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MOT inspection manual: motorcycles

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Introduction

Definitions, vehicle classes, reasons to refuse to test a vehicle, historic vehicles, and inspection procedures for motorcycle MOT tests.

1. Abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviation or term	Definition
abandon	When a test cannot be completed because the tester considers it unsafe to continue or because it becomes apparent during the test that certain items cannot be satisfactorily inspected. An appropriate fee may be charged for the test.
abort	When a test cannot be completed because of a problem with the test equipment or the tester. No fee may be charged for the test.
AE	Authorised Examiner – the organisation that operates and manages one or more VTS and is responsible for controlling the quality of testing carried out. The AE is not a person but a legal entity, such as a company or partnership, except in the case of a ‘sole trader’.
category L1 vehicle	Two-wheeled moped with a maximum speed up to 45km/h, internal combustion engine up to 50cc or electric motor up to 4kW maximum continuous rated power
category L3 vehicle	Solo motorcycle with an internal combustion engine over 50cc and/or a maximum speed over 45km/h

Abbreviation or term	Definition
category L4 vehicle	Motorcycle combination with an internal combustion engine over 50cc and/or a maximum speed over 45km/h
CT	Contingency testing – the test process using paper documentation when the online MOT testing service is not available
CT20	An MOT test certificate issued during a period of contingency testing.
CT30	A refusal of an MOT test certificate issued during a period of contingency testing.
DVSA	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
insecure	A component has relative movement (looseness) at its fixings where there should be none, a component has relative movement (looseness) to an associated component where there should be none, or a component critical to safety is not safely or completely attached at its fixing or to an associated component.
MOT Testing Guide	A handbook for MOT scheme administration available at https://www.gov.uk/topic/mot/manuals
MOT testing service	Internet based system for registering MOT tests, producing MOT documentation and performing certain administrative functions
special notice	An official notice issued by DVSA to inform AEs, testers and other system users of changes and developments to the testing scheme, and to highlight concerns
VT20	An MOT test certificate which includes the Welsh language version (VT20W)
VT30	A notice of refusal of an MOT test certificate including the Welsh counterpart (VT30W)
VTs	Vehicle Testing Station
V5/V5C	Vehicle registration certificate issued by DVSA
you	MOT tester

2. Application (Classes 1 and 2)

This manual is a detailed guide to the inspection for statutory MOT testing of the following classes:

- Class 1 - motorcycle or motorcycle combination up to 200cc
- Class 2 - all motorcycles or motorcycle combinations including Class 1

Classes 1 and 2 both include categories L1, L3 or L4.

A motorcycle combination has at least one wheeled element that's clearly a sidecar. It's acceptable if changes have been made to a solo motorcycle's components such as brakes, tyres and suspension when it's been adapted for use with a sidecar.

Other than for the inspection of tyres, any two wheels of a motorcycle shall be regarded as one wheel if the distance between the centres of the areas of contact between the wheels and the road surface is less than 460mm. You should be aware that this may affect the test class, for example a three-wheeled vehicle with a wheel layout more than 460mm must be tested as a tricycle (Class 3).

3. Motorcycles of historical interest (over 40 years old)

Some motorcycles of historical interest may be exempt from Statutory MOT testing. Such motorcycles must be over 40 years old and not substantially changed.

Owners of these motorcycles may still request a statutory test be conducted. In these circumstances, the test must be registered on the MOT testing service and carried out in the usual way, with the necessary documentation issued as appropriate.

Some historic motorcycles' components may have been manufactured to have a greater degree of play or tolerance than in modern motorcycles.

If you or your assistant are not familiar with the controls of a historic motorcycle, you should ask the vehicle presenter - if available - to operate or demonstrate the controls.

4. Refusal to test

Legislation permits testers to refuse to test motorcycles in certain circumstances. If any of the reasons for refusal (see below) apply, you should not carry out the test and must return any fee paid for the test. You should carry out appropriate pre-checks before starting the test, to ensure the suitability and general condition of the motorcycle. If the motorcycle presenter needs written confirmation of why the test cannot be carried out, you should register the test using the MOT testing service and issue a VT30 clearly showing the reason(s) why the test could not be carried out.

If the reason for refusal 'i' applies, you should issue a handwritten CT30 and include as many of the motorcycle details as possible. A copy of the CT30 should be retained by the VTS.

