



# Testing Times

Issue 23

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## Welcome

Welcome to Edition 23 of Testing Times.

Another good and varied collection of items for you in this issue ranging from administrative items such as Corrective Action Reports, Accident Damage Repair Reports and SRS Reports through to technical subjects such as fluffy dice and disco balls (huh!) and lighting and seating issues.

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

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## After the Audit

### Corrective Action Reports

When Compliance Officers have completed an audit on your licence and explained to you what they have found, they go away and compile a formal report. That formal report is then sent to you and contains some important information, including items known as corrective actions.

A corrective action is something you need to do to ensure that you are complying with the Regulations and the licence conditions. It is then necessary for you to notify VicRoads that you have done what was required and you do this by sending in a Corrective Action Report (CAR). To make this easier for you, a form has been created to send the information to the Roadworthiness Section so your file can be updated. There is a copy of the form included with this edition of Testing Times and it will also be available on the web site.

Please do not send information to the Compliance group as they cannot process it.

The other thing to remember is that if an audit finds things that are wrong, then you really shouldn't test vehicles until you have fixed the problem. While displaying a sign incorrectly will not usually evoke drastic action from VicRoads, things like continuing to use non-compliant equipment could lead to an unwelcome holiday.

## Fluffy Dice

For some strange reason people persist in dangling all sorts of things from their internal rear view mirror. Large fluffy dice (claimed to be the ultimate in 50's retro accessories) and



miniature disco balls seem to be popular.



The Road Rules require that a driver has a clear view of the road and traffic ahead and the ADRs also require that a vehicle must not be constructed or equipped or have anything attached to it that stops the driver having an adequate view of traffic on either side of the vehicle and in all

directions in front of the vehicle.

The "A" pillars on some cars are bad enough but added obstructions dangling from the rear view mirror are a real road safety concern. Drivers can become desensitised to the movement [and flashing in the case of the disco balls and jewellery] of these dangling objects causing other road users behind these objects to be missed with serious consequences.

Any vehicle presented for a roadworthy inspection with any dangling objects hanging from the rear vision mirror should not be issued with a RWC until the objects are removed.

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## Dim Lights

In Testing Times 22 we talked about bright lights - aftermarket HID lamps - which are required to have a self levelling system and a lens cleaning system. But what about all those other aftermarket lamps, particularly the custom tail/stop/turn and reverse lamp units which are now readily available for many cars?

In the old days, it was very difficult to get anything but the OEM lamps to fit in the body opening and if the OEM lamps were fitted with any sort of coloured aftermarket covers you could be pretty sure that the light output would be below the minimum required by the ADRs. In fact, even clear covers on some headlamps could drop the light level to below the minimum but this was generally only marginal and very difficult to prove.

But now, aftermarket custom rear lamp units come with all sorts of fancy bezels, reflectors and lens and look quite different to the OEM units in all but their outer housing shape.



Not so long ago you could say that if the rear lamp units were not OEM or were not ECE marked then they were unacceptable. However, recent changes to the ADRs now allow non-ECE marked lamps to be used. So where to from here?

Because it is impossible to check compliance of lamps without complex testing processes you will have to use some basic rules of thumb. If the lamp when working shows light that is the same as the original and is the same brightness, then it should be OK as long as it also meets the angles of visibility specified in VSI 10.



If the light emitted is quite dull or is significantly reduced [as it would be on the black vehicle shown at the bottom of the previous column] or discoloured because of the outer cover colour or tint then they should be rejected.

While most coloured covers will cause the lamps to show colours outside the required range, a very light gray, or light blue outer cover like the one on the right, may not move the colour of the tail, stop or turn signals outside the acceptable range [amber light has a component of blue light and red often does, too] and even the reversing light colour may still be bluish white which is also OK [white light has a very large component of blue]. However, if the light emitted is quite dull [as it would certainly be with a medium to dark gray or blue cover] or the outer cover is any other colour then the lamp unit should be rejected.



So when the various lights are turned on, the question to ask is "Is it obviously a tail light, a stop light or an indicator?" And don't forget to check the reverse lights. This all may sound complex but remember, when they are on, tail and stop lights are red, indicators amber and headlights, parking lights and reversing lights are white.

One last thing to check with aftermarket units is the red rear reflectors. Many of the clear lens types have been found with this important item missing. If the original unit had an inbuilt red reflector then they have to be on the replacement unit also. This also applies when swapping OEM lamps for OEM lamps. For example, with the VX Commodore range, the Executive, S and SS rear lamp units did not have red reflectors - they were built into the rear skirt. So these units cannot be fitted to the Berlina or Calais both of which had the red reflector built into the lamp unit unless the skirt is changed too.

## Vehicle Damage & Structural Repair Reports

Following on from the article in Testing Times 21, the differences in the Vehicle Damage & Structural Repair Reports required by VIV inspectors and those required by a LVT needs more explanation.

When a VIV inspector requires a Report it helps if it comes from businesses on VicRoads' list of

Recognised Panel

Repairers as they are familiar with the requirements. The report must include a considerable amount of vehicle details, dimensions, repair

methods, etc. And even then, VIV

inspectors are required to check some of the information quoted to ensure that the report does accurately represent the vehicle.

