

## Information Note on the use of the NCT as a Warranty

The RSA is very concerned that people are buying used cars and relying on the NCT without doing any checks on the vehicle's history or getting it independently inspected.

There is a widespread misconception in Ireland that an NCT is the same as a warranty. It's not. The NCT is a periodic test that the vehicle meets basic requirements without any dismantling of the vehicle. It checks, at a point in time, that the components required to be tested, where visible and accessible, meet a basic standard. It cannot be a warranty and this is clearly stated on the NCT certificate. The NCT certificate issued at the time of test does not confirm the condition of the vehicle for the duration of the certificate. It merely states that an NCT was passed on that date and when the next test is due.

A vehicle needs to be [serviced](#) in line with Manufacturer's guidelines, even if it has a valid NCT cert. A dealer should be willing to give their own warranty on a vehicle they're selling. If not, this should immediately raise concerns regarding the condition of the vehicle.

The NCT complies with and, in many ways, exceeds the EU minimum standard of testing. However, it is not, and was never meant to be, a detailed mechanical investigation of roadworthiness. For example; to identify internal and concealed corrosion it would be necessary to remove parts in a car. Dismantling is not allowed at NCT. Only parts that can be seen and are accessible can be checked e.g. tyres, lights, brakes etc.

In addition, the NCT does not assess the remaining life of parts or give indications as to when they need to be replaced. Cheap cars typically have a lot of mileage and components may be reaching the end of their life. An independent inspection by a qualified mechanic can expose this.

There are other risks associated with treating the NCT as a warranty. The certificate could be fake; the vehicle could have been crashed since its test; or the dealer could have replaced original parts with poor quality ones following the test. There are examples on the internet of owners/sellers looking to borrow exhausts or tyres for the day to pass the NCT and advice regarding the use of sealant to disguise corrosion.

All cars over 4 years old are legally required to have a valid NCT certificate. Vehicles registered before 1 January 1980, or cars permanently based on islands, are not required to be tested. You can check whether an NCT cert is fake by visiting [www.ncts.ie](http://www.ncts.ie) and entering the vehicle registration number. This will show the expiry date of the last NCT cert issued for that vehicle.

Under Road Traffic Law it's the owner or driver's responsibility to ensure their vehicle is in a roadworthy condition at all times when used in a public place. Therefore, if stopped by An Garda Síochána while driving a dangerously defective vehicle, it is the driver/owner that's liable for prosecution. This is why it's essential that buyers are fully aware of what condition the vehicle is in before driving away. They need to protect themselves by carrying out a comprehensive history check and engaging a qualified mechanic to independently inspect the vehicle.