

Vehicle Standards Compliance Amendment (No 2) 2013

Questions and answers

What is the purpose of the amendment Rule?

Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Standards Compliance Amendment (No 2) 2013 makes the law changes agreed by Cabinet to the frequency of in-service vehicle inspections (that is, warrant of fitness (WoF) and certificate of fitness (CoF)).

Warrant of fitness

What are the changes to the WoF system?

Currently, WoF inspections are annual for vehicles up to six years old and six-monthly thereafter.

The new WoF package applies to all light vehicles (those weighing 3.5 tonnes or less). It includes:

- an initial inspection for new vehicles, then no further inspections until the vehicle is three years old, then annual inspections for the lifetime of the vehicle.
- annual inspections for vehicles three years and older that were first registered anywhere on or after 1 January 2000. These vehicles will remain on annual inspections for their lifetime.

There is no change for vehicles first registered anywhere before 1 January 2000. They will remain on six-monthly inspections for their lifetime.

When will the changes to the WoF inspection frequency be introduced?

The new WoF inspection frequencies will be phased-in in two stages.

1. From **1 January 2014**, a vehicle first registered anywhere in the world **on or after 1 January 2004** (eg, up to nine years old) will move to annual WoF inspections for the lifetime of the vehicle.
2. From **1 July 2014**, other vehicles first registered anywhere in the world **on or after 1 January 2000** will move to annual WoFs for the lifetime of the vehicle. Also from this date, a new vehicle will require an initial inspection, then won't require another inspection until three years after its date of first registration. It will then be on annual inspections for its lifetime.

Why are WoF frequency changes being phased-in?

Phasing-in the amended WoF inspection frequencies will help the vehicle inspection industry adapt to the changes in demand for inspection services as a result of the frequency changes. The phasing-in will allow a more even distribution of demand for vehicle inspection services over a 12-month period. Without the phase-in there would be a period of low demand for WoF inspections each year.

1 August

Is 1 January 2000 a fixed cut-off date for six-monthly inspections?

Yes. This is a once only cut-off date, not a rolling date.

Any vehicle registered before 1 January 2000 anywhere in the world will remain on six-monthly inspections after these changes come into force. As pre-2000 vehicles are retired, the proportion of these vehicles in the fleet will decrease. Projections indicate that by 2020, approximately 370,000 light vehicles will be left on six-monthly inspections. This is about 13 percent of the projected light vehicle fleet at that time.

Do these changes apply to all light vehicles that receive a WoF?

Yes, this change applies to all vehicles that receive a WoF, including cars, utes, trailers, caravans, motorcycles etc.

Are there any vehicles that receive a WoF that are not covered by the changes?

Yes. There are some heavy vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes) that receive a WoF, for which the inspection frequency will not change.

Why are vehicles older than 1 January 2000 remaining on six-monthly inspections?

Safety data suggests there is an increase in crashes related to defects that can be picked up at WoF inspections when vehicles are around 12 years-old. However, the increase is small and is reducing over time as new vehicle quality improves. The government is taking a precautionary approach by keeping vehicles older than 1 January 2000 on six-monthly inspections until they leave New Zealand's vehicle fleet.

What do I need to do to change my vehicle to the new system?

Motorists are not required to do anything different as a result of the changes. They will take their vehicle for an inspection as usual either before, or when its current WoF expires, and the inspection agent will issue a new warrant for the appropriate period (if the vehicle passes).

Under the new WoF frequency requirements will I still need to get a new WoF for my vehicle if I sell it?

Yes. The existing law that requires a vehicle to have a new WoF within one month before the date of delivery to a purchaser has not changed. This applies to all vehicles, regardless of their age.

What happens if I need to get a WoF and my vehicle is less than three years old?

If your vehicle is less than three years old, you will still need to take it for a WoF inspection when your existing WoF expires (or because you are selling the vehicle). However, the WoF inspector will take the age of the vehicle into account when issuing your new WoF. For example, if your vehicle is 18 months old, you will be issued with a new WoF that would last 18 months. If your vehicle has less than 12 months before it turns three, you will receive a 12 month WoF.

Under the new WoF frequency requirements, if my vehicle requires only annual inspections but I want to have my vehicle inspected at any time, can I? If so, will the new WoF be issued for another full year or will the earlier expiry date still apply?

You don't have to wait until your WoF expires to get your vehicle inspected. The date of expiry of the new warrant of fitness will be in 12 months' time.

Will the reforms affect businesses that provide WoF inspections?

A reduction in the inspection frequency will affect inspecting organisations because there will be fewer vehicle inspections required. The vehicle inspection and repair industry will have a lead-in time to adjust to the changed environment and New Zealanders will continue to have good access to inspection services.

Why is change needed?

Vehicle technology has dramatically improved since six-monthly inspections were first introduced in the 1930s. International research and analysis of New Zealand crash data shows that vehicle defects play a very small role in road crashes and, overall, their contribution to vehicle crashes has been decreasing.

New Zealand had one of the most frequent vehicle inspection systems in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). Each year, New Zealanders spend about \$245 million on inspection fees and about \$100 million in time getting WoFs. Because vehicles are now of a better quality they don't need to be checked so often. Too frequent checking can mean unnecessary costs for motorists.

An annual inspection will maintain regular checks on vehicle roadworthiness while providing savings to motorists. The changes in the frequency of inspections will be supported by measures such as an information campaign and a sharper Police enforcement focus to encourage motorists to take responsibility for the safety of their vehicle.

