



Walsall Council

REPORT OF THE INTERIM REGULATORY MANAGER
TO A MEETING OF THE LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2012
LICENSED VEHICLE TESTING FREQUENCY

1.0 Summary of report

- 1.1 To further advise Members on the failure rates for mechanical testing of licensed vehicles from May 2012 to October 2012 during which time vehicles of over 3 years of age continued to be tested on a reduced frequency basis (every 6 months).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 For Members of the committee to consider the report and to determine the required frequency of testing for all licensed vehicles over three years of age (taken from date of first registration). The resolved testing regime, to be effective from the 1 January 2013.
- 2.2 That vehicles under 3 years of age continue to be tested on an annual basis only.
- 2.3 That the Licensing and Safety Committee continue to be advised of the failure rates of licensed vehicles following Taxi/Private Hire Liaison Group meetings so that remedial measures can be considered if necessary.

3.0 Background information

- 3.1 Following a report of Fleet Services/M.O.T Test Centre being submitted to the Licensing and Safety Committee on the 21st April 2010, it was resolved that 'Two M.O.T tests for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles over three years of age be introduced for a trial period of twelve months commencing on 1st May 2010' .

- 3.2 Due to the fact that a number of vehicles had been licensed prior to the 1st May 2010 and were therefore, being tested every 4 months, in order to minimise disruption and confusion to the licensed trade, and causing already pre booked test dates to be rearranged by the M.O.T test centre, a meeting with representatives of the taxi trade was held to highlight the potential difficulties of full implementation from the 1st May 2010. It was agreed that vehicles currently licensed under the old regime (i.e. tested every 4 months) would continue to be tested every 4 months until they had completed the full 12 month cycle. Once they had had their 3 tests for the year, they would then fall onto the 6 month vehicle testing regime.
- 3.3 On the 20 October 2010 in light of 3.2 the Committee further resolved that six monthly MOT testing be extended from twelve months to two years so that all vehicles within the licensed fleet can obtain the benefit of six monthly tests so that the pass/fail figures are reflective of the entire fleet. This two year period came to an end on the 1 May 2012.
- 3.4 The actual decision to reduce the frequency of testing in 2010 was made in light of the fact that since 2007 the failure rate for all licensed vehicles undergoing mechanical inspection had fallen from approximately 60% to 40% in 2009.
- 3.5 There are currently 724 licensed vehicles over 3 years of age. 111 hackney carriage and 613 private hire vehicles.
- 3.6 The pass/fail rates for all licensed vehicles have been regularly reported to the Taxi Liaison Committee as information items since the trial period began in 2010.
- 3.7 Over the initial first two year period the failure rate for such vehicles was never above 40%.
- 3.8 Failure items are predominantly headlight aim, bulbs, suspension, brakes and tyres.
- 3.9 In April 2012 a report was submitted to this committee giving failure rates for licensed vehicles covering the period from May 2010 to April 2012. At that time the failure rate (for the entire 2 year period) for hackney carriage vehicles was 32% and 33% for private hire vehicles.
- 3.10 At this committee it was resolved that the trial period be extended for a further six months so that committee members could be further advised on failure rates.
- 3.11 The current average failure rate (covering the period May 2012 to October 2012) is 25% for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

4.0 Resource considerations

4.1 **Financial:** With the current trial testing regime, there has been a loss of 1 vehicle test/year at the Councils Testing Station for all vehicles over 3 years of age. The current test fee is £45.

4.2 **Legal:** Section 50 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 states in part that the Council shall not require a proprietor to present the same hackney carriage or private hire vehicle for inspection and testing on more than three separate occasions during any one period of twelve months.

5.0 Citizen impact

5.1 None

6.0 Community Safety

6.1 The Council may require licensed vehicles to be tested up to 3 times/year

7.0 Environmental impact

7.1 None.

8.0 Performance and risk management issues

8.1 None

9.0 Equality implications

9.1 None.

10.0 Consultation

10.1 Taxi/Private Hire Liaison Group.

11.0 Contact Officer

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