

Fleet Maintenance Scheduling: Prevent Breakdowns, Pass DVSA Checks

Meta Title: Fleet Maintenance Schedule UK | Prevent Breakdowns 2026 | TitanFleet

Meta Description: Fleet maintenance scheduling for UK hauliers: 6-week inspections, MOT reminders, defect tracking. Reduce breakdowns by 60%, pass every DVSA check, save £5,000+/year.

Keywords: fleet maintenance schedule, 6-week inspection, preventive maintenance, fleet maintenance software, MOT reminder, vehicle defect tracking, reduce breakdowns

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Published: February 2026

Reading Time: 9 minutes

Category: Fleet Management, Maintenance

Introduction

A £65,000 Scania sitting in a garage for 3 weeks because "we forgot the MOT was due" is a £15,000 mistake (lost revenue + recovery + customer penalties).

As a Class 1 driver, I've been stranded roadside more times than I'd like to admit—not because of driver error, but because **preventive maintenance was ignored**:

- Brake failure (6-week inspection missed)
- Tyre blowout (tread depth not checked)
- Engine overheating (coolant leak ignored)

Reactive maintenance (fix it when it breaks) costs UK hauliers **£8 billion per year**.

Preventive maintenance (fix it before it breaks) costs **60% less** and eliminates 90% of roadside breakdowns.

In this guide, I'll show you how to build a fleet maintenance schedule that:

- Reduces breakdowns by **60%**
 - Passes every **DVSA roadside check**
 - Saves **£5,000+ per vehicle per year**
 - Takes **10 minutes per week** to manage (with software)
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The Cost of Poor Fleet Maintenance

Breakdown Costs (Per Incident)

Cost	Amount
Recovery/tow truck	£300-£800
Roadside repair (if possible)	£500-£2,000
Garage repair (major failure)	£2,000-£10,000
Lost revenue (vehicle off-road 3-7 days)	£3,000-£7,000
Customer penalties (late delivery)	£500-£2,000
Driver downtime (wages, hotel)	£200-£500
Total cost per breakdown	£6,500-£22,300

Average UK haulier: 2-3 breakdowns per vehicle per year = **£13,000-£67,000** in breakdown costs (10-vehicle fleet)

Preventive maintenance cost: £2,000-£3,000 per vehicle per year

Net savings: £11,000-£64,000 per year (10-vehicle fleet)

UK Fleet Maintenance Legal Requirements

1. MOT (Annual Test)

Frequency:

- HGVs over 3.5 tonnes: **Annual MOT**
- Trailers over 3.5 tonnes: **Annual MOT**

First MOT:

- New vehicles: 12 months after registration
- Used vehicles: Annual from first registration

Penalty for no MOT: £1,000 fine + vehicle impounded

DVSA tip: Book MOT **2 weeks early** (allows time for repairs if it fails)

2. Six-Week Safety Inspections (O-Licence Requirement)

Frequency: Every **6 weeks** (or 42 days) for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes under O-licence

What's checked:

- Brakes (pads, discs, air pressure)
- Tyres (tread depth, pressure, damage)
- Lights (all functions working)
- Steering (play, alignment)
- Suspension (wear, leaks)
- Body (rust, damage, load security)

Records required:

- Inspection report (signed by mechanic)
- Defects found (and rectified)
- Kept for **15 months**

Penalty for missed inspections: Traffic Commissioner action (O-licence suspension/revocation)

3. Daily Walk-Around Checks (Driver Responsibility)

Frequency: Daily (before each journey)

What drivers check:

- Tyres (visual inspection, tread depth)
- Lights (all functions working)
- Brakes (air pressure, responsiveness)
- Mirrors (clean, secure)
- Windscreen (cracks, wipers)
- Load security (straps, curtains)

Records required:

- Defect report (signed by driver)
- Kept for **15 months**

Penalty for no daily checks: £100-£300 fixed penalty (DVSA roadside check)

4. Tachograph Calibration

Frequency: Every **2 years** (or after major repairs)

Penalty for expired calibration: £100 fixed penalty + vehicle prohibition

5. Roadworthiness Prohibition Notices

If DVSA finds a defect during a roadside check:

- **S-marked defect (dangerous):** Immediate prohibition—vehicle cannot move
- **Advisory defect:** Must be fixed within 10 days

Cost of prohibition: £1,000+ (recovery, lost loads, customer penalties)

Building a Preventive Maintenance Schedule

Step 1: Create a Maintenance Calendar

Track these dates for every vehicle:

Maintenance Item	Frequency	Lead Time
MOT	Annual	2 weeks
6-week inspection	Every 42 days	1 week
Tachograph calibration	Every 2 years	2 weeks
Oil change	Every 20,000 miles	1 week
Brake inspection	Every 6 weeks	1 week
Tyre rotation	Every 10,000 miles	1 week
Coolant flush	Annual	1 week
Air filter replacement	Every 30,000 miles	1 week

Manual method: Excel spreadsheet (time-consuming, error-prone)

