

Vehicle Standards Instruction

Seat Belt Assessment

September 2021

As part of all routine vehicle inspections, key safety components like seat belts are checked to ensure they meet the relevant standards and have not been damaged. Following feedback from industry groups, Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has produced this Vehicle Standards Instruction (VSI) to provide Transport Inspectors (TI), Approved Persons (AP), Approved Inspection Stations (AIS) and vehicle owners with information about some of the common defects found with seatbelts.

When inspecting a seatbelt assembly, ensure you follow this seat belt safety checklist.

Seat Belt Safety Checklist

Tongue and Buckle Assembly

- The buckle and tongue assembly should securely latch together with no freeplay.
- The tongue should eject actively when released.
- There should be no visible cracks on the buckle and the buckle cover must be intact.
- The tongue should have no metal deformation, webbing marks, or visible cracks on metal or plastic sections.

Retractor

- Pull the belt out as far as it will go then release it. The belt should return all the way to the retractor without sticking, gripping or stalling.
- The retractor should lock if the webbing is pulled out suddenly.

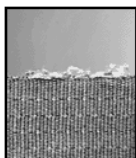
Webbing

- The webbing should be securely attached to its end fittings displaying no stretching or pulled stitching.
- The webbing should be flat throughout its entire length.
- Look for plastic burn marks, frayed stitching and any signs of rippling.
- Look for severe fading as exposure to sunlight could possibly reduce the strength, this could be apparent as visible degradation of the webbing fabric.

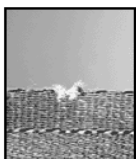
Anchorage

- Ensure all anchorages are free from corrosion and securely fastened to the vehicle structure.
- All mounting points should not show any signs of deformation.

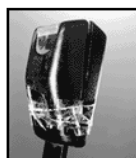
When inspecting a seat belt assembly, make sure you look for these common types of damage:



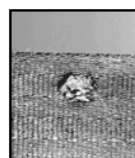
Fraying and fluffing



Cuts or Nicks



Damaged Buckles



Holes



Chaffing / Stretch



Weak Connections

What to do if a seat belt assembly is damaged

Inspection at an Approved Inspection Station

If your vehicle is inspected at an Approved Inspection Station, the examiner who is looking at your vehicle is responsible for deciding whether or not damage to a seat belt assembly will make the vehicle defective.

If the examiner decides that the damage is such that it makes the seat belt unsafe, the vehicle will be considered defective and the examiner will fail the inspection. In this situation, you will need to follow the directions given by the inspector about how to correct the defect.

Inspection by Transport Inspector or Police Officer

When your vehicle is being inspected by a Transport Inspector or a Police Officer, it is the person carrying out the inspection who is responsible for determining how severe damage to a seat belt is, and what action will be taken.

Possible actions that may be available to a Transport Inspector or Police Officer are:

- A defect notice can be issued requiring the damaged seat belt to be replaced
- The Transport Inspector or Police Officer may impose conditions about how the vehicle can be used until the defects are corrected, such as prohibiting the use of a seating position with a damaged seat belt
- If the Transport Inspector or Police Officer believes that nature of the defects would mean that allowing the vehicle to continue being used on the road would pose an imminent and/or serious risk to the safety of the driver, occupants, other road users or road infrastructure, they can prohibit the vehicle from being driven at all
- If the inspection is being carried out for a certificate of inspection, the Transport Inspector may not pass the inspection

If you have concerns in relation to a defect notice you have been issued, you should first discuss your concerns with the Transport Inspector or Police Officer who issued the notice. If you are not able to resolve the issue, you may then wish to direct your enquiry to either the Senior Transport Inspector or Officer-in-Charge at the Inspection Centre or Station where the issuing officer is based.

Further information

For more information about this VSI, please email vehiclestandards@tmr.qld.gov.au