



THE NEWSLETTER
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WHEEL TORQUE

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WoF reform a cautious first step

While it is not the whole package of reforms sought by the FOMC on behalf of member clubs, the announced revisions to the WoF and vehicle licensing regimes are a positive first step towards reducing the multi-million dollar annual costs imposed on heritage and special vehicle owners.

And as part of the follow-up consultation on the proposed amendments to vehicle compliance standards to implement the changes, the NZ Transport Agency is calling for feedback on how the introduction of 12 month WoFs for vehicles first registered (anywhere in the world) from 2000 could be extended to cover the heritage fleet.

The changes, which include exempting new cars from a WoF for the first three years, are scheduled to be phased in from October this year.

The FOMC and our member clubs have until the end of May to take advantage of this opportunity to suggest the ways and means which could be implemented by the Government to halve the costs of WoF checks for older heritage vehicles too. As well as providing the FOMC with ideas and information to support our submission, clubs can also visit the NZTA website (www.nzta.govt.nz) and file their own submissions on Land Transport Vehicle Standards Compliance Amendment Rule 35001/11.

During the consultation process so far, a number of issues have been considered in relation to the inspection requirements applying to veteran, vintage and other heritage vehicles. The NZTA took note of the submissions from the FOMC, other motoring organisations, and individual owners which argued that heritage vehicles should be subject to less frequent inspections as they usually have lower usage than other vehicles. It was also noted that though such vehicles were usually well-maintained they could not be expected to meet the safety standards of modern vehicles.

Even the Motor Trade Association, who ran a campaign opposing changes to the WoF system, concurred that there should be an exemption from six monthly warrants for heritage and collector vehicles as they usually only cover very low mileages each year and are often fully restored to as new condition, or meticulously maintained by their owners.

While independent analysis indicated that a 12 month WoF period for all vehicles would have produced the best economic outcome, the government appears to have supported the chosen option because it is more gradual and gives the inspection industry time to adjust. It also reflects submitters concerns about the safety of 'older' cars (i.e. high-mileage 1990s Jap-imports).

However, it is projected that in about 10 years time, only 13% of the fleet will still be on a 6-monthly WoF, so a future anomaly has been created which will become increasingly untenable.

Under the selected option, it will be mainly the owners of vintage and classic vehicles and trailers and caravans remaining on six-monthly inspections despite low use.

While agreeing that any increased safety risks generated by making specific arrangements for heritage vehicles would be small, the NZTA believes the economic benefits would be limited and would also involve an increase in implementation costs.

So it is calling for more submissions on what the frequency requirements for the in-service inspections of older

cont'd on page 2



heritage vehicles should be, and whether the current definitions accurately depict vehicles commonly referred to as 'veteran' and 'vintage' motor vehicles.

The transport legislation currently defines 'veteran motor vehicles' as those manufactured before 1 January 1919, and 'vintage motor vehicles' as all others manufactured after 1 January 1919 and at least 40 years old on the date that they were registered, reregistered or licensed.

The problem for the Government is how to separate fully restored and well maintained heritage vehicles from clapped out old cars more than thirty or forty year old and being driven by people with neither the money nor the moral responsibility to keep their vehicles roadworthy.

One option is to suggest to the Government that heritage vehicles belonging to club members could be separately identified by stickers, a database register, or different coloured number plates. But the Vintage Car Club and others are justifiably concerned that once a process is in place to separate heritage vehicles from the main vehicle fleet it will only be a matter of time before rules are introduced to restrict when they can be driven on public roads as has happened in other countries.

The results of the FOMC's survey of members indicated the majority of car collectors are paying between \$90 and \$360 in WoF fees each year, and most favoured 12 month WoFs for vehicles 30 years old and over, with 18 per cent supporting an exemption for heritage vehicles from WoF inspections as is now the law for pre-1960 vehicles in the United Kingdom.

The argument that six monthly WoF checks impose heavy costs on heritage and collectable car owners without achieving any significant road safety benefit appears to have been accepted by the Government and its advisors.

But even though New Zealand has one of the most draconian inspection systems in the OECD, and vehicle design has dramatically improved since the scheme was first introduced in the 1930's, there was vociferous opposition to updating the system, especially from the MTA which operates the VTNZ chain of testing stations.

So it was not surprising the Government is initially being more cautious than it might have been in preparing the changes it proposes to implement. But there are still avenues open for additional reforms to further reduce the costs imposed on motorists, if we respond effectively to the latest consultation on the proposed rule changes.

The FOMC will be taking advantage of the continuing opportunity to suggest other ways the fees and charges imposed on car collectors can be curbed. For example it could be submitted that the unfairness in the costs imposed on the owners of older vehicles could be offset by reducing licensing fees for vehicles older than thirty years (rather than 40 as at present).

