



London Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Trust

Procedure for Statutory Vehicle Checks Incorporating Pre and Post Shift Arrangements

DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL

Purpose of the document: To provide guidance on legal checks drivers must undertake before driving a vehicle on the roads.

Sponsor Department: A&E Operations

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Links to Related documents or references providing additional information		
Ref. No.	Title	Version
OP/044	Vehicle off the Road Procedure	1.0
LA1		
LA27	Staff Car Vehicle Movement Log	2.0
LA76a-h	PTS VDI and Inventory	1.0
LA400	Vehicle Defect Sheet	
LA420a	Found on Inspection Report	
LA429	Vehicle Statutory Check Sheet	1.0
PT1		

Introduction

To ensure the safety of road users and pedestrians alike, drivers of road vehicles in the UK have a legal responsibility to ensure the vehicles they drive comply with statutory safety standards. This Operational Procedure outlines the Trust's interpretation of these standards and details the checks drivers of Service vehicles must undertake to meet them.

Scope

This procedure covers all Service motor vehicles across all directorates. It does not cover unmarked lease vehicles assigned to an individual for their personal use (i.e. manager's lease cars), but does apply to lease vehicles assigned for general use (i.e. pool cars).

Objectives

1. To highlight the legal responsibilities that drivers of vehicles have towards ensuring the vehicle they are driving complies with legal standards.
2. To provide guidance for undertaking checks to satisfy compliance with these standards.
3. To provide protected time to individuals to undertake these mandatory vehicle checks.

Definitions

Driver	Any individual that intends to operate a vehicle on the road during their duties
Control VRC	Emergency Operations and Urgent Operations Centres Vehicle Resource Centre

Responsibilities

This procedure creates the following responsibilities:

Vehicle drivers:	To ensure the vehicle they are driving complies with the statutory checks as detailed in the LA429 (VDI form) and to complete the required equipment checks noting them on and sign the LA1 during the first 10 minutes of their shift.
Control:	To ensure front-line resources are provided with 10 minutes protected time at the commencement of the rostered shift.
VRC:	To endeavor to provide front-line staff with fully kitted, road-worthy vehicles at the commencement of the shift start.

Procedure

1 Legal Requirements

- 1.1 In line with the Road Traffic Acts (1984, 1988, 1991, 2004 and 2006), **it is the legal responsibility of the driver to ensure the following checks are carried out before that vehicle is driven on a road:**
- 1.2 Tyres should be inflated in line with the requirements of the vehicle. It is not necessary to deflate a warm tyre that is no more than 5psi over the marking.
- 1.3 Tyres should appear undamaged. A visual check focussing on cuts, lumps, bulges and pry exposure should be sufficient. See appendix 2 for ref.
- 1.4 The windscreen should be clear, in good condition, with wiper blades attached.
- 1.5 Lights, indicators and blue lights should all work.
- 1.6 The horn and sirens should work.
- 1.7 The vehicle should display a valid tax disc.
- 1.8 Brakes should function correctly. Carry out a static brake test (foot and hand) and mobile brake test.
- 1.9 Check for excessive play on the steering.
- 1.10 Check all the vehicle seatbelts operate correctly.
- 1.11 Check the exhaust silencer for excessive noise.

2 Protected Time

- 2.1 Through time and motion studies carried out in agreement with trade union representatives, it has been agreed that in normal circumstances the minimum statutory legal checks detailed above can be completed within 10 minutes. Therefore, the first 10 minutes of all shifts will be considered 'protected time'.
- 2.2 Protected time is a period of time at the commencement of a front-line operational shift that is protected to enable the driver to undertake legal checks and complete and sign the LA1.
- 2.3 During this time, a front-line vehicle will not be expected to respond to an incident, providing that the time is used for undertaking the checks detailed above.
- 2.4 For the purposes of this policy a frontline resource is considered to be a frontline A&E ambulance, and A&E support ambulance, PTS vehicle, fast response car, motorbike response unit, clinical assessment unit or any other marked service response that is routinely assigned to emergency calls.

