**Vehicle Roadworthiness Blog: Fit for the road**

Ensuring that vehicles are roadworthy is not only a matter of you obeying the law as the vehicle’s driver, but also an essential part of your employer’s responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of both you and other road users.

Every organisation is required to make sure that all vehicles used for its business purposes are fit for purpose and properly maintained. This includes vans, company cars and even an employee’s personal car is used for a work journey! Roadworthiness is an essential component of driver safety.

Why does it matter?

Vehicles experience high wear and tear, friction, heat and impact with obstacles, such as kerbs and potholes. This means parts can fail or deteriorate at any time, with a consequent effect on your ability to safely control the vehicle, and a high potential for breakdown.

It’s worth reflecting that more than a third (36.4%) of vans between 3 tonnes and 3.5 tonnes fail their MOT first time, 29.3% fail altogether, and more than 10% of vans a year fail with at least one dangerous fault – an item they were being driven with until just before the test.

Furthermore, a recent DVSA data analysis showed that vehicles received ten times as many prohibitions three months after their annual test as they did one month post-test. This shows how quickly vehicle condition can deteriorate. A prohibition is where the police refuse to let a driver continue and immediately take the vehicle off the road due to safety-critical faults following a roadside check. If that’s you, then you’re walking home, or phoning someone for a lift.

Staying roadworthy

Commercial vehicles, including vans, should all have visual pre-use checks at the start of every day or prior to the start of each shift which need to be recorded. These checks are sometimes recorded using paper check books but, more commonly these days, they’re carried out using a vehicle checking app which gives you a list of checks to complete and allows you to submit photos of any damage or defects. As a minimum you should dbe checking

A daily walkaround check of your van should include:

* Secure wheel fixings, bodywork and doors.
* All lights and brakes work.
* No fuel or oil leaks.
* Sufficient tyre pressure and tread depth.
* Tyres are free of cuts and defects.
* Clean and undamaged windscreen, windows and mirrors.
* Operational washers, wipers and horn.
* No excessive play in the steering.
* Secure tow bar/trailer coupling.
* Load and tools are to be secure on the vehicle.

Breakdowns are dangerous, inconvenient and costly. There are around 19,000 breakdowns each month on the motorway network and, in 2021, one in five of those were tyre related – that’s 41,500 breakdowns a year.

It is estimated that, each year, approximately 80,000 vehicles run out of fuel - 6,000 of which run out of fuel on the motorway, and the AA reported more than 10,000 call outs due to lack of fuel or battery issues.It might be a very long walk to find a fuel station. If the warning light is on then fuel up!