



Testing Times

Issue 22

September 2007

Welcome

Welcome to Edition 22 of Testing Times.

We have a varied collection of items for you again in this issue ranging from administrative items and information access through to technical subjects such as HID lighting, faulty LPG valves, remote engine starters and disc brake problems.

If you have comments on any of the articles here please e-mail to:

roadworthy@roads.vic.gov.au

Registration & Licensing Compliance Group Reports

The audit group has completed its first round of LVT audits and has identified some consistent issues. The most frustrating are failure to complete certificates correctly and not maintaining the mandatory records. These are matters addressed in the accreditation training and reiterated during seminars so it is difficult to accept the casual attitude taken by so many testers. Much of this is just carelessness with inaccurate or incorrect information being put on the certificates and in some cases important information being left off. There has to be a person to present a vehicle (or give you the right to take it if you pick it up yourself) so there must always be a presenter's name on the certificate. The certificates now also have a place for the presenter's signature. Correctly completed certificates and proper records are important legal issues so it is likely that testers who continue to offend will suffer automatic licence suspension.

The ongoing issue of non-use of test equipment such as headlight aimers (see later article) and brake decelerometers has also been highlighted as has the need to ensure that all such equipment has been correctly calibrated.



Where identified, failure to use this equipment or to use equipment that is not correctly calibrated will result in action being taken against testers so don't risk it.

LVT Sanctions

The suspension and cancellation of tester licences occurs when breaches of the regulations are identified. The minimum suspension that can be applied under the regulations is 30 days. Approximately 300 investigations are carried out each year resulting in about 100 licences being suspended or cancelled. The decision to suspend or cancel is not taken lightly with five licences being cancelled last financial year and suspensions ranging up to 26 weeks.

A number of LVTs have also been prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court for fraudulently issuing certificates. If a LVT is found guilty of fraud it results in an automatic licence cancellation. Several of the non LVT fraud convictions related to the use of stolen certificates.



Appropriate Signage

VicRoads issues signs to testers to show the public that premises displaying the sign are authorised to do roadworthy tests. If you change your licence categories then you need to amend the sign accordingly. This particularly applies to the old GE category as it is no longer used. If you would rather have a new sign it can be ordered through the bookshop, however, we are also hoping to provide category stickers through the bookshop to go on existing signs.

You may not use the VicRoads logo **vic roads** on other signs, buildings or business cards without written approval from VicRoads because

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it is a registered trademark.

However, VicRoads is unlikely to give approval to use its logo elsewhere as this may confuse the public and create an impression that other parts of the business are endorsed by, or directly linked to, VicRoads. The audit group has identified workshops that are displaying the logo without permission and it must be removed or VicRoads may take legal action to protect its trademark.

HID Lighting

High intensity gas discharge lights are now available as aftermarket accessories and they are being fitted to vehicles that were not fitted with them as original or optional equipment. When fitted as low beam headlights, HID lights require an automatic self levelling system and a high performance headlight cleaning system. The kits seen so far do not contain the headlight cleaner or levelling systems and any low beam installations without these features must be rejected.



Even with HID lighting fitted by the manufacturer there is no guarantee that the self levelling system is working correctly so you still need to check them with your headlight aimer. You should also check that the cleaning system works.

While we are on the subject of checking lights, it seems that many testers are just not doing it properly. Many modern headlamp units can be checked for aim and adjusted without a headlamp screen/board but this requires special equipment. If you don't have an aiming machine you are required to have a suitable headlamp testing area at least 12 m x 2.5 m and a headlamp screen/board. Whatever you have, **make sure that you use it!** It is simple and it is quick.

Fog light misalignment causing dazzle is another major cause of complaint from other road users so they must also be checked for correct aim.



Because fog lights are mounted low and have their light concentrated in a narrow flat beam even minor out of adjustment causes problems.

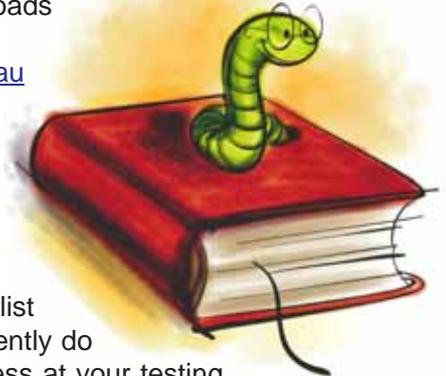
Keeping Information Up To Date

Having access to information is important and one thing the auditors look for is current copies of Vehicle Standards Information (VSI) sheets (or access to them) at the testing site. If you have internet access they can be found on the VicRoads website at

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

and then go to the **Rules, Standards and Regulations** tab along the top and select **Vehicle standards information** from the list

on the left. If you currently do not have internet access at your testing site (see next item) you will need to have an up to date printed set of VSIs on hand.



There is also now a special Licensed Vehicle Tester page on the VicRoads website which you can go to directly at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/lvt. Here you can find the most recent editions of Testing Times and all the back issues as well as a number of LVT forms.

Future Information Access

From 1st July 2008 all testing sites will be required to have an internet connection to enable immediate access to information on the VicRoads website. Along with this internet connection, each testing site will be required to have an email address for direct communication with VicRoads. So if you haven't already done so, now is the time to start thinking about setting up a PC or a laptop with internet access at your testing site.

Remote Starters

The aftermarket industry, always looking for a new gimmick to sell, is now offering remote starting kits. These kits allow you to start the engine of a vehicle from some distance away.

Just what everyone needs???



All you have to do is press a button while you are eating breakfast or reading the morning newspaper.

