

Introducing and sustaining vehicle checking habits

A guide for organisations to
support better vehicle checking
for work-based driving

2022



A guide to supporting better vehicle checking

Who needs to check their vehicle, and why?

Checking the vehicle before setting off is something that all of us, driving any type of vehicle, need to do. This involves looking inside and outside of the vehicle, such as checking the lights, brakes and tyre tread.

However, it's not always easy, especially if we're out of the habit, we feel we'd know if the vehicle had a problem or we don't know what to check. Sometimes we might assume someone else has already checked the vehicle, or we skip checks because we're in a rush.

As a result, we risk accidents and breakdowns happening because of poor vehicle condition. This can affect people's wellbeing, increase vehicle repair costs, and mean organisations operate less efficiently if vehicles are taken out of the fleet to be repaired.

Encouraging better vehicle checking in your organisation is important, but not always easy!

How can we set better vehicle checking habits?

It's essential to follow legal requirements for vehicle checks as a minimum, including completing MOT tests.

You might have also thought about training people on how to do the right checks, or even introducing a new way of doing it, like using a smartphone app.

This guide gives tips on where to start and what to do to help encourage better vehicle checking habits, based on research and discussions with professional drivers.



Top tips for before and after you launch your initiative

Getting the show on the road once you've decided on your initiative



Plan ahead: plan what training and communications people will need and test out your initiative first.



Prioritise the most important checks: streamline the checks and make sure they are suited to the type of vehicle driven. Order checks so that the outside of the vehicle is checked first, then the inside.



Provide support: focus on the 'how to' in training – give visual demonstrations in person or record this in a video.



Give people the tools for the job: for example, give paper forms and a pen or an app to record checks, or a tool to measure tyre tread depth.



Find a champion to manage it: give them the tools they need too (e.g. training) and reward them, making sure their role is recognised.

Top tips for before and after you launch your initiative

Recommendations for a smooth onward journey after your launch



Check if it's working: ask people in different roles for feedback, and collect data on the checks and defect reporting to see if there are any changes. You could use paper records or an app management portal. You could also look for changes in spend on vehicle repairs, and the time that vehicles are out of use for repairs.



Repeat training or onboarding: for new joiners in the organisation and those who need a refresher.



Look for improvements: make the initiative as easy as possible for everyone, using their feedback, and tell people how you've taken their comments on board.



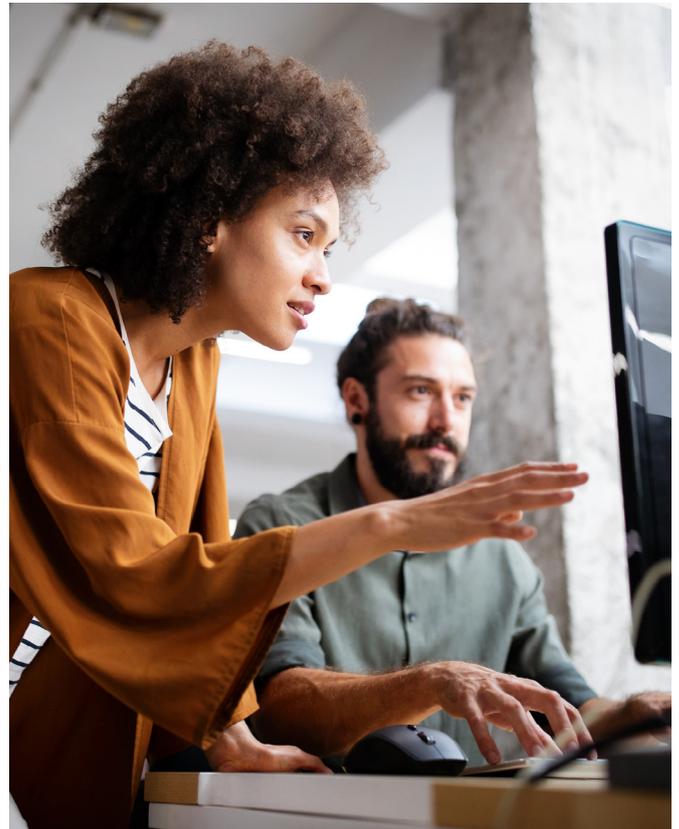
Communicate positive stories: to people at all levels including the Board, such as better vehicle condition or lower repair costs.



Where to start? Assessing the tools in your kit and identifying opportunities for change

Before you decide what to do next, it may be helpful to work through these questions:

- **How do I know whether people are checking vehicles currently?** Remember: knowing about vehicle condition is not the same as knowing whether people are conducting checks! Collect data on vehicle condition and repair costs so you have a baseline and can track progress later.
- **What do we have in place for vehicle checking? How well does this work?** Do people need to fill out a paper form to show they've completed the checks, is this done electronically, or not at all? How well do people think this works? Ask people in different roles what they think.
- **What's stopping people from checking their vehicle?** Ask people who drive (and let them give their views in private if they feel more comfortable), and people who look at data on vehicle defects.
- **Has the organisation tried anything else to encourage vehicle checking?** Try to speak to everyone who was involved. If something was tried and stopped, find out why.
- **What are other organisations like yours doing?** Make use of your sector networks to find out, and visit the [Driving for Better Business website](#) to read Business Champion Case Studies.
- **Who do I need to involve in making decisions about this?** Think about who might need to approve any new processes, and speak to drivers and anyone involved in running a new initiative.

