

Seat Belts

Application

This inspection applies to all vehicles with seat belts fitted. The minimum requirement for the fitment of seat belts is detailed in the tables below. The only goods vehicles up to and including 3500kg dgw likely to be subject to this inspection are mini-articulated vehicles.

Procedure and standards

Minimum Requirements for Forward Facing Seats

Vehicles First Used from 1 October 2001 with A DGW in Excess of 3500kg

Drivers seat	Front passenger seats	Rear passenger seats
3 point belt (lap and diagonal) or lap belt	3 point belt (lap and diagonal), lap belt or disabled person's belt	No belt required

Vehicles First Used from 1 April 1980 up to and Including 3500kg DGW

Vehicle first used:	Drivers and specified front passenger seat (furthest from driver)	Other front passengers	Rear passengers
1/4/1980 to 31/3/1981	2 point belt (diagonal body restraining)	No belt required	No belt required
1/4/1981 to 31/3/1987	3 point belt (lap and diagonal)	No belt required	No belt required
1/4/1987 to 30/9/2001	3 point belt (lap and diagonal)	3 point belt, lap belt or disabled person's belt	No belt required
From 1/10/2001	3 point belt (lap and diagonal)	3 point belt (lap and diagonal), lap belt or disabled person's belt	No belt required

Note: Seat belts are not required on light goods vehicles with an ULW exceeding 1525kg, if the model of vehicle was first manufactured before 1 October 1979 and the vehicle was manufactured before 1 October 1981, or first used before 1 April 1982.

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Procedure and standards (cont'd)

Condition of all seat belts fitted

Check that each seat that requires a seat belt is fitted with one of the appropriate type.

As far as is practicable without dismantling, check the condition of the vehicle structure around the seat belt anchorage points (i.e. within 300mm (12") of the anchorage).

Where a seat belt is mounted to a seat frame this will apply to all seat mounting points. The floor-mounted anchorage points might need to be inspected from underneath the vehicle.

Pull each seat belt webbing against its anchorage to see that it is properly secured to the vehicle structure.

Note: For seats with integral seat belts, it may not be possible to examine the fixings of the seat belt to the seat.

Fasten each belt locking mechanism and try to pull the locked sections apart. On retracting seat belts, check that with the mechanism fastened and the seat adjusted to its rearmost position, excess webbing is wound into the retracting unit. If there is doubt about the operation of the retracting unit, this check should be carried out with the seat unoccupied.

Note: Some types of retracting belt might need manual help before they retract. Operate the release mechanism while pulling on the belt to check that the mechanism releases when required.

Examine flexible buckle stalks for:

- a) signs of corrosion or weakness. Pull the sheaths aside if this can be done without damage
- b) 'waggle' flexible buckle stalks and listen for a clicking noise indicating broken strands of a cable.

Examine the condition of all seat belt webbing for cuts or obvious signs of deterioration. Pay particular attention to webbing around anchorages, buckles and loops.

Examine the condition of the attachment fittings and adjusting fitting on each belt.

Check the seats to which seat belts are fitted for security and for cracks or fracture of the leg/s and frame.

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Reasons for Failure

1. Obligatory Seat Belt (see Table on first page):
 - a. missing.
 - b. of an incorrect type.
2. Anchorages:
 - a. with excessive corrosion, serious deterioration or a fracture in a load bearing member of the vehicle structure within 300mm (12") of the anchorage. (Where a seat belt is attached to a seat frame this will apply to all seat mounting points).
 - b. a seat belt not securely fixed to the seat or to the vehicle structure.
3. Locking Mechanism, Stalks, Retracting Mechanism and Fittings:
 - a. locking mechanism of a seat belt does not secure or release as intended.
 - b. an attachment or adjustment fitting fractured, badly deteriorated or not operating effectively.
 - c. corrosion or deterioration of a flexible stalk likely to lead to failure under load
 - d. broken flexible stalk strands.
 - e. a retracting mechanism does not retract the webbing sufficiently to remove all the slack from the belt with the locking mechanism fastened.
4. Condition of Webbing:
 - a. a cut which causes the fibres to separate.
 - b. fluffing or fraying sufficient to obstruct correct operation of the belt or which has clearly weakened the webbing.
 - c. stitching badly frayed, insecure, incomplete or repaired.
5. Seat belt fittings:
 - a. any guide, stalk or pivot with obvious signs of structural weakness such that failure is likely.
6. Seat or seats with seat belts attached to them:
 - a. insecure.

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- b. with a cracked or fractured leg or frame.