

TESTING TIMES

Roadworthiness Section, Road Safety, VicRoads

May 1998 ♦ Issue 6

Welcome

Hello and welcome to issue No 6. From the feedback we have been receiving you are finding testing times useful, however we don't get many suggestions for items to include. We would like you to have more involvement if possible. You don't need to write an article, just let us know what you would like covered.

Conference Series

The first of our conferences has been conducted at Mildura. The new format of providing a meal at the start of the evening proved popular. The presenters from VicRoads and the department of Justice covered a number of legal, as well as technical matters and as usual answered lots of questions. A survey conducted at the end of the evening showed that although we can still improve our presentation the night was informative and worthwhile.



The only real disappointment from our side was the poor attendance by LMCTs. This was a shame as one of the points we are trying to cover is the relationship between LVTs, LMCTs and VicRoads.

The next conference is scheduled for Horsham and as we travel around the state you should all receive an invitation to attend at a reasonably local venue. If you deal with local car yards feel free to suggest that it is in their interest to attend as well.

Technical Issues

Window tinting, change to standards

As of the 1st of April 1998 the standard for side window light transmittance changed. It is now permissible for all side windows to have only 35% light transmission.

A copy of the revised Vehicle Standards Information (VSI) No2 is enclosed - put it in your folder for reference.



CATS on personally imported vehicles

Personally imported vehicles are exempt from many registration requirements provided that they met the requirements in the country of origin. There have been instances where LVTs have required catalytic converters to be fitted to post 1986 personally imported vehicles.

Personally imported vehicles less than 15 years old are identified by a yellow personal import plate in place of a compliance plate. These vehicles are required to have an unleaded fuel filler restrictor fitted but there is no requirement for a catalytic converter.

Refer to VSI No. 3 for more details on personally imported vehicles.

Falcon door intrusion beams

Door intrusion beams on EA & later Ford Falcons are held in place by spot welds. We have found a number of high mileage vehicles where the spot welds are breaking out. The problem is easily seen with the door open by looking near the door latch mechanism. Advice should be obtained from Ford on the correct repair method. An inappropriate repair may adversely affect the safety of the vehicle.

Commodore seat belts

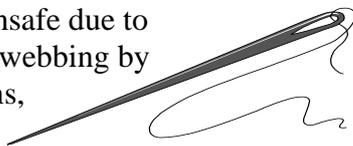
VT Commodores have seat belt pretensioners with an electrical harness, which runs back underneath the seat. The harness connectors can be damaged or disengaged by objects stored beside the seat. (eg street directories) This causes the SRS warning light to come on. As the connector is not sold separately an entire pretensioner assembly is required.

Holden have recommended that objects are stored in the map pockets at the rear of the front seats.

Seat belt repairs

Seat belt repairs are not approved. Spare parts for the mechanisms are not available. The webbing has different characteristics on different belts. If the webbing is worn or damaged then the mechanism usually needs replacing also, ie a complete new belt. Only a manufacturer can modify a belt for special use (eg longer webbing for wheelchair occupants in taxis) because they have the expertise to certify the finished product meets the standards.

Belts we have seen ~~webbed~~ by motor trimmers have been unsafe due to damage caused to the webbing by incorrect stitch patterns, wrong thread and the wrong needle.



Because the backyard repairers don't identify their work you could be liable if you fit faulty units.

If a belt has been in an accident and any warning device fitted to it has been triggered then the whole assembly must be replaced. The warning devices include tabs which pop up and labels which appear when the belt is stretched. If you are not familiar with them have a look in a few owners' handbooks.

Road testing motorcycles

Do you have to road test motorcycles?

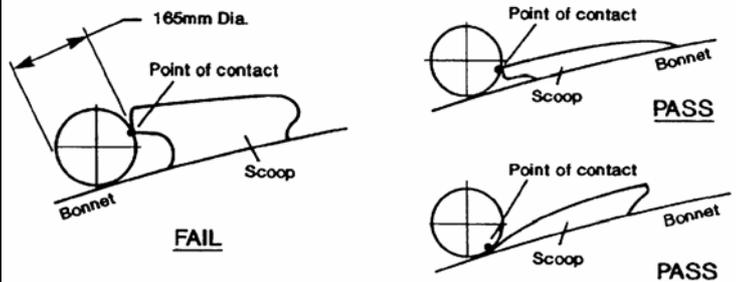
The real question should be - if I don't perform a road test how do I check the braking capability, machine stability, controllability and other handling traits.



The advice we have had from the trade and our own motorcycle instructors is that it is not possible to judge the above items unless a road test is conducted. Remember the onus of proof is usually on you. Of course all this applies to other vehicles as well.

Bonnet Scoops

VicRoads has adopted a slightly more liberal position on what is a safe bonnet scoop and what is not. VSI 8 has now been reprinted and, in addition to the previous requirements for vision of the road and the area of openings to the front, the shape of the front must now meet the test below:



Trade plates

A tester has contacted us about a discussion he had with a police officer during a road test of a vehicle fitted with trade plates.

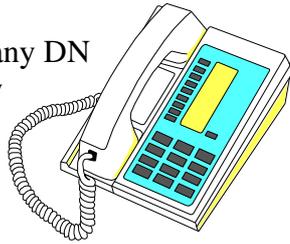
Trade plate conditions of use are restricted for LVTs. If you use the trade plate outside the conditions specified you could be liable for a charge of driving an unregistered vehicle. Please read the conditions of use and if you don't have them contact VicRoads for a copy.

How do you clear a Canary?

The way a Defect Notice (canary) is to be cleared is marked on the notice. Victorian ~~Canaries~~ usually require the vehicle to be presented at a Registration Office with a Roadworthiness Certificate (RWC). For minor items the RWC may not be required.