The reasons for refusing to carry out the test are:

- a. The log book / registration certificate or other evidence of the date of first use is not shown. Normally this evidence is only necessary if the motorcycle has a 'cherished' registration mark (also referred to as personalised registration number) or if the registration mark's year letter does not make clear the standard that should be applied.
- b. The motorcycle or any part or equipment on the vehicle is so dirty that examination is unreasonably difficult.
- c. The motorcycle is not fit to be driven when necessary to complete the test because of a lack of fuel, or oil, or for any other reason.

- d. The tester considers a load or other items, or insecurity of a load or other items, would prevent a proper test being carried out – unless the load is secured or removed.
- e. The VTS asks for the fee to be paid in advance and this is not done.
- f. The motorcycle emits substantial quantities of avoidable smoke.
- g. A proper examination cannot be carried out because any cover, fuel cap or other device designed to be easily opened cannot be easily opened.
- h. The condition of the motorcycle is such that, in the opinion of the tester, a proper examination would involve a danger of injury to any person or damage to the motorcycle or other property.
- i. The motorcycle does not have a registration mark or VIN, chassis number, frame number by which it can be identified, or that all such identifications are illegible or use letters and numbers not normally used in the English language.

If despite due care initially, it becomes apparent during a test that the test cannot be completed for any of the above reasons, the test must be abandoned, or the motorcycle failed because the test could not be satisfactorily completed. Any subsequent re-examination and fee must be in line with normal policy. See the MOT fees and appeals poster (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mot-test-fees-and-appeals-poster-vt9a>) (VT9A) for further information.

In addition to the above reasons you must decline to test any motorcycle that is not of a class you are authorised to test or it's of such a size, weight or configuration it cannot be properly or safely tested on the approved facilities. You should also decline to test a motorcycle that has the frame stamped with 'not for road use' or similar words.

5. Motorcycle 'first used' dates - application of test criteria

Usually you'll be given the details of the motorcycle as part of the registration process. This will usually include the motorcycle's 'first used' date. If this information is available, you should only use defects appropriate for the motorcycle's age.

When the 'first used' date is not known or incorrect, you should determine the motorcycle's 'first used' date as follows:

- a. Its date of manufacture, if the motorcycle was originally used without being registered in GB, such as an imported motorcycle or ex-HM Forces motorcycle.
- b. Motorcycles with a Q plate registration when presented for MOT are to be treated as being first used on 1 January 1971.
- c. In any other case, the earlier of either its date of first registration or the date six months after it was manufactured. For example, motorcycles first used on or after 1 April 1986 must have stop lamps that are operated from both brake controls, but a motorcycle first used after that date, but manufactured at least 6 months before (1 October 1985) that date would not need to comply with this requirement.

This information should be entered onto the MOT testing service to let the tester select the appropriate defects.

6. The inspection manual

Although this manual is publicly available, it's specifically written for MOT testers. It specifies the applications, procedures and standards to be used for motorcycle MOT testing. You must read it with any current special notices relevant to the class or type of motorcycle under test.

You should familiarise yourself with the contents of the manual and any amendments to it, including special notices which affect test procedures or standards.

The manual numbering system follows that of the European Roadworthiness Directive. Some Directive items do not apply to motorcycles, which is why there are gaps in the numbering.

Defects found during the MOT test must be categorised in one of the following groups:

- minor - defects having no significant effect on the safety of the motorcycle or impact on the environment and other minor non-compliances
- major - defects that may prejudice the safety of the motorcycle, have an impact on the environment, put other road users at risk or other more significant non-compliances
- dangerous - defects constituting a direct and immediate risk to road safety or having an impact on the environment

If a motorcycle has only minor defects, it will pass its MOT inspection and a test certificate will be issued. If a motorcycle has any major or dangerous defects, it must be failed and a refusal notice issued.

7. Motorcycle technical data

The MOT testing service may give testers technical information about certain motorcycles under test. This is to help testers choose the correct test methods and/or apply the correct standards.

8. The MOT testing guide

The MOT testing guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mot-testing-guide>) explains what is required of persons and organisations authorised to conduct statutory tests on motorcycles. It also includes, amongst other things, information on the administration of the MOT scheme, disciplinary procedures and equipment calibration requirements.

9. Assessment of component condition

It is not practicable to lay down limits of wear and tolerances for all types of components on different models of motorcycle, or to define acceptable amounts of damage, deterioration and effectiveness. You are therefore expected to use your knowledge, experience and judgement to assessing if the condition of a component has reached the stage where it's obviously adversely affecting its functionality or likely to adversely affect the roadworthiness of the motorcycle.

