

Warrant of Fitness (WoF) changes

1 July 2014

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why is the WoF system changing?

Investigations conducted by the NZ Transport Agency and the Ministry of Transport found that:

- Vehicle technology has dramatically improved since six-monthly inspections were introduced in the 1930s.
- Crash data shows that vehicle defects play a very small role in road crashes.
- Checking vehicles so often places unnecessary costs on motorists
- Changes to the frequency of WoF inspections could save motorists time and money while maintaining road safety.

What are the changes?

The changes are summarised in the table below.

Length of WoF for light motor vehicles from 1 July 2014

Excludes agricultural motor vehicles.

Note that changes come into effect once the current WoF expires.

When was the vehicle first registered anywhere in the world	How long the WoF is issued for
New vehicle that's never been registered	WoF is issued for three years
Less than two years ago	WoF is issued to the vehicle's third 'birthday' (third anniversary of when it was first registered)
More than two years ago, but less than three years ago	WoF is issued for 12 months
On or after 1 January 2000	WoF is issued for 12 months
Before 1 January 2000.	WoF is issued for 6 months

Can you provide some different scenario's to explain the different WoF lengths?

EXAMPLE 1

An 18-month old car is being sold and the owner takes it in for a WoF inspection (cars have to be sold with a WoF that's less than one month old).

The new WoF will be issued for 18 months through to the third anniversary of when it was first registered.

EXAMPLE 2

The owner of a car that's two years and six months old decides to take it their local garage for a WoF inspection.

The new WoF will be issued for 12 months – as it's only six months until the cars third anniversary of its first registration.

EXAMPLE 3

A car that was first registered in July 2002 has a WoF that expires on 30 August 2014. Following the changes on 1 July it will be given a 12 month WoF when it passes its next WoF inspection.

It's important to note that the owner still needs to take it in for a WoF inspection when the current WoF expires before it will be given a 12 month WoF.

What are the benefits of making these changes to the WoF system?

The package of changes could benefit New Zealanders by around \$159 million each year, while still keeping our vehicles and roads safe (the value of the benefits is \$1.8 billion over 30 years).

How does New Zealand's vehicle inspection system compare with other countries?

New Zealand has 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.

What measures are the Transport Agency putting in place to support this change?

The WoF changes are being supported by the Transport Agency's \$2 million, three-year Check Your Car public awareness campaign which encourages people to take an active role in keeping their vehicles safe and properly maintained throughout the year.

The Check your Car campaign reaches motorists through a range of media, including radio, billboards, petrol station advertising, brochures, posters, You Tube clips, and practical tools like tyre tread checker key rings.

The campaign promotes people regularly checking things on their car such as Tyres, Windscreen, Indicators, Rust and Lights (TWIRL).

NZ Police will also support the campaign by undertaking vehicle compliance checks to make sure cars are roadworthy.

How regular are WoF inspections currently?

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

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

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

Why were the WoF changes phased-in?

The changes to the WoF system were phased-in to help the vehicle inspection industry adapt to the changes in demand for inspection services as a result of the frequency changes. It will effectively even out the impacts of the changes, which would otherwise create seasonal demand for vehicle inspection services.

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

Yes. This is not a rolling cut-off date.

From 1 July 2014, any vehicle registered before 1 January 2000 anywhere in the world will remain on six-monthly inspections until it leaves the vehicle fleet.

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 light vehicle fleet of that time.

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

Safety data suggests when current vehicles are around 12 years old, there's an increase in crashes related to defects that could be picked up at a WoF inspection. So the Transport Agency is taking a precautionary approach by keeping vehicles older than 1 January 2000 on six-monthly inspections.

However, the increase is small and is reducing over time as vehicle quality improves.

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

Motorists need to take their vehicle for an inspection when the current WoF expires and the inspection agent will issue a WoF for the appropriate period.

Between inspections it's important to ensure that your vehicle remains in roadworthy condition at all times. It only takes a minute to do a quick safety check of your vehicle and if you have any concerns we recommend it taking to a professional to look at.

Under the new WoF system will I still need to get a WoF for my vehicle if I sell it, even if it's before it's three years old?

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.

Under the new WoF system, if my vehicle requires only yearly 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 inspection will depend on the age of your vehicle but will be no shorter than that of the initial WoF.

Will the changes to the WoF system 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.

What part does vehicle inspection play in road safety?

Periodic inspection of our vehicles by qualified vehicle inspectors 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 so it's important to regularly check your vehicle between WoF inspections to ensure it remains roadworthy. To keep your vehicle safe regularly check your tyre tread depth and tyre pressure, windscreen wipers, indicators and lights. If in doubt consult your local mechanic.

What percentage of crashes are 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 as a result of the WoF changes, and if so, how will these be countered?

The WoF changes include measures aimed at preventing any adverse impacts on safety, such as the Check Your Car public awareness campaign and improved Police enforcement to encourage New Zealanders to keep their vehicles safe and roadworthy at all times.

What will be included in the information campaign?

The Check Your Car campaign is:

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

- Informing vehicle owners about how easy it is to give their vehicle a quick safety check. It also recommends key things they should check e.g. tyres, lights, indicators, windscreen wipers etc.

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.