When a LVT requires a Report the detail required will depend on the nature of the repair and what the LVT needs to know. The report face sheet properly filled out with a brief explanation from the panel shop may be enough in some cases. In cases where substantial issues are to be addressed, the LVT still needs enough information to be satisfied that the vehicle complies. An LVT is not expected to perform an extensive analysis of the report, however, caution is needed.

### YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE THE REPORT ON FACE VALUE!

Does the report relate to the vehicle you are looking at? Even if the VIN and other vehicle details match anyone can make what looks to be a genuine report using a scanner and a printer. How do you know the panel shop that issued the report is reputable, and for that matter, how do you know if the "panel shop" that supposedly issued the report even exists?

The risk is that if the "panel shop" cannot be found or if the panel shop that supposedly issued the report did not do so, then the ball is back in your court.

To protect yourself you need to remember that at the end of the day, you are the one issuing the Roadworthiness Certificate and therefore you are the one who is primarily accountable. If a person buys a vehicle on the strength of your Certificate and it is later found that you should

have realised the report was clearly wrong, then not only will you have VicRoads to deal with but, if the matter goes to court, you may end up wearing not only the cost of repairs but possibly substantial legal costs also.



The solution - the phone is your friend.

Ring the panel shop that issued the report and check that they exist and did really issue the

report you have in front of you. Confirm not only the vehicle details but the date the report was issued and make a record of your call and who you spoke to. If you are not familiar with the panel shop it would be wise to look them up in the phone book and call the



listed phone number rather than the one on the report. It would not be the first time that someone has altered a genuine report and put their mate's phone number on it just in case someone calls to check.

In summary, VIV's usually refer customers to panel shops on the recognised repairers list because those repairers are familiar with the more complex requirements. However, you can accept reports from other businesses once you are satisfied with their bona fides.

## SRS Reports

SRS reports are required when any SRS warning lights are active or if there are any physical signs of airbag or seat belt pretensioner deployment. Any covers that have been damaged during deployment must be replaced and not repaired.

There are two types of SRS reports.

1. Fault diagnosis and post crash reports.
2. Submerged vehicle reports

Fault diagnosis reports are completed by an authorised dealer of that make of vehicle. This is a system check using the appropriate scan tools to interrogate the system. This checks for fault codes and such and performs an integrity check to ascertain that all sensors, wiring and computer systems are correctly connected and

the system should work in the event of another crash.

Submerged vehicle reports cover the above but also include a requirement for as much physical dismantling as is required to ensure that the components have not been water contaminated, the propellants in airbags and seat belt pre-tensioners are still viable and no contamination of wiring links, etc has occurred. These are issues that require physical inspection as normal scan tool system checks will not always identify a problem.

Not all submerged vehicles are written off so if you find a vehicle that appears to have been swimming and there are signs of water having



been over ECU's, pre-tensioners or airbags you should request a full SRS system inspection.

### Temporary Seat Removal

Station wagons and hatchbacks have always been able to make seats 'disappear' by folding or other means. When those seats are 'gone' they cannot be used to carry passengers so if the seatbelts have 'gone' too, the compliance of the vehicle is not affected.

Folding the seats to carry large loads is not an issue as the vehicle can be easily returned to normal when the job is done. However, complete removal of the seats for these large loads or the fitting of a storage system is another matter. If the removal is permanent then the owner should notify VicRoads of a change in vehicle description. Some newer vehicles have a quick release system to allow the seats to be removed but for most vehicles this is a spanner job. If the seats and seatbelts are un-bolted and later refitted using the OEM mountings, nuts and bolts, etc then no engineer's reports or approval certificates are required as this is a normal trade process.

If a vehicle which has had seats removed either temporarily or permanently is presented for a roadworthy inspection you must record what you saw on your test report.. For example: two front seats only, drawer system fitted to rear.

The customer should also be told that re-installing the removed seats will make the current RWC invalid and they will need to get another roadworthy inspection. It is important to get this process right for your own protection and to ensure that customers do not incorrectly refit components or refit un-roadworthy components after your inspection.

### Mandatory Equipment Changes

The days of the mechanical brake testers are numbered. The old brake testers such as the Tapley and Bowmonk are to be phased out and replaced by electronic units with a printout facility.

The requirement for new licenses to have printout testers will commence from January 2009 and all licences will need to have them from January 2010.

The older devices do not provide an audit trail as they rely on your memory and they are also a major safety issue - an unrestrained (very) heavy weight sitting on the floor of the car could do enormous damage to you in a crash.

### Back Issues of Testing Times

Do you have a problem with finding that article you read a while ago in Testing Times but now cannot remember which issue it was? Or do you want to know whether a particular topic has already been covered in Testing Times before you phone your area supervisor to ask? Well, there is now an easy solution.



A CD has been produced which contains all the back issues of Testing Times [issues 1 to 20] and a subject index with hyperlinks so you can quickly jump back and forth between the index and each issue of Testing Times that covered that subject. You can also quickly go to any specific back issue of Testing Times to view or print off a copy. All on one little CD. Once you have a copy you will no longer have to keep paper copies of those back issues of Testing Times with their accumulation of greasy fingerprints, coffee rings and lunch stains, etc.

You can order your copy of the CD from the VicRoads bookshop - ph 03 9845 2782 or fax 03 9845 2468 for just \$15.00 each, which includes postage and handling.