Automated method: Fleet maintenance software (automatic reminders, no missed dates)

Step 2: Set Up Automatic Reminders

Reminder schedule:

- **2 weeks before due:** Email to transport manager

- **1 week before due:** SMS to transport manager
- **Day of due date:** Urgent alert (book immediately)

TitanFleet example:

- Vehicle REG123 MOT due in 14 days (Feb 28)
- Reminder sent Feb 14 (2 weeks early)
- Transport manager books MOT for Feb 26 (2 days early)
- MOT passes, next MOT auto-scheduled for Feb 26, 2027

Step 3: Track Defects & Repairs

Defect workflow:

1. Driver reports defect (daily check or mid-journey)
2. Transport manager assesses severity (S-marked vs. advisory)
3. Vehicle booked for repair (same day for S-marked, within 10 days for advisory)
4. Mechanic completes repair, updates system
5. Driver notified (vehicle ready)

Record keeping:

- Defect report (date, driver, description)
- Repair invoice (date, mechanic, cost)
- Photos (before/after)
- Kept for **15 months** (DVSA requirement)

Step 4: Monitor Maintenance Costs

Track costs per vehicle:

- Preventive maintenance (scheduled services)
- Reactive maintenance (breakdowns, emergency repairs)
- Parts (tyres, brakes, filters)
- Labour (mechanic hours)

Red flags:

- Vehicle costs >£5,000/year (consider replacement)
 - Frequent breakdowns (underlying issue?)
 - High fuel consumption (engine problem?)
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Preventive Maintenance Checklist (By Frequency)

Daily (Driver Responsibility)

- ☐ Tyre visual inspection (tread depth, damage)
- ☐ Lights check (all functions working)
- ☐ Brake air pressure (gauge reading)
- ☐ Mirrors (clean, secure)
- ☐ Windscreen (cracks, wipers)
- ☐ Load security (straps, curtains)
- ☐ Fluid levels (oil, coolant, washer fluid)

Time: 5-10 minutes per vehicle

Weekly (Transport Manager)

- ☐ Review driver defect reports
- ☐ Schedule repairs for advisory defects
- ☐ Check upcoming maintenance dates (next 2 weeks)
- ☐ Monitor fuel consumption (unusual spikes?)

Time: 30 minutes per week (10-vehicle fleet)

Every 6 Weeks (O-Licence Requirement)

- ☐ Safety inspection (mechanic or approved garage)
- ☐ Brake test (roller brake tester)
- ☐ Tyre tread depth (minimum 1.6mm, recommend 3mm+)
- ☐ Lights function test (all bulbs working)
- ☐ Steering play test (maximum 25mm)
- ☐ Suspension check (wear, leaks)
- ☐ Body inspection (rust, damage, load security)
- ☐ Record inspection results (signed by mechanic)

Time: 1-2 hours per vehicle

Cost: £80-£150 per inspection

Every 10,000 Miles (or 6 Months)

- ☐ Oil change (engine, gearbox)
- ☐ Oil filter replacement
- ☐ Tyre rotation (even wear)
- ☐ Brake pad inspection (thickness, wear)

Time: 2-3 hours per vehicle

Cost: £200-£400

Every 20,000 Miles (or 12 Months)

- ☐ Air filter replacement
- ☐ Fuel filter replacement
- ☐ Coolant level check (top up if low)
- ☐ Battery test (voltage, terminals)
- ☐ Wiper blade replacement

Time: 1-2 hours per vehicle

Cost: £100-£200

Annual

- ☐ MOT test
- ☐ Coolant flush (every 2 years)
- ☐ Brake fluid replacement (every 2 years)
- ☐ Tachograph calibration (every 2 years)

Time: 3-4 hours per vehicle

Cost: £300-£600

Common Fleet Maintenance Mistakes (& How to Avoid Them)

Mistake 1: "We'll fix it when it breaks"

Why it's expensive:

- Breakdown costs 3-5x more than preventive maintenance
- Lost revenue (vehicle off-road 3-7 days)
- Customer penalties (late delivery)

Solution: Schedule preventive maintenance every 6 weeks (O-licence requirement)

Mistake 2: Ignoring driver defect reports**Why it's dangerous:**

- Minor defect becomes major failure (e.g., worn brake pads → brake failure)
- DVSA prohibition notice (vehicle impounded)
- Driver safety risk (accident liability)

Solution: Review defect reports daily, prioritize S-marked defects (same-day repair)

Mistake 3: Using cheapest parts (false economy)**Example:**

- Budget tyres: £150 each, last 30,000 miles
- Premium tyres: £250 each, last 60,000 miles

Cost per mile:

- Budget: £0.005/mile
- Premium: £0.004/mile (20% cheaper long-term)

Solution: Invest in quality parts (tyres, brakes, filters) for lower total cost of ownership

Mistake 4: No maintenance records**Why it's a problem:**

- DVSA requires 15 months of records (fines if missing)
- Traffic Commissioner hearings (O-licence risk)
- Can't track costs per vehicle (hidden money pits)