10. Definition of insecure

The term 'insecure' is used many times throughout this manual to describe a defective condition. This term should be taken to mean one of the following:

- a component has relative movement (looseness) at its fixings where there should be none
- a component has relative movement (looseness) to an associated component where there should be none
- a component critical to safety is not safely or completely attached at its fixing or to an associated component

Wheel security has specific criteria detailed in the manual.

11. Unsafe modification

Modifications to motorcycles must be assessed on their merits, taking account of the nature of the modification and whether the component is safety critical.

The main criteria to be used are whether the modification adversely affects the roadworthiness of the motorcycle, or it's likely to cause injury.

12. Inspection procedure

You are advised to carry out pre-checks to ensure the general condition and suitability of the motorcycle for test. Other than when using a contingency test (CT) code, a test must not commence until you have registered the motorcycle for test in the MOT testing service (see MOT testing guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mot-testing-guide>)).

When registering a motorcycle for test, the actual details from the motorcycle must be used. It is not acceptable to use details from other sources such as the V5C, job card or previous electronic record.

The tester who registered the motorcycle for test must personally carry out the test, without avoidable distraction or interruption and only the tester is empowered to make decisions about the test results. The tester must use a suitable assistant for certain parts of the inspection.

Small tools, such as pinch bars, levers and the corrosion assessment tool must be used when necessary. A hand held inspection mirror may be used in the inspection but it is not mandatory.

The MOT test must be carried out without dismantling, so it is not always possible to inspect some testable items. Access panels, covers and seats designed to be easily removed or opened without tools must be removed or opened when necessary, so that the testable items can be inspected. You must abandon or refuse to carry out the test if it is not possible to test an item because an access panel, cover or a seat does not open despite having been designed to be easily opened.

Solo machines without a centre-stand should be jacked to raise the wheels clear of the ground to check steering and suspension. It is not recommended to pull a machine over on the side-stand.

Once the inspection is completed, you must record the test results in the MOT testing service (see MOT testing guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mot-testing-guide>)).

If testing under CT, you must calculate brake efficiencies and retain the readings for later data entry. You should record all results on the VT29 and retain any printout. Refer to the MOT testing guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mot-testing-guide>) for a full explanation of CT procedures.

Recommended inspection routine

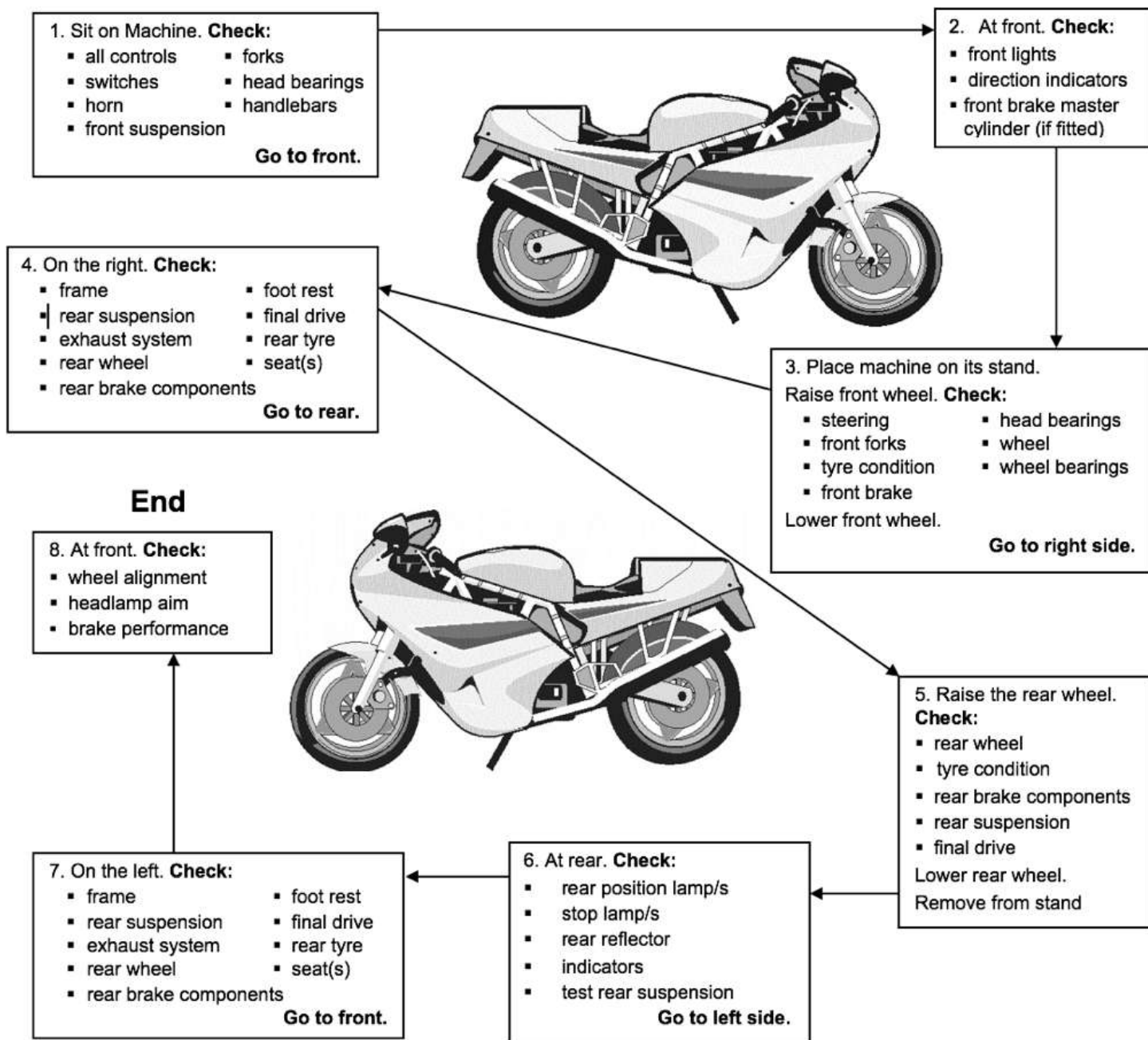
Diagram 1 shows a DVSA recommended inspection routine for a motorcycle. The routine may need to be varied to suit different test bay layouts and equipment types. It's recommended that the brake performance test is not carried out until after the rest of the inspection to prevent an unknown defect causing injury to a person, damage to the motorcycle or other property.

