

The Single Vehicle Approval Scheme

A guide to the scheme, which includes:

- Disabled person's vehicles
- Hearses
- Armoured vehicles
- Vehicles outside the above classes.

What is the Single Vehicle Approval scheme?

The Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) scheme provides pre-registration inspection of vehicles less than 10 years old that have not been 'type-approved' to UK or European Union (EU) standards. Its main purpose is to ensure that these vehicles have been designed and constructed to acceptable safety and environmental standards before they are

used on public roads. SVA is also available on a voluntary basis for manufacturers and importers of motor caravans and ambulances.

There are two types of test: - Standard and Enhanced. Details of these tests are explained in this booklet.

From 31st March 2004 the SVA scheme will also apply to Light Goods Vehicles.

Why is SVA needed?

SVA checks that vehicles constructed for non-EU markets comply with Northern Ireland law. Even vehicles outwardly similar to EU-specification models – but meant for other markets – may be unsuitable for use in Northern Ireland without modifications. SVA will recognise foreign systems and components that meet SVA technical standards.

SVA will also improve the construction of kit cars and other amateur-built vehicles by ensuring that, over time, they will meet the safety and environmental standards of today's production cars.

Will SVA affect you?

Your vehicle will need SVA inspection if it is not already type-approved to UK or EU standards, and is a car or light passenger vehicle (including dual-purpose vehicles) with:

- 4 or more wheels and 9 seats or fewer including the driver's seat; or
- 3 wheels, 9 seats or fewer including the driver's seat, and a maximum gross weight of more than 1000kg; or
- 3 wheels, a maximum gross weight of 1000kg, an unladen weight of more than 410kg (i.e., not a motorcycle), and either a design speed of more than 50kph (31mph) or an engine capacity of more than 50cc.

Or is a light goods vehicle, manufactured on or after 31st March 2004 (including tractor units of articulated vehicles) with:

- 3 or more wheels, and
 - a design gross weight of not more than 3,500kg,
- or
- three or more wheels, and
 - a design gross weight more than 3,500kg but not more than 5,500kg, and

- down plated to a design gross weight of 3,500kg, and
- a kerbside weight not more than 3,425kg, and
- belonging to the same family of types as at least one vehicle granted a Department's Approval Certificate under the above goods or passenger categories.

NOTE: "Family of types" means, one of the same manufacturer, the same basic chassis/floor plan, and the same power plant e.g. Internal combustion/Electric/Hybrid.

The vehicle will be in at least one of the following 4 classes:

1. Disabled person's vehicles (D)

This means vehicles adapted or specially constructed to enable a disabled person to travel in safety and reasonable comfort as driver or passenger.

Subject to consultation it is likely that Disabled Persons Vehicles will become subject to the Enhanced SVA requirements later in 2004.

Please contact DVA's SVA Section for further information.

2. Hearses (M)

This means vehicles intended for carrying the dead and having special equipment for this purpose.

3. Armoured vehicles (I)

This means a vehicle complying with the armour anti-bullet requirements.

4. Vehicles outside the above classes (R)

This means vehicles that are not type-approved in the UK or EU and do not fall within classes 1-4, e.g. vehicles imported on a commercial basis.

From 31st March 2004 these vehicles must undergo an Enhanced SVA (ESVA) test. This requires you to satisfy the Department by documentary evidence that certain key testable items comply with the relevant European Community Instruments or equivalent ECE Regulations.

Vehicles that have an EC Type Approval number on the VIN plate but do not have a Certificate of Conformity may use the enhanced test as a route to registration. DVA will check that the number provided to them by the customer with the vehicle

manufacturer to see if the vehicle is type approved to the required EC type approval standards. Once this is confirmed and if the vehicle has travelled less than 3,000km then the vehicle will be checked for the EC Type Approval number as well as a number of 'E' or 'e' markings on certain components. This test is charged as a separate fee from the normal ESVA test. If the vehicle has travelled more than 3,000km then a standard SVA test will also be carried out and the enhanced fee will be due. However the vehicle manufacturer is not obliged to provide this information or the approval may not extend to all required components. In both cases other evidence of compliance will be required and this will mean that the full EVSA fee will be due.

