



Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

Getting through the annual test

A guide for horse box owners



www.vosa.gov.uk

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The welfare and well being of your horse is important to you. With high quality stabling and the best possible veterinary care you can ensure your horse is comfortable and healthy, but what happens when you are on the move? How safe is your horse box?

As the government agency responsible for vehicle safety and environmental standards, VOSA carries out a test every year on your horse box to make sure it meets minimum road safety and environmental standards. The test is usually carried out at our HGV test stations.

If your vehicle fails the test

If we identify any fault that could cause danger or damage the environment, we will ask you to have it repaired before we issue the MOT certificate. If the fault is serious, you will need to arrange recovery from the testing station. (Some breakdown / recovery policies do not cover HGVs so check your small print).

Be prepared

Having your horsebox properly checked and serviced by a qualified mechanic beforehand will help to make sure it is in a good enough condition to pass the test.

If you've made changes to the vehicle's specification such as changing the tyres to a different specification to the original fitting, you need to let us know. Check you have a plating certificate (VTG 6) displayed somewhere in the cab and another copy for your records (VTG 7). Bring both to the test.

If your vehicle is fitted with a tachograph but you only use it as a speedometer, you must make sure that all the seals are intact, and that the tachograph has been initially calibrated and is fitted with both the calibration and K factor plaques. Also if you do not use tachograph charts, you will need to fill out a tachograph exemption form and present it at the time of the test. Check with your local test station, our enquiry line or website for further information (see front).

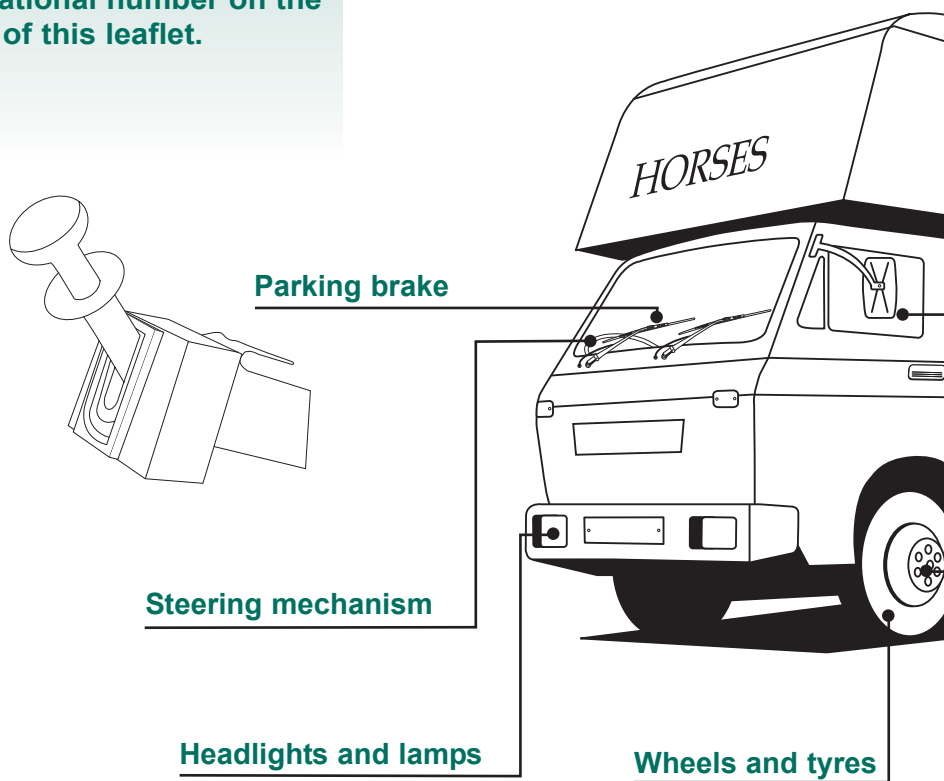
Make sure your horse box is loaded when you bring it to the test so the brakes can be checked for maximum efficiency. Use heavy items such as bags of feed or fertiliser or even straw bales, as long as it is not livestock.

