

GOVT: MODIFIED CARS CAN BE MOT-FREE...

...but you'll have to declare it as a 'Vehicle of Historic Interest' first

Pre-1977 vehicles like this Austin Mini Cooper can be made a Vehicle of Historic Interest in May 2018 – and not subject to MoT testing.

THE MAJOR POINTS

- The process is one of self-declaration.
- Owners will only be required to declare their vehicle to be a VHI if they wish to be exempted from an annual MoT test.
- All vehicles can still be tested if their owners wish.
- The criteria are generic and permit changes made less than 30 years prior to the declaration, which improve efficiency, safety, preservation or environmental performance.
- If vehicles registered on a Q-plate, as kits or built up classics, have been registered as 'Historic' vehicles and not substantially changed, they can also be exempted.



The Government has declared that your classic can still be a classed as a Vehicle of Historic Interest – and therefore MoT-free – unless you've made significant changes to your classic in the last 30 years.

Last year, the Government announced that vehicles 40 years and older will be exempt from annual roadworthiness testing, with the exception of those that have been substantially changed from standard.

And as reported in last week's *Classic Car Weekly* (27 December) the guidelines for what 'substantially changed' means have been released by the Government.

Highlights include chassis, axles and engine modifications. Replacements of the same pattern chassis and bodyshells that are original, will not be considered substantially changed. Alteration of the type and or method of suspension or steering will constitute as a substantial change. Alternative cubic capacities of the same basic engine and alternative original equipment engines are not considered substantially changed.

There are some caveats however. Many cars that have been issued with a Q-registration number will still need to be tested, as will kit cars built using components from different makes and models.

Department for Transport media officer, Ashleigh Moore, says: 'The DfT has set the modification timeframe at 30 years to ensure that any modifications made more than 30 years ago will not be considered as substantial changes that require a vehicle aged more than 40 years old to be tested. Mods made a long time ago should not trigger the need for testing.'

'If a car built more than 40 years ago was last substantially changed more than 30 years ago, it would not be exempt from the requirement for testing from May 2018. It would need to have an MoT if used on a public road for up to the date at which it would become not substantially modified for 30 years. It could then be declared by its keeper as being a Vehicle of Historic

Interest and hence exempt from having further MoTs.'

Communications director for the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, Geoff Lancaster, says: 'The guidance reflects the outcome of intensive discussions between the DfT and the FBHVC. In the discussions, we were careful to take account of all possible members of the historic vehicle family.'

'Following strong arguments and representations, a vehicle may now generally be a VHI if relevant changes were undertaken more than 30 years previously. This will be a rolling 30 years and replaces the fixed 1988 date previously proposed by DfT.'

Murray Scullion
tinyurl.com/gvtvhi

THE COVER STORY

HOW TO DECLARE A VEHICLE FOR THE 40-YEAR MOT EXEMPTION

■ From 20 May 2018, at the point of taxing a vehicle, the vehicle keeper can declare their vehicle exempt from MoT if it was constructed more than 40 years ago.

■ When declaring an exemption, you will be required to confirm that it has not been substantially changed (as defined in this guidance).

■ If the vehicle does not have an MoT

and you wish to continue using it on public roads, you will have either to undergo an MoT or, if you wish exemption from the MoT, to declare that the vehicle is a VHI.

■ If the vehicle has a current MoT certificate but you anticipate that on expiry of that certificate you will wish exemption from future MoTs you will at the time of relicensing be required to declare that the vehicle is a VHI.

YOUR OPINIONS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

■ **Ian Albert Tiddill:** 'We'll start seeing some proper dangerous heaps on the road.'

■ **Stephen Clacker:** 'I will still be getting my 47-year-old Triumph MoTd every year - it's like part of its historical record.'

■ **Andy Cook:** 'So if you have a 40-year-old Moggie Minor and a big V8 was dropped in over 30 years ago then it's not substantially modified.'

■ **Michael Davis:** 'So if I read this correctly, I can just ignore all the fuss, take my car for an MoT each year as I was doing anyway and carry on as before. Well, that sounds easy enough.'

TWITTER

■ **@motoringevents:** 'Ridiculous'

■ **@rover_mg:** 'My wife's car has an MoT failure for parking brake lever missing. It is on a foot pedal! I won't miss testers 'inspecting' my classics!'