

MY OWN TEST:

Enjoy your classic, *safely*.

The COOC guide to continuing to enjoy your car once the government MOT test is no longer mandatory for old cars.

A new roadworthy test, or MOT, comes into force on May 20th 2018.

Historic vehicles over 40 years old will have the option to opt out of the new scheme as they no longer need to pass an MOT to be allowed on UK roads.



Initially at least you will have the option to take your old car for an MOT, but as time moves forward that will become more and more difficult to do within the legal framework as the modern MOT test has aspects that cannot be applied to old cars.

The sensible thing would be for a two-tier arrangement to have been put in place, a different test for vehicles of different ages; the government, following advice and legislation from the EU, have not taken this route.

We, as a club, strongly recommend that you continue to have your car MOT inspected by a local garage you trust, preferably one that understands old cars.

That second pair of eyes to spot a cracked brake pipe or slightly weeping wheel cylinder, before you find yourself sailing towards the scene of the accident with no brakes, is very important.

The vast majority of COOC members were against this change, the committee were unanimously so, but we don't make the laws and cannot change it now.

Continuing to have your car MOT'd is also likely to make your classic car easier to insure.

We know that the club has a variety of members, some are happy to fit a new engine in a weekend, others are less experienced, but actually the majority of what is found in an MOT is logic and observation and even a mechanical novice can safety check a car to a fairly high degree of competency; you never know it might save your, or someone else's, life.

The First rule of COOC Club is TALK; about anything you spot that doesn't feel, look or sound right. You may not understand why but someone on the forum will, and if you don't ask you may regret it later.

If you spot a puddle on the ground, actually put some time into working out where it's coming from. Obvious, but I know but we've all ignored them at times...

Carrying out your own vehicle safety check is vital to maintain your classic to a safe standard of roadworthiness. Below are some guidelines to help you keep your vehicle safe. We suggest these checks be performed annually and in addition to your regular servicing procedures.

Safety

Safety should be your primary concern, for yourself and any assistant.

The vehicle should be parked on a solid, stable, and preferably level, road surface.

Before starting the checks make sure you have a good trolley jack (rated above the weight of your car) and a pair of strong axle stands.

DO NOT under any circumstances use the car's side jack, to carry out any of the under-body or suspension and brake inspections.

DO NOT support your car on bricks, there was a reason those magicians smashed them with a karate chop on 1980s Saturday night TV shows, they are a very crushable and unstable material under compression!

For checking the front end, jack under the main front suspension crossmember and place your axle stands on the chassis rails just behind the front outriggers. For the rear inspection the best place to jack is under the rear axle and place the stands either fore or aft of the springs on the main chassis rails.

NEVER go under your car on a jack alone.

Always make sure it is well supported by axle stands first.

Lighting and Horn

Check the operation of all lights, including stop lamps and indicators. Make sure they work correctly and do not flicker or light dimly. Flickering lights can indicate a wiring fault, which could lead to fire. If possible check the headlight aim. This can be done against a wall but obviously a beam setter would be more accurate.

Make sure the horn works. Many club cars have horns which don't work due to dirty fuse contacts

Wipers and Washers

Check operation of the wipers and screen washers. Make sure the blades are in good condition and do not smear the screen.

Make sure both washer jets work and the screen wash hits the screen in the right place.

Make sure there is enough tension in the wiper arms to keep the blades in contact with the screen across the whole travel of the wiper.

Seatbelts

Make sure the belts fasten securely and if inertia type they are working correctly. Check security of mountings and area round mountings for corrosion. If the belts are after-market ones fitted to the rear or in the front of early cars make sure they are fitted properly. Check they are not seriously frayed and would thus snap when called upon to actually restrain you.

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MY OAN TEST

The
Cambridge-Oxford
Owners Club

REGISTRATION	MODEL	MILEAGE	DATE
Lighting and Horn			
Headlamp Dip Beam			
Headlamp Main Beam			
Sidelights (Front & Rear)			
Indicators (Front & Rear)			
Brake Lamps			
Fog Lamps			
Reversing Lamp			
Check horn			
Wipers and Washers			
Blades in good condition and effective			
Washer jets both hit screen at right place			
Seatbelts			
Buckle working			
Mounting point solid			
Webbing not cut or damaged			
Under Bonnet			
Brake master cylinder secure and dry			
Brake pipes secure and dry			
Brake servo (if fitted) secure			
Battery secure (terminals and clamp)			
Check for fuel leaks around pipes and carburettor			
Check lighting wires for corroded or loose connections			

