

[News story: Commercial vehicle operators using old tyres to face investigations](#)

From today (23 November 2018), if the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) finds a tyre more than 10 years old as part of its routine heavy vehicle enforcement work, it will carry out follow-up investigations on the vehicle operator.

If the operator cannot give an adequate explanation for using an old tyre, or their tyre management systems are not up to standard, DVSA may refer them to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner for potential regulatory action.

Updated guidance for operators

DVSA has updated its [guide to maintaining roadworthiness](#) as part of [Road Safety Week](#). It builds on previous guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2013 which strongly discouraged the use of tyres older than 10 years on coaches.

Jesse Norman, Roads Minister, said:

I asked the DVSA to consider this measure as a means to tighten enforcement against the use of older and potentially dangerous tyres.

This is an important step forward in our efforts to improve tyre safety. The Department for Transport is continuing to work with experts to collect robust evidence on older tyres. This research will report back in the spring.

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

DVSA's priority is to protect everyone from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

Tyre safety is vital and DVSA has always taken strong action to protect the public from unsafe tyres of all ages.

By changing our approach, we're sending the message that no one should use tyres more than 10 years old.

Roadside checks

DVSA has also updated its [categorisation of defects guide](#) to include tyres aged more than 10 years old fitted to any heavy vehicle or trailer.

The guide, which is for DVSA enforcement staff, sets out what action they can take when they find roadworthiness defects on vehicles.

From April 2016 to March 2017, DVSA enforcement staff carried out:

- 64,690 mechanical safety checks on heavy goods vehicles and issued 17,405 prohibitions
- 9,787 mechanical safety checks on light goods vehicles and issued 5,434 prohibitions
- 11,324 mechanical safety checks on buses and coaches, and issued 1,760 prohibitions

A prohibition prevents you from driving until you get a problem with your vehicle fixed.

Tyre research

Earlier this year, DfT announced a study into the safety of ageing tyres – the first publicly funded research of its kind in the UK.

In 2013, DfT issued guidance to all operators setting out that tyres that have reached the age of 10 years should not be used on a steering axle, and stipulating strict conditions if they're to be used at all.

Since then, DVSA vehicle standard standards assessors and vehicle examiners have routinely checked the age of tyres on these vehicles every year, as well as in fleet and roadside inspections.

Helping operators keep their vehicles safe to drive

The 'guide to maintaining roadworthiness' has also been updated to help resolve bridge strikes. These cause significant disruption for the rail network and are often caused by drivers failing to appreciate the height of their vehicle.

It gives guidance for drivers to help make sure they record the height of their vehicle during their [daily walkaround checks](#), which are part of an effective maintenance system. By improving guidance in this area, DVSA aims to see a reduction in disruption to travellers.