- 2.5 For example, a 0700 hours start vehicle must be ready to mobilise to a call no later than 0710 hours having fully completed and signed the LA1.
- 2.6 Should a vehicle not be available at the commencement of the shift, this 10 minutes protected time starts as soon as a vehicle becomes available. The time the vehicle is considered to be available will be taken from the electronic time stamp of the MDT system when the vehicles returns to station (where there is a known and recognised issue with the accuracy of station locations within the mapping system the vehicle return time will be taken from the PRF). For example, a crew start their shift at 0700 hours however the vehicles does not return to station until 0709 hours. The period of protected time for the completion of the minimum statutory vehicle checks commences at 0709 hours and concludes no later than 0719 hours.
- 2.7 This protected time is protected for the benefit of completing the legal checks and LA1. All other activities should be completed at the most appropriate time. This may include in the case of ambulance crews the completion of equipment checks by the attendant at the same time as the driver is completing the statutory vehicle checks.
- 2.8 If an emergency call is assigned to a resource within the 10 minutes protected time allocated for the purpose of completing the minimum statutory vehicle checks and a delay occurs this must be recorded on the PRF and call log by EOC having been notified of the delay by the crew. This will only normally occur when no other suitably proximate resource is available to be allocated the call. In cases where other responses are assigned to the call it may not be necessary to assign the vehicle completing its minimum statutory vehicle checks until they are completed.
- 2.9 Upon completion of the minimum legal checks, the relevant documentation (varies between resource types) must be fully completed.
- 2.10 If the vehicle fails any of the checks, front-line operational staff must notify Control immediately where the vehicle will be shown as off the road until the fault has been rectified. All other staff must comply with their respective departmental procedures.

3 Readiness to Respond and Mobilisation Delays

- 3.1 It is best practice for double crewed ambulances, that whilst the driver is carrying out the legal checks, the attendant undertakes the Vehicle Daily Inspection (VDI) of medical equipment and ability to respond.
- 3.2 Solo Responders should endeavour to complete their VDI at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.3 As per OP/044 'Vehicles off the Road Procedure' a vehicle is only unavailable in this regard if "the vehicle is not sufficiently equipped to provide Basic Life Support (BLS), e.g., no bag-valve mask/AED" (paragraph 4.1.2).
- 3.4 Upon completion of the VDI, the LA1/PT1/LA356 must be completed and any equipment deficiencies should be noted accordingly.

- 3.5 If a full VDI has not been completed before a call has been received, mobilisation should not be delayed. Control should be notified that a full equipment check has not been carried out, and this should be completed at the earliest opportunity thereafter (for example once the patient has been off-loaded at hospital).
- 3.6 Taking an early job for colleagues is common practice however this must not cause an undue delay in mobilising to a call.
- 3.7 If the oncoming crew/responder are not in a position to take this early job in a timely manner, the outgoing crew/responder must accept and mobilise on the call immediately as shift end has not yet been reached.

4 Pre and post shift arrangements for frontline staff

- 4.1 All staff are expected to be ready to commence duty at their rostered shift start time, irrespective of their role within the Service.
- 4.2 There will be **NO** payment of any pre-shift overtime for the completion of a Vehicle Daily Inspection (VDI) or for any other purpose except the pre-shift allocation of an emergency call.
- 4.3 Pre-shift overtime payments remain available for 'early jobs'. Overtime will be paid from the time the early job is accepted and this will not be rounded up to the nearest 5 or 10 minute block. This time should be marked on the signing on sheet, the LA1 and in the case of the call log by EOC.
- 4.4 A pre-shift overtime payment **is not available** for instances where an incoming crew relieves the outgoing crew prior to their official shift end time and no call is received. Any such arrangement should be mutually agreed by the respective crews and sits outside of any formal remuneration arrangements.
- 4.5 Upon Return to Base (RTB) at shift end, a number of 'wash up' or administrative tasks may sometimes need to be carried out (including, but not limited to: signing and submitting all shift-related paperwork; returning drugs packs, morphine and EZIO as required; disposing of waste and readying of vehicle for incoming shift). A payable period of **up to 10 minutes** is available for staff to complete these tasks.
- 4.6 Staff must sign off **at the exact time** they complete their wash up tasks (not exceeding RTB +10 minutes). Signing off times **must not be rounded up**.
- 4.7 In those rare occasions when 10 minutes is insufficient to complete these tasks and reasonably ready the vehicle (e.g. a heavily soiled vehicle), staff should notify Control of this to enable a note to be made on the call log. Overtime claimed outside of the maximum of 10 minutes normally available will be authorised following confirmation from the call log that the additional time was necessary to reasonably ready the vehicle.