What part does vehicle inspection play in road safety?

Periodic inspection of our vehicles by qualified mechanics is an important check that our vehicles comply with safety requirements at a point in time.

While more than 97% of crashes are caused by factors such as alcohol and speed, vehicle defects can also cause or exacerbate crashes.

Defects can occur at any time between inspections so it is important not to wait for your current WoF to expire before checking your vehicle. This is why education and communication measures are an important part of implementing the WoF changes.

What percentage of crashes is due to WoF-related defects?

Based on New Zealand crash data, 2.5% of vehicles involved in fatal and injury crashes have defects that would be detected by a WoF inspection. Other contributing factors could be speed, alcohol or loss of control. Only 0.5 % of all fatal and injury crashes have vehicle factors cited as the sole cause of the crash.

Will there be any safety risks and if so, how will these be countered?

The package of changes includes measures aimed at preventing any adverse impacts on safety as a result of the changed frequencies. The reform package takes a precautionary approach to older vehicles by keeping pre-2000 vehicles on six-monthly inspections. It also includes a public information programme supported by focussed Police enforcement to encourage New Zealanders to keep their vehicles safe.

What will be included in the information campaign?

Detailed planning, including timing, for a three-year \$2million public information campaign is currently underway. In broad terms, the campaign aims to:

- increase awareness among vehicle owners that they need to take responsibility for the safety of their vehicle all year round
- encourage vehicle owners to proactively check their vehicle is in a roadworthy condition at all times and to seek expert advice if concerned about anything.

The campaign is expected to have three aspects:

- 1: Telling people they're responsible for the safety of their vehicle all year round.
- 2: Telling people some key things they (or a professional) should check to maintain a safe vehicle.
- 3: Telling people the Police will also be checking for certain things to ensure vehicles are safe.

It is expected that the campaign will use a range of mediums to inform the public. These could include vehicle-related locations and radio advertising, a website, brochures, radio etc.

The information campaign will be supported by focussed Police enforcement activities.

What will additional enforcement activities include?

When Police stop a vehicle for a suspected offence, such as speeding, or other routine roadside inspections, there will be an increased emphasis on carrying out a basic visual safety inspection of the vehicle.

1 August

Are these changes related to the changes to WoF requirements for agricultural vehicles?

No. Changes to the inspection requirements for some agricultural vehicles are the result of a separate review that aims to simplify and clarify the Rules for using agricultural vehicles on public roads. More information about these changes is available on the NZ Transport Agency's website.

Vintage and veteran vehicles

Have any changes been made to the inspection frequencies for older vehicles such as veteran or vintage vehicles?

No. The amendment Rule does not change the inspection frequency for vintage and veteran vehicles.

Why has no change been made to the inspection frequency for veteran or vintage vehicles?

A range of views were received by submitters on the issue of reducing the frequency of inspections for veteran and/or vintage vehicles. Issues raised included unintentionally creating loopholes and complications in the system and whether the current definitions of veteran and vintage vehicles are appropriate.

Officials concluded that no clear view had been presented and there would need to be further investigation to ensure there are no unintended consequences from any changes. At this point, no further work on this issue is planned.

Certificate of fitness

What changes have been made to the CoF system?

The NZ Transport Agency currently has the ability to vary the inspection frequency for certificates of fitness between three and nine months depending on an assessment of the vehicle's risk to safety. The amendment Rule has extended the range from three to nine months to three to 12 months. The default inspection frequency will remain at six months.

When will the changes to the CoF inspection frequency be introduced?

The extended variable inspection frequency for CoF will be introduced on 1 July 2014.

What is the purpose of having variable inspection periods for CoFs?

Variable inspection frequencies for heavy vehicles are designed to provide an incentive for operators to maintain the safety of their vehicles.

Rental vehicles

Has the inspection frequency for Class MA rental service vehicles been changed?

No. The amendment has not made provision to apply a variable CoF inspection frequency to rental vehicles. Consultation on the question of the appropriate requirements for these vehicles was inconclusive, with submitters varying in their suggestions for inspection frequency requirements.

In recognition of the commercial use and increased exposure to risk, light vehicles used in rental services undergo CoF inspections rather than WoF. After an initial inspection, rental vehicles must have a CoF inspection after one year, then every six months.

General

What is the authority for making the amendment Rule?

Section 152 of the *Land Transport Act 1998* sets out the Minister's general power to make Land Transport Rules.

Section 155(a), and (e) provides for the Minister of Transport to make Land Transport Rules that:

- set out standards and requirements concerning vehicles, including their construction, mass and dimensions, emissions, environmental requirements, loading requirements, identification, repair, maintenance, modification, inspection, and fuel systems; and
- that provide for the periodical or other examination of motor vehicles and the issue of evidence of vehicle inspection.

Where can I get a copy of the amendment Rule?

Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Standards Compliance 2002 and its amendments are available from selected bookshops that sell legislation or direct from the printers, Wickliffe Solutions (telephone (06) 353 2700). Land Transport Rules are also available on the NZ Transport Agency's website at [URL]. **Rules can also be inspected at the National Office and regional offices of the NZ Transport Agency**

Where can I get more information about the Rule changes?

More information about the amendment Rule is available from the NZ Transport Agency Contact Centre, on 0800 699 000. The NZTA will also be updating the relevant information material on its website.