Steering & Front Suspension	
Check steering wheel is secure and amount of free play	
Steering not binding or tight spots	
Check ball joints for excessive play and worn rubber boots	
Check swivel pins for excessive play	
Spin wheels and listen for rumble or noisy bearings	
Grab wheel at top & bottom to check for excessive free play	
Check all rubber components for wear	
Check front shock absorbers for leaks	
Check front springs and pan for corrosion or breakage	
Check brake pipes and flexi hoses	
Check tyre tread, wear and sidewalls	
Rear Brakes and Suspension	
Check brake pipes and flexi hoses	
Check operation of handbrake and linkage	
Check rear leaf springs and shackles for wear	
Check rear shock absorbers secure and not leaking	
Check tyre tread, wear and sidewalls	
Exhaust and Underbody Checks	
Check exhaust for leaks, condition and security	
Check front to rear brake pipe and fuel lines for security and corrosion	
Corrosion, Body and Structure	
Check condition of chassis members and outriggers	
Check inner sills	
Check floor wells	

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Under Bonnet Inspection

Closely inspect the brake master cylinder and all visible brake pipes including the servo if one is fitted. These checks should be done while the brake pedal is pressed hard by your assistant. If a servo is fitted the engine should be running.

Make sure the battery is secure. Check around the engine for fuel leaks and finally have a look at any lighting wiring for corrosion or loose wires or broken insulation that could cause the lights to fail.

Steering, front suspension, front brakes and tyres.

Check the steering wheel is secure and assess the free play at the wheel which on a box system can be as much as three quarters of an inch or 19mm.

Then with the car jacked up on the centre cross member and the wheels hanging free turn the steering lock to lock making sure nothing binds or there are no tight spots.

Check all the ball joints for excessive play and torn rubber boots which will let dirt in and cause premature wear. Listen for undue noises when doing this test as that warns of wear as well.

Place a crow-bar or lever between the ground and bottom of the road wheel and lift up while checking the swivel pins for excessive play. Some movement is considered normal but not excessive amounts.

Spin the wheels and listen for rumbling or noisy wheel bearings. Then grab the wheel top and bottom to check for excessive free play.

Check the condition of all rubber bushes on the lower arms and the top fulcrum pins. Make sure the front shockers are not leaking excessively. Then have a close look at the front springs and spring pans. You are checking for broken coils usually at the bottom of the spring plus making sure the spring pan is structurally sound as they can rust through.

While the car is jacked at the front, get someone to press the brake pedal hard while you check all the pipes and flexi hoses for leaks, corrosion and cracks or splits in the rubber hoses. Also make sure the brake locks and releases.

Last job before you drop the front of the car down is to check the tyres for condition and tread depth. Remember to look carefully at the side walls and between the treads for excessive cracking. This is a big problem with tyres on cars that don't get a lot of use.

Rear Brakes and Suspension

With the car raised and safely on stands get an assistant to press the brake then check all brake hoses and pipes for leaks, corrosion and splits or cracks in the flexi hose.

Get your assistant to work the handbrake on and off and then apply hard while you check the cable and links and clevis pins for correct operation, security and the cable for broken stands and excessive wear. Check the wheels lock and release when both the foot brake and then the hand brake are applied.

While the rear of your vehicle is raised check the rear springs and shackles for wear, broken leaves and split or worn bushes. Then make sure the shockers are not loose or leaking.



Final check before dropping the car is of course the rear wheels and tyres. In the same way as you did at the front.

Exhaust and underbody checks

While the car is jacked up check the exhaust for leaks, condition and security. Then check the front to rear brake pipes and fuel pipes for security of attachment and corrosion.

Corrosion, Body and Structure

Most of these checks can be made while inspecting the sections above and should include a thorough inspection of all chassis members and outriggers, inner sills and floorwell. Finger and thumb pressure is all that is required or tap with a small screwdriver handle.

The carpets should be lifted to check the floors above the front and rear outriggers. Also check the inner sills within the car especially around seat belt mounts.

These safety checks should only take about an hour or so and should be carried out if possible with an assistant.

Remember an independent second pair of eyes is always a good idea as well as doing your own checks. It is all too easy to be complacent and you may not have a second chance at complacency.

Steve Turner, Eddie Foster and John Lakey