Interstate Defect Notices (DNs) may specify clearance at an Authorised Inspection Station (AIS) - private or government run - or presentation at a Police Station or Registry Office.

By interstate agreement, any DN can now be cleared in any other jurisdiction but in Victoria only VicRoads can clear DNs. Where an interstate DN required presentation at an AIS, VicRoads will require a RWC to clear the notice. If the DN only required presentation at a Police Station or Registry Office, a RWC will not be required.



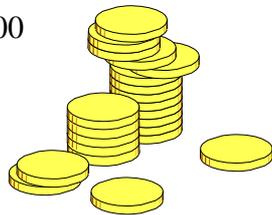
It should be noted that Licensed Vehicle Testers (LVTs) are not Authorised Inspection Stations and are not authorised to clear interstate DNs. Signing an interstate DN as an AIS could be fraud.

Roadworthy Books, Fee Increase

Inflation has finally caught up with us and the cost of books of certificates of roadworthiness went up from the 1st of April 1998. This is the first rise in about six years.

The new cost per book of 100 certificates is **\$105.00**

If you don't send enough money in future we will have to return your order to you.



Heavy vehicle training

Batman/Kangan Institute are now providing heavy vehicle LVT accreditation training. This course is also likely to be of interest to those involved in quality assured maintenance programs.

If you are interested in attending please contact admission officer Kay Cayton of student administration at the Moreland campus on ph 9353 1860.

Location of VINs

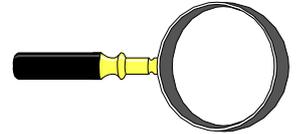
From time to time you will encounter a vehicle where it is seemingly impossible to find the VIN.

In most vehicles the VIN is located under the bonnet somewhere on the firewall or near the strut towers. Holden placed it under the

windscreen on late model Commodores as is the practice with most American cars.

However, as you may know, not all Holdens are made in Australia. Some of the new models are from Europe and have their VINs inside the passenger compartment. VINs in unusual positions also applies to other European vehicles.

Here are some examples of these locations.



On the Holden Calibra, Vectra and Astra the VIN is located between the driver seat and the door sill panel (covered by a plastic latch). This location is also used on some later Mercedes Benz models.

Another unusual location was used on the earlier model (mid 80s) SAAB 9000 series. The VIN is actually located in the boot on the cross member just behind the seat.

Some model Volvos use the **A** and **B** pillars on the drivers side for the VIN location.

Commercial vans such as the Mitsubishi Express, Toyota HiAce and Nissan Urvan also usually position the VIN inside the cab. So have a good look at the floorpan around the seats and pillars.

On vehicles with a ladder type chassis, manufacturers usually make use of the chassis rails to stamp in the VIN.

Favourite locations are the front left or right hand quarters, somewhere in the middle or the left and right rear quarters.

If you are really stuck and have searched everywhere and can't find the VIN for a 1986 onwards vehicle with a GVM under 4.5 tonne as a last resort you can contact the Vehicle Safety Branch.

Supervisors phone numbers

Due to a switch to digital mobile phones we had to change our numbers so here are the new ones.

Ed Hollyoak	0418 365175
Graeme Banes	0419 395025
Bob Abeysekera	0417 366310
Andrew Cruddas	0418 365176
Craig McDonald	0417 302180
Nino Menolascina	0418 507580
Fred Hebb	0417 366305

Customer Surveys

Someone (no names mentioned) came up with the idea of producing a customer survey on the back of the vehicle testers licence renewal form. The first lot went out in April and much to our surprise we got a great response. Those testers who took the trouble to include some additional comments or queries have been sent a personal reply.

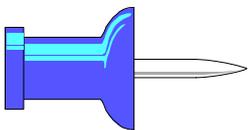
It is important to us that you tell us what you really think if we are to identify things we can improve.

The surveys will continue and we will bring you the results in future editions of testing times.

Supplies

Supplies of all stationary needed for LVTs are available from the VicRoads bookshop. All requests should be sent to:

VicRoads Bookshop
Ground Floor
60 Denmark Street
Kew Vic 3101



If you need to make urgent arrangements the bookshop can be contacted on:

Phone **(03) 9854 2782**
Fax **(03) 9854 2468**

between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm Monday to Friday.

Remember, the bookshop is now using the same roadworthy database that the supervisors use and books can only be ordered by:

- (a) the licence holder, or
- (b) a director of the company which holds a licence, or
- (c) a person who has been delegated in writing by one of the above people.

A reminder:

RWCs are now \$105.00 for a book of 100.

If you want to buy a new book of RWCs over the counter you will need:

- * the proforma from your old RWC book, correctly completed (signed by the Director/owner or representative of the licence),
- * positive identification of yourself, or your representative (photograph on a drivers licence or passport would be ideal), and
- * cash, cheque or credit card.

Delivery of Books

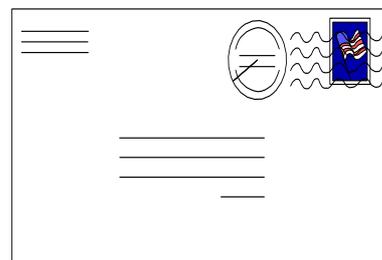
The Bookshop has used a courier service and your purchases have been delivered to you at no extra cost. Not only has this given you prompt delivery but it ensured their security as well.



As a trial recently, RWC books have been delivered using Australia Post PostPaks and registered mail.

On results to date this looks even better than the courier service and we might adopt it permanently.

Consideration is also being given to using yellow Priority Post envelopes by certified mail but this may require you to pick them up from the Post Office.



If you have received any books via Australia Post recently and have had any problems please let us know. Also, would you have any problems with picking the books up from the Post Office if they were sent by certified mail?