- 4.8 Where staff are on station at the end of their shift a maximum of 10 minutes overtime is payable to complete the return of drug packs, other equipment, cleaning the vehicle or completing paperwork.
- 4.9 For administrative purposes, this 10-minute period at the end of the shift commences when the 'Green at station' button is pressed, or the 'automatic at station' time is recorded (whichever is the earlier).
- 4.10 Station administrators are to follow existing procedures for recording overtime on ProMis. Should any further guidance be needed on this they should liaise with Matilde Aguilera (Lead Station Administrator) in the first instance.
- 4.11 Resource centres will work with station administrators to produce regular reports and undertake spot-checks to identify any non-compliance. Instances of non-compliance and/or variation may require further investigation by local management teams.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
Intended Audience	For all LAS staff
Dissemination	Available to all staff on the Pulse
Communications	Revised Procedure to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document
Training	
Monitoring	

VEHICLE STATUTORY CHECK SHEET

Fleet No.		Call Sign	
Shift Start Date		Shift Start Time	
Speedo Reading		Base Location	
Driver's Name		Crew Name	
Signature			

You must carry out the Primary Checks prior to driving the vehicle. 10 minutes will be allowed for the Primary Checks. Secondary Checks should also be carried out at commencement of shift whenever possible, or at the earliest possible opportunity.

Failure to carry out these checks may result in the prosecution of the driver should the enforcement authorities find the vehicle to be unroadworthy.

Vehicle drivers should refer to the Service Policy on Vehicle Roadworthiness Check for further guidance.

PRIMARY CHECKS - DRIVER'S LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY**VISUAL & AUDIBLE CHECKS**

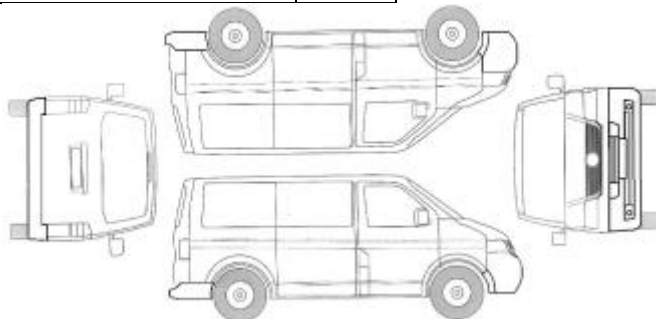
		NS tread	OS tread	NS psi	OS psi
1	Tyre depth and pressure, ✓ = OK X = UNFIT NA = NOT APPLICABLE				
2	Front				
3	Rear outer				
4	Rear inner				
5	Under bonnet, washer bottle fluid & engine oil (between max & min on dipstick) levels				
6	Vehicle lights reflectors, number plates and mirrors				
7	Emergency lights & siren				
8	Cab seatbelt condition, fuel level, horn & controls				
9	Hand & foot brakes				
10	Valid tax disc displayed				

Fuel level E ¼ ½ ¾ Full Please Circle Refuel if the tank content is half or less

SECONDARY CHECKS

1	Steering		8	Tail Lift	
2	Seats & Belts (Saloon)		9	Reversing Aid	
3	Exhaust, Condition / security		10	Fuel Card	
4	Fuel & Oil Leaks		11	Stretcher Tag	
5	Windscreen Condition / Wipers / Washers		12	Orthopaedic Stretcher Tag	
6	Dash Warning Lights		13	Carry Chair Tag	
7	Body Work (Complete below as appropriate)				

Please mark damaged areas with a cross and write a short comment in the box opposite

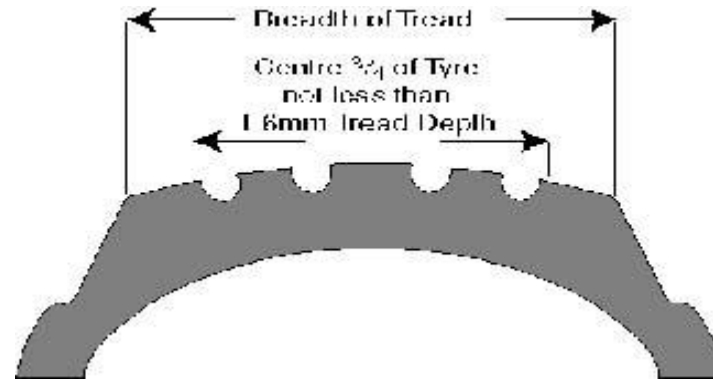


If vehicle does not pass the statutory checks inform your line management and EOC as appropriate and use the Vehicle Defect Book procedure.