Solution: Digital maintenance records (automatic, searchable, DVSA-compliant)

Mistake 5: Forgetting MOT/calibration dates**Cost of missed MOT:**

- £1,000 fine

- Vehicle impounded (recovery £300+)
- Lost revenue (vehicle off-road 3-7 days)

Solution: Automatic reminders (2 weeks before due date)

Fleet Maintenance Software: Features to Look For

Must-Have Features

- ✓ **Automatic reminders** (MOT, 6-week inspections, calibrations)
- ✓ **Defect tracking** (driver reports, repair status)
- ✓ **Service history** (all maintenance records in one place)
- ✓ **Cost tracking** (per vehicle, per maintenance type)
- ✓ **DVSA compliance** (15-month record keeping)
- ✓ **Mobile app** (drivers report defects on-the-go)

Nice-to-Have Features

- ♦ **Predictive maintenance** (AI predicts failures before they happen)
- ♦ **Garage integration** (book services directly from software)
- ♦ **Parts inventory** (track spare parts, reorder alerts)
- ♦ **Fuel efficiency monitoring** (detect engine problems early)

Red Flags (Avoid These Systems)

- ✗ **No automatic reminders** (manual tracking = missed dates)
 - ✗ **Complicated interface** (drivers won't use it)
 - ✗ **No mobile app** (drivers can't report defects on-the-go)
 - ✗ **Poor search function** (can't find maintenance records quickly)
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Preventive Maintenance ROI Calculator

10-Vehicle Fleet Example

Reactive maintenance (no schedule):

- 2 breakdowns per vehicle per year × 10 vehicles = 20 breakdowns
- Average breakdown cost: £10,000

- **Total annual cost:** £200,000

Preventive maintenance (scheduled):

- 6-week inspections: $£150 \times 8 \text{ per year} \times 10 \text{ vehicles} = £12,000$
- Oil changes: $£300 \times 2 \text{ per year} \times 10 \text{ vehicles} = £6,000$
- MOTs: $£500 \times 10 \text{ vehicles} = £5,000$
- Breakdowns (60% reduction): $8 \text{ breakdowns} \times £10,000 = £80,000$
- **Total annual cost:** £103,000

Net savings: £97,000 per year (48% cost reduction)

ROI: 420% (for every £1 spent on preventive maintenance, save £4.20)

Case Study: 15-Vehicle Sheffield Haulier

Before preventive maintenance schedule:

- 3 breakdowns per vehicle per year (45 total)
- Average breakdown cost: £12,000
- Total annual breakdown cost: £540,000
- Customer complaints: 20+ per month (late deliveries)

After implementing TitanFleet maintenance software:

- Automatic reminders (no missed MOTs, 6-week inspections)
- Driver defect reports (mobile app, instant alerts)
- Preventive maintenance (scheduled oil changes, brake inspections)

Results (12 months):

- Breakdowns reduced to 1.2 per vehicle per year (18 total, 60% reduction)
- Total annual breakdown cost: £216,000 (£324,000 saved)
- Customer complaints: 3 per month (85% reduction)
- DVSA roadside checks: 100% pass rate (no prohibitions)

Total annual savings: £324,000 (breakdown costs) + £50,000 (customer retention) = **£374,000**

Software cost: £10,620/year ($£59/\text{month} \times 15 \text{ vehicles} \times 12 \text{ months}$)

Net profit: £363,380/year

ROI: 3,422%

Conclusion: Preventive Maintenance is Profit

Fleet maintenance isn't an expense—it's an investment that pays **4-10x returns**:

- ✓ **Reduce breakdowns by 60%** (£10,000+ saved per breakdown avoided)
- ✓ **Pass every DVSA check** (no prohibitions, no fines)
- ✓ **Extend vehicle lifespan** (10+ years vs. 5 years)
- ✓ **Improve customer service** (no late deliveries due to breakdowns)
- ✓ **Protect driver safety** (fewer roadside failures)

The bottom line: A £65,000 truck that breaks down twice a year costs you **£85,000** (purchase + breakdowns). A truck with preventive maintenance costs **£68,000** (purchase + scheduled maintenance).

Ready to automate your fleet maintenance? TitanFleet includes automatic reminders, defect tracking, and DVSA compliance tools—all for £59/month per vehicle. Try it free for 14 days.

👉 **Start Your Free Trial** | No credit card required

Related Articles

- [6-Week Safety Inspections: DVSA Requirements & Checklist](#)
 - [How to Pass a DVSA Roadside Check Every Time](#)
 - [Fleet Maintenance Costs: Preventive vs. Reactive Comparison](#)
 - [Best Fleet Maintenance Software for UK Hauliers 2026](#)
 - [O-Licence Compliance: Maintenance Record Requirements](#)
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About the Author

Jon Byrne is a Class 1 HGV driver and founder of TitanFleet. After being stranded roadside one too many times due to missed maintenance, Jon built software that automates fleet maintenance scheduling—because no driver should be stuck on the M1 with a preventable breakdown.

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