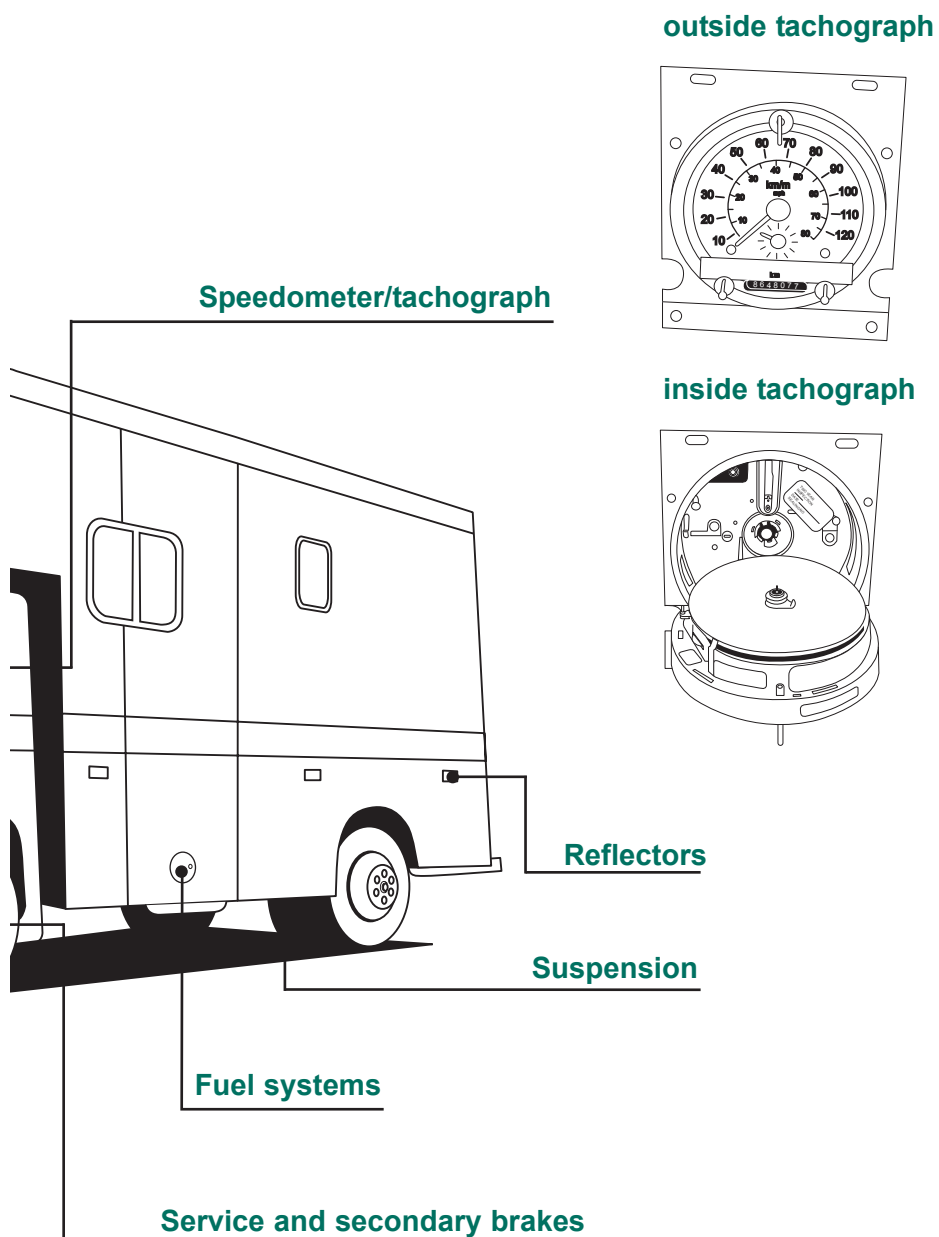
Check for yourself

Listed overleaf are the ten most common reasons vehicles fail the test and details of some fortnightly checks which you can carry out yourself. There are also some suggested questions which you can ask your mechanic. Keeping your vehicle in a garage will help.

Did you know you can book your test up to 12 months in advance?

To do this, contact your local testing station or ring the national number on the front of this leaflet.





Help Yourself Guide

Headlights and lamps	Check that they work and are the right colour. Look for faded and broken lenses.
Service and secondary brakes (footbrake)	Regular use of your vehicle can help maintain the braking efficiency by preventing the moving parts of the braking system from seizing.
Fuel systems	Check for obvious fuel leaks and black smoke coming from the exhaust pipe as well as the condition and security of the exhaust system.
Brake systems	Check for air and fluid leaks and drain air tanks if required.
Speedometer/	Make sure that it illuminates.
Tachograph/	Has the vehicle got a tachograph? (If the vehicle is exempt from using a tachograph, an exemption form must be completed, which is available from your local HGV testing station).
Speedlimiter	Has the vehicle got a speedlimiter? Check that it has the appropriate calibration plaque and seals.
Parking brake (handbrake)	Regular use of your vehicle can help to keep the hand brake efficient. Check the condition of the parking (hand) brake application mechanism.
Steering mechanism	Check for obvious oil leaks and any unusual knocking noises when driving.
Suspension	Is the vehicle is sitting square or lopsided. Listen for knocking noises in motion.
Reflectors	Check for obvious missing reflectors at the rear and the sides of your vehicle.
Wheels and tyres	Check the wheel nuts for security and your tyre pressures. Use your vehicle regularly and park with the tyres in alternating resting positions. Parking your vehicle out of direct sunlight can also help to prevent tyre sidewalls from perishing.

These are the most common defects found at test

Questions to ask your mechanic.

Q. Have you checked the headlight aim and the condition/operation of all the lights?

Q. Have you roller brake tested my horsebox before the test? Can you load my horse box for the test? I need to know that when I carry my horse, my horse box will stop quickly if necessary.

Q. Have you checked that the fuel cap has a seal fitted and there are no fuel leaks?

Q. Have you checked the mechanical system including load sensing valve, brake pipes and hoses for corrosion or perishing?

Q. Does the speedometer illuminate?

Q. Does the vehicle need a tachograph? Does the vehicle have a tachograph? Is it calibrated & sealed?

Q. Does the vehicle require a speedlimiter? Does the vehicle have a speedlimiter? If it has a speedlimiter, does it have a calibration plaque and does it have the required seals (where necessary).

Q. Does the handbrake work properly?

Q. Have you checked the complete steering system including the kingpins?

Q. Have you checked the springs and suspension bushes? Are the shock absorbers and any mounting brackets secure?

Q. Are you sure all the reflectors are there and properly positioned?

Q. Have the wheels been torqued to the correct manufacturer's specifications? Are the tyres legal and to the correct tyre pressure? Are they the correct tyres to carry the weight? Do the tyres show the correct speed rating? (Your local tyre supplier should be able to help you with this).

Q. Also, ask your mechanic if he has checked the cab, chassis and body for excessive corrosion that could cause the vehicle to fail the MOT.