GUIDE TO CONDUCTING A VEHICLE STATUTORY CHECK

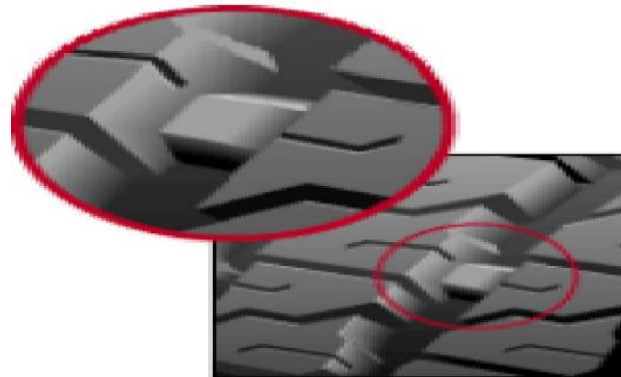
It is essential to conduct a Vehicle Statutory Check (VSC) prior to using a vehicle. The VSC must be recorded in the personal issue book, LA 008, with one page retained in the book and the copy page handed in to your manager for filing at completion of vehicle usage.

	SAFETY NOTE	<p>Before conducting stationary checks ensure that the parking brake is fully engaged and P is selected with automatic transmissions.</p> <p>When checking the emergency siren use the noise reduction unit where fitted and give full consideration to any colleagues and members of the public who may be close by.</p>
	General	<p>Some features such as emergency lights and sirens will not be on all vehicles and in these cases mark the inspection record NA where appropriate.</p> <p>Wear Hi visibility clothing when conducting any VSC where appropriate.</p> <p>Wear Service issue latex gloves when conducting a VSC</p>
1 to 4	<p>Daily Drivers Checks</p> <p>Tyres</p> <p>Tyre Pressures</p> <p>Tread Depth</p>	<p>Make an examination of the exposed surfaces of the tyres looking for cuts, lumps, bulges or ply exposure which are unacceptable.</p> <p>Using the station tyre gauge ensure all tyre pressures match the markings on adjacent wheel arches and inflate tyres as necessary, it is not necessary to deflate a warm tyre that is no more than 5psi over the marking.</p> <p>Visually inspect the tyres and the 1.6mm wear bar indicator, to determine that the depth is at least 1.6 mm across the central three-quarters of the breadth of tread and is in a continuous band around the entire circumference of the tyre. This is the legal minimum but LAS workshops use a minimum dimension of 2 mm to provide a safety factor. See the illustration below for a depiction of the terms used.</p> <p>The tread depth of inner rear wheels can be gauged by kneeling beside the outer wheel and leaning in to reach using the kneeling pads provided to each Station.</p>



Tread Wear Indicators

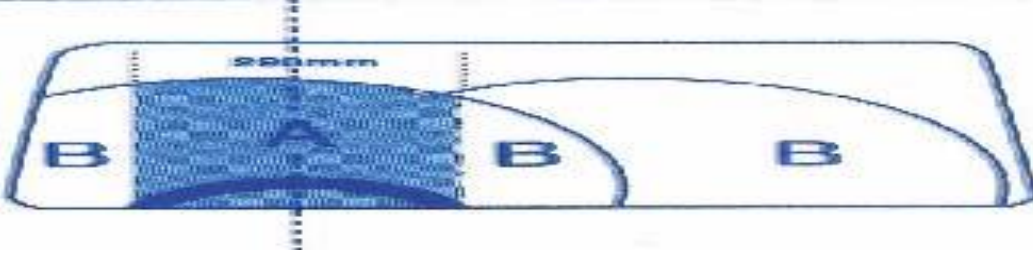
Tyres have tread wear indicators, usually at least six small ribs across the bottom of the main tread grooves, and when the tread surface becomes level with these ribs the tyre is at the legal limit of 1.6 mm and must be replaced. See illustration below:-

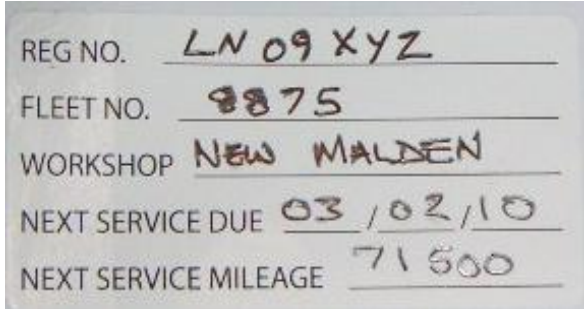


Ensure where visible that the tyres are securely seated in the wheel rims.

