

Classic cars could soon require MoTs

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Classic cars could become subject to MoT-style safety checks after the public backed a proposed move.

More than two in five respondents to a Department for Transport (DfT) public consultation said they agreed with officials that new tests should be introduced for cars over 40 years old, while only 36 per cent saw no need for a change to current rules.

At present, cars that were first registered more than 40 years ago are exempt from vehicle excise duty and MoT testing — provided that they have not been substantially modified.

Of the 1,083 respondents, 41 per cent supported either a full MoT or similar safety tests appropriate to the age of the classic or historic car. Among those supporting a change, 18 per cent said that tests the same as MoTs should be introduced, while 10 per cent said that “basic checks for roadworthiness” ought to be made mandatory.

Wayne Scott, of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, suggested that one-off safety checks “would be appropriate” if carried out after a major rebuild of a vehicle. “This may need to be a more in-depth inspection than the MoT, possibly including some degree of dismantling to permit full access to all parts of the vehicle but, in common with the MoT, should assess the vehicle with reference to technical standards applicable when it was new,” he said.

Other classic car clubs disagreed and said arrangements were adequate. Dale Keller, chief executive of the Historic and Classic Vehicles Alliance, said: “There could be a case for an optional, industry-led, roadworthiness test for historic MoT-exempt vehicles, especially those being returned to the road after an extended laying-up period, or major repair or restoration. We are not aware of any evidence that the trust placed in owners to maintain their specialist vehicles to a roadworthy standard is being abused, nor any statistical evidence that historic vehicles are more prone to be involved in accidents.”

A government spokesman said any plans for new safety tests for classic cars would be announced. “The safety of our roads is our utmost priority, and all car owners are responsible for ensuring their vehicle meets the road safety and environmental standards,” he said.

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