#### The Institute of Advanced Motorists

#### The MoT test – time for a change?

**Policy overview**

**A recent government report suggested that the frequency of the MOT test should be changed to bring it more in line with EC minimum requirements. A change would reduce costs for some motorists, but would road safety be compromised?**

The EC minimum is for a first test for cars at four years old, followed by a test every two years, known as the 4-2-2 sequence. The UK requirement is for the first test after three years, followed by annual testing, the 3-1-1 sequence. An analysis for the government\* suggests that the three-year test is costing car owners £80 million a year in test fees.

In the 1960s, the UK was one of the first countries to require all vehicles to undergo an annual roadworthiness inspection after three years. At that time, new cars had only one-year warranties, and the quality of design and construction was much lower. Today, new cars come with three-year warranties, and it is in the new car owner’s interest to have the car serviced, under warranty, before three years are up, to rectify any faults.

Therefore, is the consumer’s best interest served by also having to pay for an MOT test at around the same time, simply to show that the garage has done its job properly?

The IAM Trust believes that both road safety and consumer costs should be considered to help form a judgement, and it is therefore important to know *why* cars fail their first MOT test at three years. It would also help to know how many cars fail the test at the fourth year, and for what reasons. Although this information is available for trucks and buses, it is not available for cars. The IAM Trust has asked that this information is made available and awaits a response.

There are fears that moving from 3-1-1 to a 4-1-1 MoT sequence would seriously impact on road safety. If this is so, the IAM Trust will support the retention of the current sequence. But the road safety benefits of maintaining the status quo must be independently reviewed to make sure that the £80 million cost to car owners of an MOT test after three years is good value for consumers and road safety, and not just garages.

\*To see the Davidson Review go to**:**

[**www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/F/davidson\_review281106.pdf**](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/F/davidson_review281106.pdf)