

What are the changes being introduced to the NCT from the 21st June 2021?

From this date, three changes will be introduced to the National Car Test.

1. **OBD Testing:** Ireland will be amongst the first of the EU Member States to commence the use of OBD testing under the EU Directive 2014/45. OBD testing will initially be introduced on a phased basis in the NCT. When an OBD error code is detected it will result in the vehicle receiving an **“Advisory Pass”** provided the vehicle passes on all other items being assessed. Then, from early 2022, when an error code is detected, this may constitute a reason for **“failure”**. This approach will enable customers and the automotive industry to become familiar with this change to the NCT process.
2. **New NCT Manual:** A new manual has been published and is available for download here [NCT Manual 2023](#) The manual lists each item on which a car will be tested and lays down the test method and pass/fail criteria to be adopted. It provides guidance to the public and the automotive industry as to why a vehicle may fail the NCT and the categorisation of defects.
3. **Escalation of defects:** This will see where a combination of deficiencies is recorded in the NCT in one area of a vehicle, the combination of deficiencies could lead to the result of the NCT being escalated to ‘fail dangerous’. Where a vehicle receives this result, it is considered to constitute a direct or immediate risk to road safety and the vehicle should not be driven on the road under any circumstances.

What is OBD Testing and why is it being introduced?

An On-Board Diagnostics System (OBD) is a computer system inside a vehicle, which tracks and regulates a car's performance. It collects information from sensors inside the vehicle, to alert the user to a problem, often before it becomes a major issue.

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These changes will see Ireland be amongst the first of the EU Member States to commence the use of OBD testing under the EU Directive 2014/45.

What will be inspected under the OBD test and how can I prepare for the test?

The inspection is quick and easy, the NCT Vehicle Inspector will plug the OBD scanner into the vehicle's OBD computer port known as the DLC (data link connector). This port is usually located under the steering wheel but may also be found in the glove compartment of the vehicle. This OBD scanner will quickly indicate whether or not error codes exist and it also helps and alerts the Vehicle Inspector to possible defects within the vehicle.

The OBD scanner will scan the OBD system for:

1. Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

Using the OBD scanner, the Vehicle Inspector will verify that the VIN read by the OBD scanner matches the number on the vehicle. While a difference will not be a reason for failure, the OBD VIN reading will be recorded on the VIR (Vehicle Inspection Report) issued to the customer.

2. Odometer Reading

The Vehicle Inspector will record the odometer reading at the time of the test. They will also verify the reading using the OBD scanner and customers will be alerted to both readings on their VIR report.

3. Electronic Braking System (EBS)

Any error code associated with the electronic braking system will be recorded on the Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) provided to the customer following their NCT inspection.

4. Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)

Any error code associated with the antilock braking system will be recorded on the Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) provided to the customer following their NCT inspection.

In order for the NCT to conduct the inspection, customers are asked to ensure:

- Their glove compartments are unlocked and clear of personal belongings before their NCT.
- That any devices using the OBD port in the vehicle are removed in advance of the NCT test.

NCTS has engaged with the automotive industry regarding this new inspection item and it is recommended that you liaise with your local garage/ mechanic who should be equipped with the necessary diagnostic equipment to perform this scan in advance of going for an NCT.