When you eventually go out to your car the engine is running and the cabin is warmed or cooled to your liking. While this might make joining the traffic snarl a little easier, it has obvious safety implications. There is already one confirmed report of a vehicle with no-one inside taking off and running into a wall. Luckily, there was also no-one in front of the car at the time but it did not do the wall or the car much good.

The fitment of such a device is not a modification given approval in Vehicle Standards Information Sheet No: 8 and therefore it is currently an illegal modification which makes the vehicle un-roadworthy.

OEMs do provide remote starting/stopping systems, however it is not yet known if they will be approved for use in Australia. For example, BMW has developed an auto park system on some of its premium models which allows you to get out of the car outside your garage, close the car doors and have the car drive itself into the garage, stop, turn the engine off, apply the park brake and lock the doors - all with the press of a button.

Then, next morning, again with a press of a button, you can remotely start the car and it unlocks the doors, selects reverse, releases the park brake and drives itself out again by going back over the same path it used to go into the garage. And it won't run into the garage doors if you forgot to open them. Very handy if you need to park very close to one wall, there is so much stuff in your garage that you cannot open the car doors once inside, or you are just not very good at reversing.



However, these OEM remote starting systems require the controller to be close to the car, have an extensive array of proximity sensors, lockouts, shut downs, etc, are deeply integrated into the car's electronic and computer systems, and have undergone rigorous testing on the specific vehicles in all sorts of

situations to ensure they are safe. This is not the case with aftermarket units and with such devices there is also the potential for someone to start an unseen vehicle in an enclosed area and asphyxiate other people in that area.

The use of some aftermarket remote starters on public roads may also contravene Road Rule 213 which requires that if a driver is more than 3 metres from a vehicle, its engine must be switched off if no-one over the age of 16 years is in the vehicle [unless the driver is temporarily leaving the vehicle to pay a parking fee].

LPG Tanks - Safety Alert

Along with Issue 21 of Testing Times you would have received a copy of a safety warning regarding SIDEK PRX pressure relief valves. Several of these valves, marked **SIDEK PRX AGA 6394 2.55MPa** or just **SIDEK PRX 2.55MPa** have not operated as they should resulting in tank ruptures thankfully to date with no serious injury occurring.



All such valves as shown in the picture above need to be replaced as a matter of urgency. If any LPG fuelled vehicle with one of these valves is presented to you for a roadworthy you should not issue a RWC until the valve has been replaced.

Checking Disc Brakes

Several recent instances of disc brake pad friction material separation have been reported. These have occurred well before the lining has reached its minimum thickness and so far they do not appear to be limited to any particular make or model or brand of pad. In some cases the lining material has broken in two and part has separated from the backing plate as shown in the picture over the page.

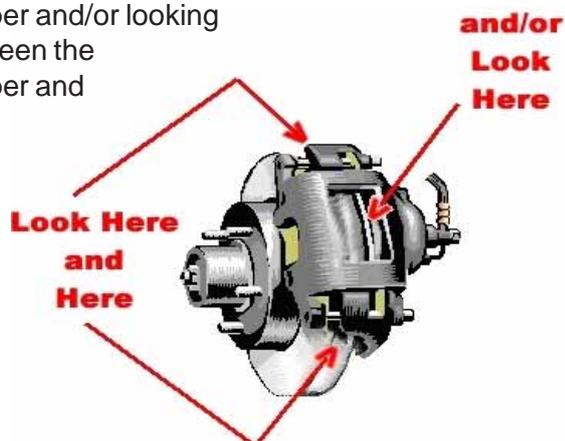


Separation of lining material from backing plate

Just why this occurs is not clear but it may be because the backing plate thickness [and hence stiffness] has been reduced to save weight and the backing plate now flexes too much causing the friction material to crack and the bonding to fail.

When this type of failure occurs, the broken bits may be retained within the calliper initially and the brake may still appear to perform. However, this is a potentially serious brake problem as the loose bit may continue to rub leading to overheating and sooner or later the loose bit of lining will either completely fall out or wedge between the calliper and rotor with potentially disastrous results.

While you are not expected to remove disc brake pads to check their condition you should be checking the lining thickness at both ends and at the inner and outer edges. This can sometimes be done by just looking into the calliper and/or looking between the calliper and rotor.



When you check the remaining lining thickness you should also be checking that there does not appear to be any separation of the friction material from the backing plate and that the friction material is still in its correct position.

If you do a thorough check on the condition of the lining material you are likely to pick up this material separation problem but now you know there is a potential problem in some vehicles you should be even more alert [but not alarmed].

Roadworthy Books

Who can order books?

Books can only be ordered by :
The licence holder,

- or in the case of a company licence
- a Company Director or
- a Company Representative



Which premises are books delivered to?

Books will only be sent to the site listed on the licence. If there is more than one site listed on the licence, then one site will be nominated as the Head Office. In that case, when RWC books are ordered we will only send the books out to the nominated Head Office.

Managing the books for multiple sites

A person at Head Office answering to the person in charge of the licence should send the RWC books out to the sites that need them and keep a record of where they are for audit purposes.

Roadworthy Section Contact Details:

roadworthy@roads.vic.gov.au

Fax 9811 8248

Admin phone 9811 8380

1st floor, 3 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell 3124

Fees

Like everything else, LVT prices have gone up.

Annual renewal of your licence is now \$17.60.

A new licence, or if you change the location of your testing premises, or to add additional premises or categories onto your licence, costs \$88.20 per site.

A book of 100 Roadworthiness Certificates now costs \$134.20 (including GST).

Note:

*All supplies can be obtained from
VicRoads' Bookshop*

*Ground Floor, 60 Denmark Street
KEW VIC 3101*

Phone (03) 9854 2782

Fax (03) 9854 2468

Open weekdays between 8.30am and 4.30pm