

The 'Minute Or Two' check to help your car pass it's next MOT

Before you take your vehicle for its annual MOT test, garages also recommend that you carry out a number of quick and easy visual checks to give your car the best chance of passing the test – saving you time and money.

Around 1.5 million vehicles fail their MOT due to simple things such as faulty bulbs, too little tyre tread, or even empty windscreen washer fluid bottles. It's possible to anticipate most of these issues with a quick check of your car. It only takes a 'Minute Or Two'!

If you do find any faults that you're unable to easily rectify yourself, it's advisable to notify your Independent Garage in advance so they can complete the work required before the test is carried out. Identifying the work before an MOT test will allow the problems to be rectified, so the car will be far more likely to pass its MOT test first time around.

The Minute Or Two check

1. Headlights and indicators

Check that all of your car's lights function properly – headlights, sidelights, rear lights, hazard Lights and indicators.

2. Brake lights

Press the brake pedal and ask a friend to check that the rear brake lights come on – including any supplementary brake strip light. Alternatively, carefully reverse up to a reflective surface (window, wall or garage door) and look behind to see for yourself.

3. Number plate

Make sure that the number plate is clean and legible – even a quick wipe with a cloth can make a difference. The font and spacing of letters must also comply with legal requirements to be passed by the MOT station.

4. Wheels and tyres

Check that wheels and tyres are undamaged. The minimum legal tyre tread depth is 1.6mm and any tyres with less than this will be marked as an MOT 'fail' (though it's recommended

that tyres are changed when tread reaches 3mm). If you're in doubt about how much tread is left on a tyre, your Independent Garage can check for you. The garage can also advise on the type of tyre that is right for your car if a replacement is required.

5. Seats and seatbelts

The driver's seat should adjust forwards and backwards and all seatbelts should be in good, working order. Test movement of the seat and inspect the seatbelt's full length for damage.

Tug sharply on all seatbelts to check that they react as they're supposed to if you have to

Brake severely.

6. Windscreen

Check the view out of the front of the car for damage – any damage larger than 40mm will

Cause a 'fail', as will any damage wider than 10mm in the 'swept' area of the windscreen in front of the driver.

7. Windscreen wipers

Make sure your wipers are able to keep your windscreen clean – any tears or holes in the

Wiper rubber can be an MOT fail.

8. Screen wash

Top up the washer bottle before taking the car in for a test – something as simple as an

empty container can cause an MOT fail.

9. Horn

Give a short blast of the horn – if it doesn't work, your garage needs to repair or replace it.

10. Fuel and engine oil

Make sure your car is filled with enough fuel and engine oil – you can be turned away from the MOT without suitable levels of either, both of which are required by the garage when running the car to test its emissions levels. If you are unsure about the type of oil that should be used, ask your Independent garage.

Note: When checking fluid levels and handling parts that could become hot to the touch (eg. bulbs), it's always best to ensure that the vehicle has had an opportunity to cool down fully.