



automotive information

42

HEAVY VEHICLE INSPECTION SCHEME

This information sheet describes a new scheme for annual inspection of heavy vehicles. The new arrangements are being introduced for:

- a) trucks which weigh 5 tonnes or more unladen,
- b) trailers which weigh 2½ tonnes or more unladen,
- c) prime movers and semi-trailers.

These vehicles will no longer go to Authorised Inspection Stations. In future, registration will only be renewed if the vehicle has passed an annual inspection by the Department of Motor Transport.

WHY ARE HEAVY VEHICLES TO BE INSPECTED BY THE DMT?

Accident records show that heavy vehicles are more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than most other vehicles. This is partly because heavy vehicles are on the road much more than other vehicles and this, in turn, means that correct maintenance is absolutely critical.

HOW WELL ARE HEAVY VEHICLES MAINTAINED?

In surveys made by the DMT's Mobile Inspection Division, about half of all heavy vehicles were found to need repairs and one in twelve had serious safety problems in braking, steering and suspension systems. **There is a clear case for improved inspections of heavy trucks.**

HOW WILL THE NEW SCHEME OPERATE?

For many years, public vehicles (such as buses and taxis) have been regularly inspected by the DMT. The inspectors travel around the State and inspections are carried out in each major town.

Heavy trucks and trailers are now to be inspected in the same way. When motor vehicle inspectors are due to visit a town, the owners of heavy vehicles in that area will receive letters asking them to make appointments for inspection — appointments will minimise the time that they spend at the inspection sites. If the vehicle arrives at the inspection site at the arranged time, the inspection will be over in about half an hour. Inspections are usually carried out on private property and DMT signs are displayed at the sites when the inspectors are present. Owners should not enter sites unless there are DMT signs outside.

Owners of fleets of vehicles might be able to arrange for inspection of vehicles on their own premises, provided that adequate facilities are available.

INSPECTION FEES

As with Authorised Inspection Stations, an inspection fee is charged to help cover the cost of operating the scheme. This fee is included in the annual registration charges.

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR TRANSPORT, N.S.W.

If a vehicle does not pass inspection, a defect notice will be issued and an additional inspection fee might be payable for the re-inspection. This fee depends on the extent of the faults in the vehicle; when motor vehicle inspectors clear such a defect notice, they will issue an invoice for the additional fee due. This is payable immediately at any Motor Registry.

INSPECTION LABELS

When a vehicle is inspected and is found to be roadworthy, an inspection label will be affixed to the windscreen. This label will indicate the month and year that the vehicle passed inspection. The owner will also be given a certificate of inspection which must be submitted to the DMT as proof of inspection at the next renewal of registration.

MISSED INSPECTIONS

Normally, inspections will be arranged one or two months before a vehicle is due for renewal of registration. However, in smaller towns, inspections might take place several months before renewal of registration. Owners are reminded that the registration will not be renewed if the vehicle has missed its inspection. If an owner does not have the vehicle inspected while the motor vehicle inspectors are in the vicinity, the owner might be able to arrange an inspection at another site. Vehicles can sometimes be inspected without an appointment but first preference will always be given to those owners who have made an appointment.

QUARTERLY REGISTRATIONS

Vehicles (other than buses) registered on a quarterly basis have an endorsement "INSPECT FEB. REGISTERED QUARTERLY" on their certificates of registration. Owners of these vehicles should note that this endorsement refers to the month in which the registration is renewed and not the month in which the annual inspection will be conducted. In the above case the vehicle would probably be inspected in December and the certificate of inspection issued during that inspection would then be used for renewing the registration during February.

CONDITION OF VEHICLES PRESENTED FOR INSPECTION

Any vehicle that is found to be defective at inspection will be issued with a defect notice that restricts the use of the vehicle until it is repaired, re-inspected and the defect notice cancelled. Experience has shown that many defects are simple and obvious. A brief check by the owner before the vehicle is first presented will usually avoid both the inconvenience and cost of re-inspection. The following check-list might help:

1. All brakes must operate correctly and must be free from leaks. Ensure that all air reservoirs are drained and that drain valves can be readily operated.
2. Tyres must have at least 1.5mm of tread and must be free of deep cuts.
3. Steering and suspension components must be in good condition. Check for worn bushes, bearings and joints.
4. All lights must operate.
5. The portion of the windscreen directly in front of the driver must be free from cracks and scratches. Windscreen wipers and washers must operate.
6. The body and cab must be securely mounted and the structure of the vehicle must be sound.
7. The exhaust must be secure and free from leaks.
8. Vehicles must be unladen when presented for inspection.
9. Vehicles must be cleaned (especially underneath) prior to inspection.
10. With tilt-cab vehicles, ensure that the cab can be readily tilted for inspection of the engine bay. Drivers must remain with the vehicle during the inspection and assist by operating the driving controls as instructed by the motor vehicle inspector.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about truck inspections, please write to the Senior Motor Vehicle Inspector, Heavy Vehicle Inspection Scheme, Department of Motor Transport, G.P.O. Box 28, Sydney N.S.W. 2001, or contact Motor Vehicle Inspection enquiries on (02) 662-5400. Special telephone numbers are available for making appointments for inspections — these numbers are shown on the notices sent to owners when vehicles are due for inspection.