Will foreign single vehicle approvals be recognised? (E)

If your vehicle has been single vehicle approved by another EEA Member State to standards *equivalent* to those of UK SVA, it is eligible for a Department's Approval Certificate on that basis.

This foreign approval is known as an "E Certificate".

You must provide evidence of the *actual standards* to which the vehicle was tested by or on behalf of the authorities in question.

Alternatively, the vehicle may be tested to UK SVA requirements by certain organisations in other Member States. For information about this procedure, please contact DVA's SVA Section at the address given at the end of this booklet.

What is tested?

Most of the items inspected in the SVA scheme are those that are tested when manufacturers apply for type-approval of mass-produced vehicles. The following table lists the items inspected for the two levels of SVA. All the items for Standard SVA are checked at the DVA test centre. However, items for ESVA cannot be tested at the test centre: you will have to produce documentary evidence of compliance as explained below.

Item	Standard SVA	Enhanced SVA
Doors, their latches and hinges	Standard	

*Radio interference suppression	Standard	
Protective steering	Standard	Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative
*Exhaust emissions	Standard	Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative. May require independent test
*Smoke emissions (diesels only)	Standard	
Lamps, reflectors and devices	Standard	
Rear-view mirrors	Standard	
Anti-theft devices	Standard	Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative. May require independent test.
Seat belts	Standard	
Seat belt anchorages	Standard	Evidence of compliance with full type-approval standard or acceptable alternative
Installation of seat belts	Standard	Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative
*Brakes	Standard	Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative
*Noise and silencers	Standard	Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative. May require independent test
Glass: windscreen & other windows outside	Standard	
Seats and their anchorages	Standard	
Tyres	Standard	
Interior fittings	Standard	
External projections	Standard	

Speedometers	Standard	
Wiper and washer system	Standard	
Defrosting and demisting system	Standard	
Design weights	Standard	
*General vehicle construction	Standard	
CO ₂ emissions & fuel consumption (vehicles manufactured after 1 January 1997)		Evidence of compliance with full type-approval standard or acceptable alternative
Front Impact Protection (vehicles manufactured after 1 October 2003)		Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative N.B. VEHICLE CANNOT BE TESTED FOR THIS ITEM
*Plate for goods vehicles	Goods vehicles only	
Side Impact Protection (vehicles manufactured after 1 October 2003)		Evidence of compliance with type-approval standard or acceptable alternative N.B. VEHICLE CANNOT BE TESTED FOR THIS ITEM

*For light goods vehicles only those marked with a * will be tested.

Acceptable alternatives are listed in the SVA Inspection Manual – see below.

How are the vehicles tested?

Standard SVA

For standard SVA, all the inspections are undertaken at selected DVA testing centres. Although the same items are tested as in National Type Approval they are not tested in the same way. To keep the fee to a level affordable by individuals the examiner will conduct an engineering assessment. This check will be in the form of either visual inspection or a simple test on the vehicle to ensure that it complies with the regulations.

The inspection will be limited to parts of the vehicle, which can be readily seen without dismantling. However, the presenter may be asked to open lockable compartments and remove engine covers, inspection/access panels, trims or carpeting. This is to allow access to items subject to inspection. Also, because vehicles are inspected individually the tests are not destructive or damaging in any way.

A Department's Approval Certificate (DAC) under SVA is issued when the examiner is satisfied that the vehicle would meet the requirements of the regulations in relation to the

design and construction of the vehicle. Unlike the MOT, the inspection it is not primarily concerned with vehicle condition (although poor condition may make it impossible to assess whether some construction requirements are met).

