

Periodic Inspection Manual Discussion

February 10, 2025

Purpose

To walk through proposed edits and reclassifications in the Periodic Inspection Manual for review and discussion. These updates aim to improve clarity, consistency, and practicality for inspectors while maintaining safety standards.

Wheels and Tires (Page 31)

Proposed Change:

Modify existing language for #2 and #3 as well as remove #4:

- 2. Any tire has a worn spot or deep cut that exposes the cord through the tread.
- 3. Any tire has visible bulges indicating separation of the tire structure.

Talking Point: States with a safety inspection apply these same guidelines. Weather cracking indicates wear or aging and not an immediate structural failure. These changes make a failure very clear.

Page 32: No changes.

Power Steering and Suspension (Pages 33–34)

Proposed Change:

Move the following from Failure to Advisory:

- Power-steering belt broken.
- Vehicle continues free rocking motion after release, indicating weak shock absorbers.

Talking Point: These items impact ride quality, not direct safety. Reclassifying them ensures inspectors focus failure calls on components that pose an actual hazard.

Brake Performance (Page 35)

Proposed Change: Remove this section entirely to eliminate the road test requirement.

Procedure: Examine braking performance during road test.

Talking Point: The road test step isn't consistently applied, introduces liability, and doesn't align with how other states evaluate braking. Removing it simplifies the process.

Rotors and Drums (Page 36)

Proposed Changes:

- Remove the word rust from: "If more than ½ inch of pitting (formerly rust) exists..."
- Keep the definition of rust in the note section only.
- Add new language: "Evidence of cracks on rotor/drum extending to open edge."
- Strike the word chips from "Brake lining shows evidence of cracks or chips or if adhesion is compromised."

Periodic Inspection Manual Discussion

February 10, 2025

Talking Point: We're clarifying language to distinguish between cosmetic corrosion and structural pitting. The term rust was redundant. The added line about cracks ensures clear inspection criteria.

Lighting and Electrical Systems (Page 38)

Proposed Change: Move the following from **Failure** to **Advisory**:

- License plate lamps (23 V.S.A. § 1248)
- Backup lamps
- Front clearance lamps (23 V.S.A. § 1250)
- Rear clearance lamps (23 V.S.A. § 1250)

Talking Point: These lighting elements are cosmetic or supplemental. The primary headlamps and brake lamps remain critical. This change focuses failure classification on true safety lighting.

Headlamp Aiming (Page 39)

Proposed Change: Remove entire section.

Talking Point: Inspection stations rarely perform this test, and equipment calibration varies widely. Removing it eliminates a step that doesn't produce consistent results.

Instrument Cluster, Speedometer, Defroster, Horn (Page 40)

Proposed Changes: Retain only one failure item:

The brake system failure indicator light remains illuminated after the engine is started and the parking brake is released.

Move the following to **Advisory**:

- Airbag warning light.
- Speedometer illumination.
- Front defroster function.

Talking Point: This focuses the failure category on a true safety indicator, the brake warning light, and moves secondary issues to advisory. It ensures consistency and reduces subjective interpretation.

Vehicle Glass (Page 42)

Note: Pages need renumbering in the print copy.

Proposed Change: Move this from **Failure** to **Advisory** - "Two or more star breaks or bullseyes larger than 1.5 inches within any part of the critical area."

Talking Point: Small cracks or chips outside the driver's view should not fail an inspection. This aligns with national visibility standards.

Periodic Inspection Manual Discussion

February 10, 2025

Side Windows (Page 43)

Proposed Change: Move the following to **Advisory**:

“Any manual or power-operated window fails to operate properly”—for both driver and rear windows.

Talking Point: Non-functioning windows do not pose a direct safety hazard. This reclassification ensures inspectors don’t fail vehicles for convenience features.”

Exterior Body and Sheet Metal (Page 46)

Proposed Changes:

- Move from **Failure** to **Advisory**: Portions of wiper blades that contact the windshield are ripped or missing sections of rubber.
- Clarify the rust guidance under Sheet Metal/Body:
 - Define failure as corrosion or torn metal that compromises structural integrity.
 - Insert a diagram identifying A, B, and C pillars, excluding front and rear doors.
 - Develop clear language describing when rust on these pillars constitutes failure.

Talking Point: This section needs precise language and a visual reference so inspectors can differentiate structural rust from surface corrosion. The diagram will standardize interpretations across stations.

Pagination

Proposed Change: Correct mis-numbered pages to match the online manual.

Talking Point: This is purely an administrative fix to ensure uniform references between digital and paper copies.

Closing Remarks

- These proposals are designed to simplify inspections, clarify ambiguous sections, and ensure that failure calls focus on true safety conditions and allow Vermonters to be made aware of possible concerns while remaining legal.
- It’s clear that Vermonters want change to the inspection process. These changes will make a meaningful impact and assist in lifting the burden and uncertainty of driving an uninspected vehicle due to replacement parts and increased costs.