



Walk Around Checks (The Circle of Safety)

As a driver, you are legally responsible to ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy and up to MOT standard at all times. Whilst walk around checks are not a legal requirement, they provide an excellent method for you to quickly check if your vehicle is safe before driving away and are an integral part of professional training for heavy vehicle drivers.

A high percentage of all collisions involve backing into or hitting stationary objects. Leaving parking positions and whilst travelling at relatively slow speeds in car parks and away from the roadside account for most of these crashes.

It is always good practice to reverse into parking positions unless there is a good reason not to, such as heavy items to remove or place in the boot or if you park in reverse it would be difficult to access the rear of the vehicle or rear doors that cannot be opened if you have to reverse close to a wall or other obstruction. If you are able to reverse in (or look for a number of empty parking bays and drive through the first one so you park facing the direction you want to leave in the second one), you will be able to drive forwards away from the parking position which gives better visibility and is much safer than having to reverse out!

The check we have put together is a very basic visual check; it should take no longer than twenty seconds to complete depending on what type of vehicle you drive and can be done as you approach your vehicle but has the potential to save damage and injury. It should be used every time you walk towards the vehicle before getting in and driving away, especially if you are in a car park or are parked in an unfamiliar location. This check does not replace weekly or monthly checks which are more detailed.

Important: If you have to walk into the traffic flow in order to carry out the check or you are parked in an unsafe area then do not put your own personal safety at risk!

Things to look for whilst conducting the check:

- Visually check all tyres for inflation. Looking at the bottom of the tyre will give a good indication; if the sidewall of one sticks out more than the others it could have reduced pressure
- Any obvious sidewall damage including cuts or bulges
- Any new damage to vehicle exterior
- Registration plate clean (front and rear)
- Lights clean and undamaged
- External mirrors clean
- All doors/shutters/fuel flap closed
- If driving a larger vehicle or have a roof rack fitted, check load security
- Any leaks under the vehicle



- Check the area behind your vehicle especially if you need to reverse
- Check for posts and other obstructions which may not be visible from the driver's seat
- Check the route you need to use leaving the parking position for the best direction and further obstructions.

Once in the vehicle, do not delay before driving away. If you drive a van with limited rear vision from the driver's seat and do not drive away promptly then you should complete a quick walk around before driving off especially if you need to reverse.

A good routine to get into, is to conduct this simple check every time you walk towards the vehicle. Regularly people are seen driving on nearly flat tyres and you'll often hear about children, or pedestrians being injured in car parks or on drives because the driver did not see them before manoeuvring or driving away, it only takes a few seconds, make sure you don't get caught out!

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