Wheel Rims

5	Exterior Lights, Mirrors, Reflectors and Registration Plates	<p>Check that all side and head lights work and have clean and undamaged lenses. This applies to high level lights where fitted. Check mirrors are secure in good condition and provide clear vision to the rear.</p> <p>Check that the reflectors are undamaged and clean.</p> <p>Check that registration plates are present, clean and the rear illumination light is working.</p>
6	Exhaust System	<p>Check that the exhaust system is secure, i.e. doesn't rattle, emit unexpected noises or smoke with the engine running.</p>
7 and 8.	Driving controls Steering and warning lights	<p>From the drivers seat test the functionality of the controls, indicators, washer / wipers, horn and check warning lights are working correctly.</p> <p>Check the steering wheel for security, free play and that it is locked following adjustment for reach and height. Note the ignition keys may be needed to disable the steering lock. Test the steering again later when the vehicle is moved to ensure steering moves freely from lock to lock without restrictions.</p> <p>Check the fuel level and indicate by circling the appropriate box on the check sheet.</p>
9	Foot Brake and Parking Brake	<p>With the engine running check that the foot pedal stops before reaching the end of its travel and stops the vehicle before leaving the station at less than 5 MPH. Check speedometer during this test. Note, modern braking systems have a longer stroke and lighter feel than earlier ones.</p> <p>Operate the parking brake to ensure the pawl mechanism is working and holds the brake on and that the lever is not at the end of its working travel.</p>
10	Excise Licence	<p>Check that the vehicle licence is legible, clearly displayed and is in date.</p>
11	Wipers & Washers Windscreen	<p>Operate the wipers and washers and note that they leave a clear area on the windscreen. The driver's view must not be impaired in anyway. The windscreen must be free of cracks and damage, although small stone chips and cracks can be ignored as long as they are not obscuring the driver's field of view.</p> <p>What the law requires</p>

		<p>Area 'A' (see diagram) is the 'critical' area. Within this area any damage that obscures the driver's view has to be below a maximum diameter circle of 10 mm.</p> <p>The remaining zone, Area 'B' (see diagram) which the wipers sweep across must not contain damage which exceeds a diameter of 40 mm.</p>  <p>Check that when engine s running all expected lights extinguish.</p>
12	Seat belts	Check that seat belts operate correctly, seat belt buckles should close and release as per design and should not be unduly stiff, difficult to release or damaged. Belts should be in good condition and free from tears, excessive wear, contamination or twists.
13	Fluid levels	Lift the bonnet and support it on the stay provided, with the engine stopped use the dipstick to check the oil level, the level should be between the min / max marks, top up with the correct type of oil if it is low, fleet workshops can supply the correct oil. Visually inspect the coolant level in the header tank, (do not remove the radiator cap if the coolant is hot). Visually inspect the brake fluid level to ensure it is not below the minimum level, report to workshops if this is below the min level and do not drive the vehicle. Check the windscreen washer level if there is s gauge present, top up with water and washer fluid if available, (workshops hold stocks).
14	Emergency lights and communications equipment	<p>Test the operation and controls of the emergency lights and radio equipment. Check lights are all working and are not damaged. Operate radios and test, operate MDT and basic functions.</p> <p>Special care should be taken when testing the siren by using the noise reduction unit and be aware of colleagues nearby.</p>
15	Fuel, water and oil leaks	Check around the vehicle to see if any leaks are present, look under the vehicle to see if there are any signs of leaking fluids. Investigate signs of leaks further by looking under the bonnet and checking levels.

16	Servicing label	<p>Check that the servicing label is within range, a service is overdue. If a vehicle is more than a week overdue or 500 miles past the due mileage it should not be used, without confirmation from the servicing manager that it is safe to use first. Telephone 02077832583 for advice during office hours.</p> 
17	Bodywork, Doors and Tail Lift	Check exterior of vehicle body to ensure there is no damage causing sharp edges or projections. Indicate any damage on the diagram on the check sheet. Test the operation of the tail lift and ensure the safety features are working .
18	Fuel Level	Check the fuel gauge with the engine running or the ignition on, (ensure it is working). If the fuel level is below ½ the vehicle will need to be filled up with the correct grade and type of fuel, (ensure the correct type of fuel is used as engine damage can occur if it is not). Fuel cards are issued to use for this purpose at BP, Total and Texaco garages