But in light of the Government's initiative, there is now an obligation on all road users, including car collectors, to show they can be trusted to keep their vehicles in safe and roadworthy condition, irrespective of WoF interval.

EDITORIAL

A Call To Arms

While the government's announcement that light vehicles built from 2000 but aged six years or older will now only be subject to an annual WoF in perpetuity is disappointing for owners of older heritage vehicles, the fact is the fight is not over and our sector still has a window of opportunity to change the rules.

The NZTA is seeking consultation on Land Transport Rule changes before the end of May which will implement the government's policy. As part of that consultation document, the NZTA has posed two questions: what is the appropriate WoF test frequency for vintage and veteran vehicles?; and are the current definitions of 'veteran' and 'vintage' appropriate?

Given that the government's announcement intended the year 2000 to be the cut-off, the significance of these questions cannot be underestimated.

The FOMC, and other clubs and individuals, put in a compelling submission on last year's review (see *Wheel Torque # 14*), seeking annual WoFs (for all car and motorcycles), and we know that senior Ministry of Transport and ministerial staff also supported reduced WoFs for heritage vehicles. However, Cabinet made its decision not to specifically accommodate our sector. But they have now left it to the NZTA to implement their policy and will take no further interest in the specifics. Therefore, there is still time to persuade NZTA to change the Rules during this second phase of consultation.



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This may be the most important policy change to affect the heritage vehicle sector in a long time. The FOMC has not before asked member clubs and individuals to submit on Rule or legislation changes, but we believe that by doing so we have a real chance at changing a rule that directly affects – and discriminates against – heritage vehicle owners. We need you to have your say! Now is the time for all collectible, heritage or special interest vehicle owners (or whatever you want to call us) to be heard. It's a bit like voting – the FOMC needs as many clubs and individuals to offer their suggestions on the two questions posed in the draft Rule amendment – and to let them know what our not-insignificant sector wants. The more unified submissions, the better our chances of success.

The FOMC will be submitting that the frequency of WoFs for 'veteran' and 'vintage' vehicles should be once every 12 months – and that the definition of 'vintage' vehicles should be expanded to include vehicles no younger than 30 years of age.

If you agree, please put in a submission from your club and ask your individual members to do the same – consultation closes on 31 May 2013.

FOMC NATIONAL CONFERENCE & AGM

It is still not too late to register for the FOMC National Conference and AGM to be held at Cutler Park in Christchurch on Sunday **May 26th**.

The registration fee of \$15 per delegate covers the catered lunch and there is no charge for delegates and club observers who don't want lunch. Club observers are also welcome to attend only the Sunday morning session to hear the guest speakers.

The venue is **The Barn**, at the **VCC's Cutler Park, McLeans Island Road**, Christchurch starting at 10:00am. Clubs are welcome to send along as members as want to hear the speeches, but only the official delegate has automatic speaking and voting rights.

Agenda:

10:00 to 10:15	Gather/morning tea
10:15 to 12:30	Presentations from guest speakers
12:30 to 1:15	Lunch
1:15 to 3:15	Officers reports, election of officers and general business
3.15 –	Afternoon tea

Guest presentations at this year's AGM & National Conference include:

- *Mark Stockdale, AA PetrolWatch spokesperson – Meeting the dangers ethanol fuels pose for older cars.*
- *Kevin Clarkson, VCC Insurance committee chairman – Public liability risk issues for clubs.*
- *Wes Davies (Publisher) and Tony Haycock (Editor) of NZ Classic Driver magazine – Exciting opportunities for classic motoring enthusiasts.*

The FOMC has received the following nominations for the Executive Committee:

President – Malcolm Lumsden
Vice President – Fred Fellows
Secretary – Roy Hughes
Treasurer – Paul Billing
Committee: Norm Pointon, Murray McLean, Tony Bartlett
Submissions Secretary – no nomination

Those who want a lunch at the national conference and AGM please advise by email to secretary@fomc.co.nz or telephone 03 332 7500 and pay on arrival at meeting.

FOMC subscriptions now due

Member clubs have been posted subscription renewal forms for the 2013-14 financial year, which are now due. But if you haven't received it, you can download a form from our website: www.fomc.org.nz

Please note the FOMC doesn't issue invoices – the fee schedule according to your club size is included on the subscription notice. Don't forget also to include any revised contact details, including email addresses.

ETHANOL A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER TO HERITAGE MOTORING

A Morris Eight owner thought he would take advantage of the lower cost of topping up his tank with the cheaper 91 grade petrol provided by Gull around the Auckland region.

Being a touch pernickety about keeping his motor tuned to perfection, he uses the traditional combination of sparking plug colour, exhaust pipe colour, and fuel consumption to assess correct mixture. So during one of his regular inspections he was somewhat horrified to find the spark plugs almost white, with a glaze akin to that of porcelain on the electrodes.