Before starting the inspection, check reasons to refuse/decline to test items.

It may be necessary to use an assistant for certain checks. It's therefore advisable that an assistant remains with the tester for the whole duration of the test.

Diagram 1. Recommended inspection routine

Start



13. Road testing

The statutory test does not specifically include a road test of the motorcycle. However, one is permitted if you think it's necessary to check the results of an inspection. You must have an appropriate licence to ride the motorcycle and make sure the motorcycle is in a safe condition to conduct the road test.

14. Disabled rider's controls

If a disabled rider's control or fitment is additional to the standard rider's controls (such as a thumb operated brake) and does not adversely affect the standard motorcycle equipment, it does not need to be tested. However, if any such equipment is defective, it should be reported to the vehicle presenter.

Disabled motorcycle controls or fitments that replace or affect the standard controls should be tested in the normal way and any defects recorded as usual.

15. Health and safety

AEs and their staff must adhere to all relevant health and safety legislation while MOT testing. You can find out more from your local health and safety enforcement officer or local authority environmental health officers.

You should be careful when testing electric and hybrid motorcycles, because they have many high voltage components such as storage capacitors and batteries. A hybrid motorcycle's engine may start without warning if electrical equipment is operated or if the battery voltage drops.

16. Recording defects

Defects covered in this manual are selected from a component-based menu system in the MOT testing service. You will first select the appropriate component from the main component list and then make further selections from the sub-menu(s). Once you've selected the appropriate component, a list of defects will be available for selection. Various defect categories may be available for the same item depending on the nature or severity of the defect – minor, major or dangerous. You must select the appropriate category, guided by the defect wording and use your knowledge, experience and judgement.

When an item is not sufficiently deteriorated to justify rejection, there may be an option to select 'advisory' to inform the presenter of this fact.

When only minor defects have been selected, a test certificate will still be issued. Unlike advisory items, the use of minor defects, where appropriate, is mandatory.

If you think that a defect on a non-testable item is dangerous, you should explain it to the motorcycle presenter. Some defects listed in the inspection manual may not be accessible if they are not relevant due to the age of the motorcycle. However, advisory items (if appropriate) for these defects may still be selectable.

17. Retest following failure

Information on retest fees and procedures can be found in the current MOT testing guide and on the 'MOT fees and appeals' poster (VT9A).

When carrying out a partial retest you must examine:

- all the previously failed item(s)
- any item(s) that may have been affected by the repairs
- any minor defect or item advised on at the time of the initial test

If during a retest it's clear that the motorcycle has any major or dangerous defects, you must issue a new VT30.