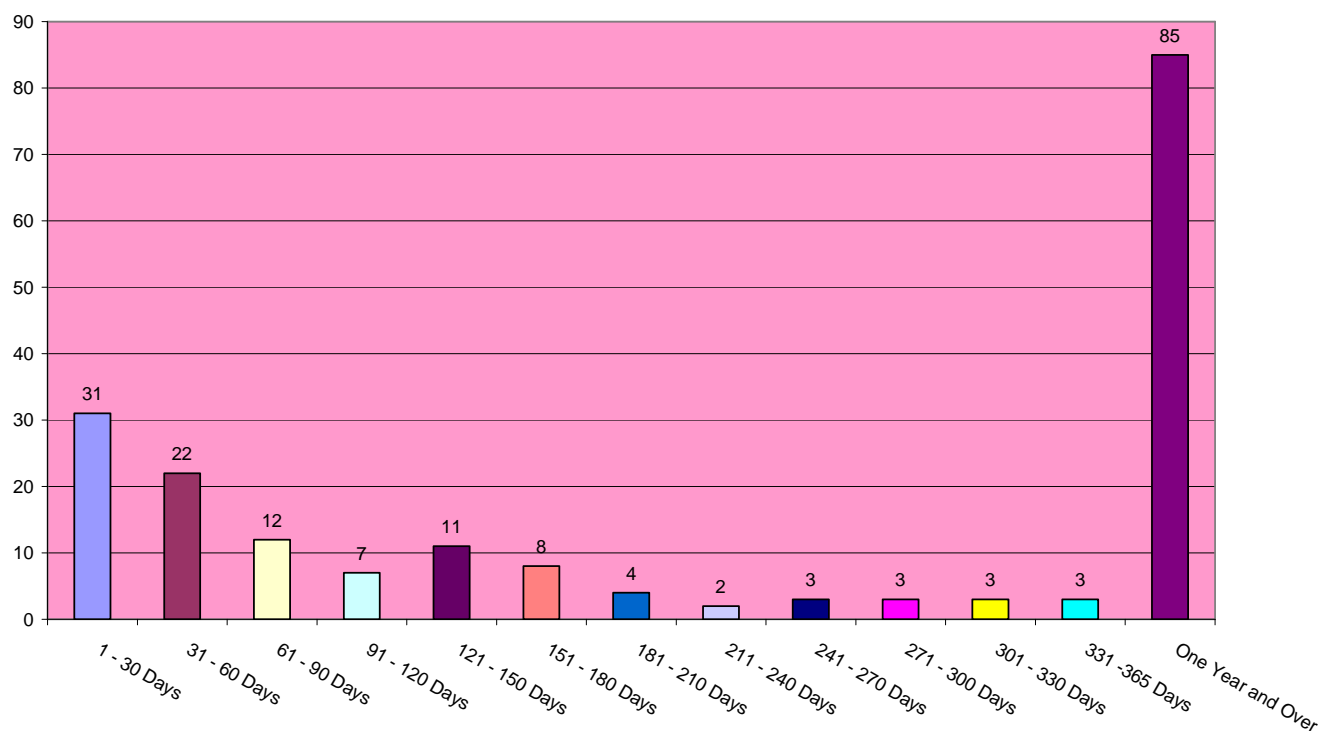
GB MOT's

5.7 A total of 27 vehicles had valid GB MOT's in place; 1.17% of the overall sample. This included 15 GB vehicles (55.6%) that had been registered in NI for the first time, 8 vehicles with a GB certificate that were the subject of a cherished transfer and 4 vehicles with a GB certificate that were registered in NI. This would indicate that 14.8% of the vehicles were taken to GB to obtain a certificate.

MOT Evaders

5.8 A total of 194 vehicles from the sample (8.42%) were identified as having no vehicle test certificate at date of sighting. A number of these vehicles obtained a certificate after the date of sighting. The chart below shows the breakdown of time taken to renew the certificate.

Days Taken to Renew MOT



Survey Locations (Table 6)

5.9 20 locations were used to collect data for the survey. ANPR was used to collect data at 15 of the sites and the rest were collected manually.

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 8.42%. From the 2007 evasion report Driver and Vehicle Agency had identified a target of MOT evasion of 4.81% by 2011, if this target was to be realised it would result in an additional 28,762 vehicles being tested in 2011 thereby generating additional gross income of £877,241 (using a current MOT fee of £30.50). The implications of additional revenue are that fixed overheads such as the cost of buildings could be spread over more tests thus allowing the Agency 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 perception on 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 Readers (ANPRs)

- 6.7 DVA - Licensing currently operate 3 ANPR`s 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 3 years, this 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. This target was also achieved, one year early in 2006.
- 7.2 An Agency Business objective has now set a new target of a 50% reduction from the rate of evasion in 2007 (9.62%) by 2011. The target for 2011 will therefore be 4.81%.

Diagrammatic Representation of Data Extraction Process