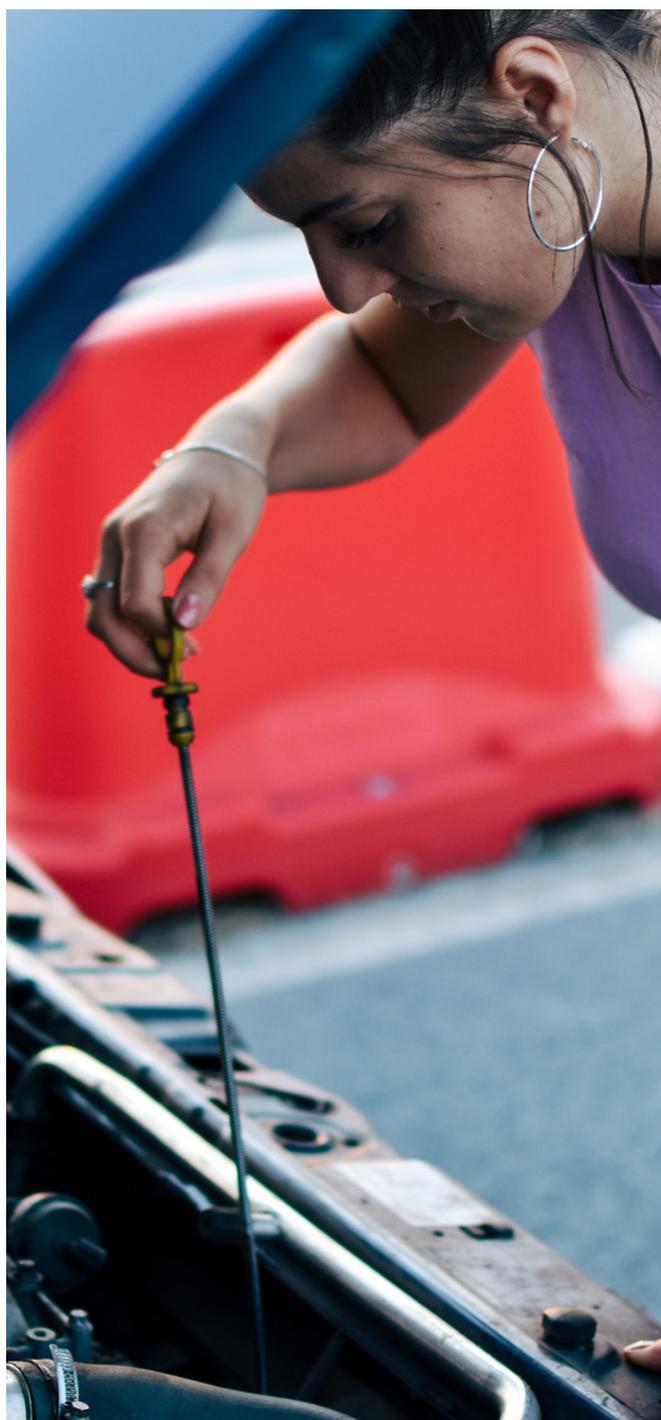


What's most important to focus on? Opening the bonnet to consider the options

What needs to change, and what do people need, to overcome any barriers to checking vehicles?

You could consider any or all of the following:

- **Knowledge and understanding of how to check vehicles, and the ability to do it:** You could introduce communications or training to build awareness and understanding not only of how to carry out each vehicle check, but how to report defects too.
- **Time and the tools to check vehicles, and a safety culture which supports this:** Managers and supervisors can give people confidence to check their vehicle on work time, and you could introduce new guidelines on vehicle checking. You'll also need to provide people with a way to report defects (which could be paper or electronic forms).
- **Motivation to do it:** Help people to see the value of vehicle checking and how it can lead to safer journeys. Communications and training can help do this, for example by explaining what can happen as a result of poor vehicle condition. You could also give rewards and set up a form of friendly competition to encourage vehicle checking.





How to choose a way forward?

Signals and indicators of potential success

The steps on the previous pages should help you decide what to focus on. To keep your initiative manageable, use this checklist:



Who will need to be involved in running it?



How and when will you introduce any new measures? For how long?



Who needs to know about new vehicle checking processes, and how will you let them know?



How likely are people to stick with a new initiative?



Will you need refreshers, and more training for new joiners?



Do you need to ask for any permissions first?



What resources, including cost, are needed? For example, drivers will need smartphones, and a good data allowance or access to Wi-Fi, to use an app-based initiative?



Who is going to 'own' and be accountable for the new system?



How will you monitor and assess progress? What types of data can you use to help show a baseline, to track progress later?

If you'd like to find out more about the study this guide was based on, contact:

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For further resources, visit:

Driving for Better Business resources and information:

www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com

National Highways road safety guidance and information for commercial vehicles:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/commercial-vehicles/>

National Highways information on how to check your vehicle:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/how-to-check-your-vehicle/>

The Highway Code, road safety and vehicle rules for checking your vehicle is safe to drive:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-safe>

Health and Safety Executive information and resources on vehicle inspection, maintenance and repair:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/vehicles/inspection.htm>

Government guidance on carrying out HGV daily walkaround checks:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/carry-out-daily-heavy-goods-vehicle-hgv-walkaround-checks>