Prior to his next long run, he filled up with BP 91 and back home he rechecked the plugs of the Morris, to find their appearance normal again.



Already aware of the damage ethanol can do to older cars he has avoided the blue ethanol-blend 98 octane pumps at Gull service stations. But he did not realise ethanol-blended 91 octane petrol branded as "Gull Regular Plus" was being sold at 15 service stations in the Auckland and Waikato regions.

Our Morris owner should be grateful it was only his plugs that became glazed and not his eyes as he contemplated the cost of repairing the damage a taste of ethanol might have wreaked on his prized classic.

While most modern cars are manufactured to run on ethanol-blended fuel, it is not recommended for older vehicles, or any engine with a carburettor. Likely damage to the fuel lines and carburettors of older vehicles built before 1986 can include corrosion, leaks and blockages, and other potential effects can include fuel starvation, weak mixtures, and engine damage.

Various elastomers, polymers and cork commonly used for sealing purposes in earlier cars can swell, shrink or leak as a result of exposure to ethanol. It also has acidic corrosive effects on zinc, brass, copper, lead/tin coated steel, and even aluminium in sufficient strength.

continued on page 4



But not only can ethanol-blended fuels do corrosive damage to various parts of older cars, they also affect the drivability. In hot weather older vehicles running on ethanol blends can prove hard to start or run roughly after a long run due to vapour lock or carburettor foaming, so the engines run too lean or too rich. Ethanol blends can also can also make cold starts more difficult.

Though the earlier Labour Government initiative to make biofuels compulsory was repealed by the present administration, the availability of ethanol blends is still likely to expand in New Zealand. Though the AA reports that Gull has recently withdrawn E10 91 due to supply constraints, the 98 grade ethanol fuel is still being supplied throughout the North Island, and Mobil is also selling ethanol-blended 91 and 98 octane fuel at some sites in Wellington and Manawatu.

While any fuel sold with more than 1% ethanol is required to be clearly labelled at the pump, this information can be easily overlooked. So the owners of older vehicles should be carefully checking the labelling displayed on the pump before filling up.

The FOMC has also received still unconfirmed reports that ethanol has been found in petrol in other parts of the country. So owners experiencing unexpected deterioration in the performance of their vehicles should investigate whether the quality of their fuel is a factor.

The AA's advice is for motorists to check ethanol compatibility in the owner's manual, or with their marque agent, and if unsure then avoid those fuel brands which sell biofuels.

Ethanol is a petrol substitute so cannot be blended with diesel. However, Gull also sells a B5 (5%) biodiesel blend at some sites, as does BP at one Christchurch station. The advice on the AA website says that B5 (which must be labelled) is suitable for use in most diesel engines, but again owners should check compatibility in the owner's handbook and if in doubt avoid the retailers that sell it.

- *A presentation on biofuel compatibility issues from AA PetrolWatch spokesman Mark Stockdale is on the agenda for the FOMC's annual general meeting to be held in Christchurch on Sunday May 26th.*



NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

FIVA's Charter of Turin now in force

On the 127th birthday of the automobile, January 29, 2013, the Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA) introduced the Turin Charter which outlines important guidelines for owners of historical vehicles on questions of authenticity.

The Charter underlines the significance of the automobile in terms of cultural heritage, sets out the case for a responsible approach to dealing with classic vehicles, and provides guidance about their use, upkeep, repair and restoration.

According to the FIVA press release, the policy paper highlights the cultural and historical importance of the automobile and advocates the responsible treatment of historical vehicles. These principles and guidelines provide support for owners of historical vehicles in the use, maintenance, repair and restoration of their vehicle.

In the Turin Charter, FIVA safeguards the right to drive historical road vehicles on international public highways. "If we want to be able to experience classic cars in the future, we must make sure they are recognised as a part of our culture worth protecting now", according to FIVA president Horst Brüning.

However, FIVA says that ever stricter and more complex environmental and safety requirements tempt people away from maintaining their classic cars in their original condition, so that they may continue to drive them on public highways. This is where FIVA, with its Turin Charter, comes in. This landmark document means that adjustments to policy in this area are to be conducted on an international, rather than a national, level.

A central theme of the charter is the preservation of as many of the original features of the vehicle as possible.

There is a whole catalogue of specific recommendations on the use, maintenance, preservation, restoration and repair of serviceable historical vehicles. For the first time, owners of historical vehicles have access to a document giving them clear guidance on the best way to look after their vehicle. An ID card based on the charter is also in the planning stages, guaranteeing every owner, buyer and seller that the vehicle has been used and cared for according to the Turin Charter.

"The aim of the charter is to protect both the tangible and intangible evidence of the history of vehicles in order to pass it on. We seek to preserve the greatest possible authenticity," Mr Brüning said.

FIVA differentiates between three different types of operation and maintenance of a vehicle: preservation, restoration and modification.

- www.fiva.org