

Annual Testing of cars at NCT from 1 June 2011

In accordance with EU Directive 2009/40/EC, all EU Member States are required to have arrangements in place for the compulsory periodic roadworthiness testing of motor vehicles and trailers registered by them. Implementation of a system of roadworthiness testing of passenger cars in Ireland commenced on 4 January 2000 through the National Car Testing Service (NCTS).

Prior to 1 June 2011 the frequency of testing private cars in Ireland was in line with the minimum requirements of the Directive i.e. the first test carried out after four years, with a test every other year thereafter. Currently cars registered prior to 1 January 1980 are exempt from the test.

On 1 June 2011 annual testing was introduced for cars 10 years and older i.e. cars having their 10th anniversary or subsequent test. There is a need to ensure that older vehicles are frequently maintained and are fit for purpose on our roads. The pass rate at NCT for cars four years old is over 70% while it deteriorates to an average of just 33% for cars over 10 years old. More than one car in a hundred over 10 years old is found to be in a dangerous state.

Older vehicles are also more likely to be involved in a collision. The Road Traffic Collisions 2009 statistics show that 41.5% of fatal collisions that occurred in 2009 involved vehicles that were 10 years old or more. Almost half (46%) of serious injuries from collisions that occurred in 2009 involved vehicles that were 10 years old or more.

The effects of wear and tear on a vehicle become more evident as it gets older and a corresponding increase of failure rates is seen at NCT. A comparison of failures between cars under ten years old and those over ten years old yields some interesting facts of concern including;

- a two fold increase in failures of brake lines/hoses and brake components
- a five fold increase in steering linkage failures
- an almost three fold increase in front suspension, tyre and wheel bearing failures
- over a two and a half fold increase in chassis/underbody and body work failures through corrosion etc.

All cars presented for their 10th anniversary or subsequent NCT on or after 1 June 2011 will receive a certificate valid for up to one year only.

Where a car is tested other than at the specified time, the test certificate is valid from the date of the actual test until the next date on which the test is due. This is to ensure that the car is again liable for a test in accordance with the test schedule laid down in Regulations. This can result in a certificate of less than 1 or 2 years duration, depending on when the car was presented for a test. No provision exists under the Regulations to permit an extension of the period covered by a NCT certificate beyond the next test due date.

Frequently asked questions regarding annual testing:

Q. When was annual testing introduced at NCTS?

A. 1 June 2011

Q. What vehicles does it apply to?

A. It applies to all cars which are being presented for their 10th anniversary' test or any subsequent test on or after 1 June 2011.

Q. What will be the validity period of an NCT certificate issued to a car 10 years and older from June 2011?

A. The certificate will be valid to the anniversary of registration the following year. For example: Car 10 years old on 5 June 2011. Tested on 20 July 2011. Certificate will be valid to 5 June 2012.

Q. My 10 year old car was due for testing in May 2011, if it is not tested until after 1 June 2011, how long will my NCT certificate be valid for?

A. The NCT certificate will be valid to May 2012

Q. If I bring my car for test earlier than its 10th anniversary date, for how long will the certificate be valid?

A. For cars brought in for test up to 90 days before the due date the certificate expiry date is the same as if it were brought in on the due date. If a car is presented for test just before the 10th anniversary, then a certificate with an expiry the following year (on the next anniversary) will be issued.

Q. When was annual testing raised with the public?

A. A public consultation document was issued on 23rd February 2009. This was published on the RSA website and issued to stakeholders including the Automobile Association, the Irish Driver Association, Macra na Feirme, National Standards Authority of Ireland, National Roads Authority, Irish Tyre Industry Association, An

Garda Síochána, Revenue, the Commission for Taxi Regulation and the Society of the Irish Motor Industry. A Press Release was issued to all national news desks and motoring correspondents and the consultation received press coverage in the main stream national press

- Q.** When was the introduction confirmed to the public?
- A.** The Minister for Transport issued a press release in December 2009 setting out details of the new test items introduced in April 2010 and annual testing from 1 June 2011. The press release was given coverage in the national press.

LEGISLATION

The Road Traffic (National Car Test) Regulations 2009. S.I. No. 567 of 2009.

The Road Traffic (National Car Testing) (Amendment) Regulations 2011. S.I. 623 of 2011.

Regulation 4 (b)(a)(i) of S.I. 623 of 2011 states that a car is due to be tested –

“from the tenth anniversary of first registration of the vehicle, each subsequent anniversary of those dates...”

Under Regulation 2 of S.I. No. 567 of 2009, “anniversary of first registration” means a date that is one or more years after the date on which a vehicle was first registered.

Regulation 11(2) (b) of S.I. 567 of 2009, states that:

“A test certificate which is issued -

- (b) not more than 90 days before a test due date other than the first test due date, continues in force until the subsequent due date.”

This facility is available to owners to have their car tested up to 90 days before the expiry of the current NCT certificate, without affecting the subsequent due date