

# Vehicle safety and serviceability checks

## QFleet driver safety fact sheet

**There is a requirement for vehicle drivers to perform periodic vehicle safety and serviceability checks. The vehicle owner's handbook provides more information about this.**

These checks will provide the driver with peace of mind and will also identify vehicle faults which, if not rectified, could lead to a situation where:

- the safety and reliability of the vehicle is compromised
- the driver may be penalised for driving a vehicle which is not roadworthy.

The checks can be performed quickly and do not require any special skills or tools, with the exception of a tyre pressure gauge.

Vehicles that are found to be unsafe or defective must be withdrawn from service until repairs are completed.

## Tyres

Tyres that are in good condition and correctly inflated contribute to improved vehicle safety, improved performance and handling and reduced fuel consumption. All tyres, including the spare, must be checked regularly for the following defects:

- less than 1.5 mm of tread depth across the full face of the tread

- uneven wear on the tread shoulders or in the centre of the tread face
- large cuts or cracks
- lumps and bulges
- tread separation or exposed cords (fabric).

Tyres that exhibit any of these defects should not be used and must be referred to a tyre specialist for replacement or rectification.

Correctly inflated tyres are safer and better for the environment and they don't wear as quickly as underinflated tyres. However all tyres lose air pressure over time. A tyre can lose a significant amount of air pressure before it becomes visibly obvious. It is useful to carry a tyre pressure gauge in your vehicle so inflation pressures can be regularly checked. Checks can also be performed at the majority of service stations.

Information about the correct tyre pressure can be located in the vehicle owner's handbook or on the tyre placard fixed to the vehicle. If in doubt, inflate passenger car tyres to 32-34psi (220 – 240 kpa) and 4x4 and light commercial tyres to 40psi (280 kpa) until the correct inflation pressure is known.



## Lights

Vehicle lights and reflectors must operate correctly and must not have dirty, broken or faded lenses. The following lights must be checked regularly:

- headlights (high and low beam)
- front park and side lights
- brake lights
- tail lights
- turn signal indicator lights
- number plate lights
- reversing lights
- hazard or emergency lights
- side and clearance lights (if fitted)
- additional lights (driving lights, fog lights).

The brake lights can be checked with the help of an assistant or by observing the illumination when the vehicle is reversed close to a wall. If a trailer is towed it is a good idea to check the operation of the trailer's lighting also.

## Under bonnet checks

The following under bonnet items should be regularly checked:

- all fluid levels, including engine oil, transmission fluid (if applicable), coolant and brake fluid. *Tip: Check the garage floor for evidence of any significant oil leaks*
- the battery electrolyte level and the condition of the terminals (obvious signs of corrosion)
- the windscreen washer fluid level
- visually check the fan belts for any obvious signs of damage or deterioration
- visually check the radiator and heater hoses for obvious splits and deterioration. Any significant coolant leaks may be obvious on the garage floor.

## Windscreen and wiper blades

The windscreen should be clean and serviceable and allow good forward vision from the vehicle. The following should be checked:

- the presence of large cracks and chips, particularly in the driver's primary vision area

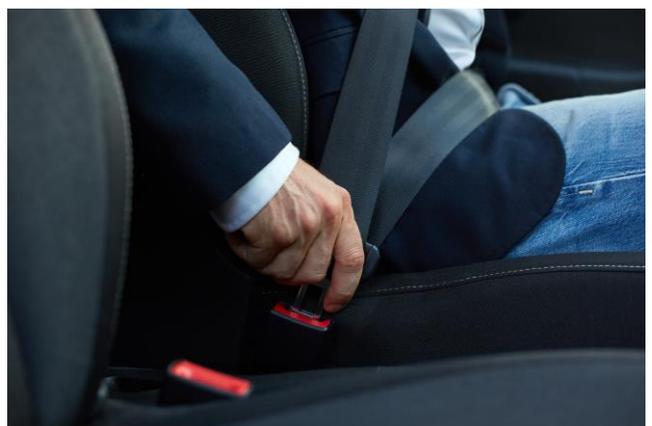
- excessive pitting or "sand blasting"
- posters, stickers, or decals in the driver's primary vision area
- devices such as satellite navigation systems in the driver's primary vision area
- effective operation of the wiper blades
- the operation of the washers. Washer jets can block and can be cleaned with a sewing pin or a needle. These same tools can be used to realign the jets if they are not aimed correctly.



## Other internal checks

Check the operation of:

- the horn
- the seatbelts: Check for ease of operation and any obvious damage
- the smooth operation of the slides and seat adjusters
- the sun visors
- the side windows and the window winders.



## Other external checks

The external condition of the vehicle's panels and paint should also be checked along with:

- the presence and serviceability of the number plates
- the serviceability and operation of the external rear vision mirrors
- the presence and security of the spare wheel (particularly on commercial vehicles).

## Transmission and differential oil level and condition

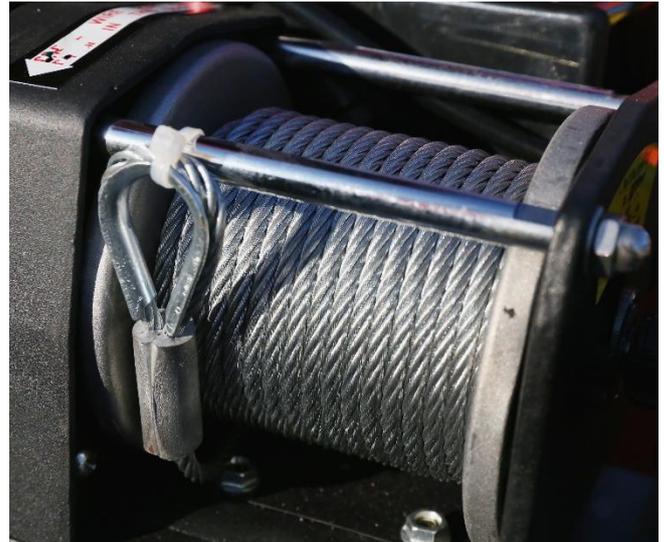
Many transmissions are now sealed for life and cannot be checked by the driver. Differentials are usually checked by the service technician when the vehicle is being serviced. The exception is when vehicles are frequently driven through water which submerges the vehicle drive train. It is possible for water to enter the transmission and differential and to contaminate the lubricant.

To guard against the failures and expensive repairs which result from lubricant contamination operators of vehicles which are regularly driven through water must initiate a regular inspection programme to monitor the transmission and differential oil level and condition. This inspection may need to be carried out at a dealership as soon as possible after the vehicle is submerged.



## Winches

QFleet receives many reports about winches which are not serviceable when they are needed. This is a significant safety risk for vehicles operated in very remote areas.



Regular inspections and use will identify issues which could pose a significant risk in field conditions. The following applies to winch use and inspections:

- Winches should never be submerged in water. If a winch is submerged it must be inspected and serviced by a technician immediately to prevent corrosion damage and to ensure its ongoing safety and reliability.
- A winch which is used infrequently should be used under power and tested periodically to ensure that it remains serviceable.
- The wire rope and its fittings must be checked regularly for obvious damage. Replace damaged, frayed and kinked wire rope.
- The wire rope should be neatly rewound onto the winch drum.

The vehicle owner's handbook and any operator's manuals should also be consulted for further advice about periodic vehicle maintenance checks.

For the full suite of QFleet Road Safety Fact sheets visit [qfleet.qld.gov.au](http://qfleet.qld.gov.au)