Enhanced SVA (ESVA)

For Enhanced SVA, some items cannot be tested by the DVA because special facilities are required. (Also, from October 2003, evidence of crashworthiness will be required, which cannot be tested on single vehicles). For such items, you will have to provide additional documentary evidence that your vehicle complies with the "type approval" standards required of mass-produced cars in Europe.

In some cases, evidence of compliance with an acceptable comparable foreign standard will be acceptable. Full details are contained in the SVA Inspection Manual - see below. If you cannot provide such evidence, the vehicle will have to be taken to an accredited test laboratory for a report to be produced. Please contact The Vehicle Certification Agency for information about any accreditations of such laboratories since the publication of this booklet (see address on the last page). The cost of such tests must be borne by the applicant and will be set by the relevant test laboratory.

For individuals or businesses wishing to submit several models of the same kind, there is a streamlined "Model Report" procedure. Once a vehicle has been shown to meet the ESVA requirements either by documentary evidence or test laboratory reports a "Model Report" can be generated. This report can be used as the basis for submitting other identical vehicles, which will be examined to confirm that they are the same as the first vehicle and align to the original model report.

If an individual or a business wish to use an existing model report to test a single vehicle or number of vehicles then they may obtain permission to do so by contacting the owner of an existing report. There is usually a fee to pay for this although this is agreed between the two parties and neither DVA nor DVA LICENSING NI are involved. The permission granted by the report owner is either for specific vehicles identified by VIN number or the total use of the report for any number of vehicles.

When applying for an ESVA test utilising an existing model report a copy of the written permission must accompany the application form. DVA cannot provide details of owners of model reports and it is down to the customer to contact the owner and arrange use of a report.

Vehicles Imported From Japan

Where vehicles have been imported from Japan, evidence that the vehicle was approved there will be taken to confirm that the vehicle meets **some** of the requirements. For a used vehicle, an original de-registration document that demonstrates the vehicle has been allocated a "type designation number" and a "variant number" will serve this purpose providing the vehicle has not been modified (since manufacture) in respect of any of the

SVA relevant items in a way that is likely to have a detrimental effect on the original approval. Where the vehicle is new, a manufacturers certificate of completion will be sufficient evidence of compliance, again providing it displays the type designation details and the vehicle has not had any detrimental modifications in respect of the relevant SVA items. The extent to which further independent tests (i.e. not capable of being conducted at the test centre) need to be conducted will depend mainly on the age of the vehicle.

Where a vehicle has a date of manufacture on or after **1 January 1997**, additional evidence will need to be needed to demonstrate that the vehicle is capable of meeting the emissions and noises standards. Additionally in the case of a forward control vehicle having a date of manufacture on or after 1 October 1997, the protective steering requirements that apply in Europe after that date. The evidence will be provided from an authorised test laboratory confirming that the vehicle has been tested in accordance with the requirements of the relevant emissions and noise Directives. This is because the standards in Europe are demanding than they are in Japan. It is likely that some modifications will be needed to achieve the European standards.

If the vehicle was built before 1997, compliance with all the requirements can be confirmed by either one of the documents mentioned above, unless the vehicle is a 4x4 with a separate chassis. In these cases, evidence of Japanese approval will need to be supported by a report from an authorised test laboratory confirming that the design of the steering wheel, steering column and structure forward of the A-post are the same as a vehicle with European type approval. The reason of the additional test is because the protective steering standards in Japan are less demanding than those in Europe.

Vehicles imported from Countries other than Japan

There are also some standards in other countries that are recognised as being sufficiently similar to those that apply in Europe, such as safety standards that apply in the United States, Canada and Australia. On the other hand, vehicles produced for use in developing countries are unlikely to have been built to standards that we are prepared to recognise as being comparable to those in Europe. Examples of such vehicles will probably require testing by an authorised laboratory to most of the enhanced requirements (including destructive tests) before a Department's Approval Certificate can be issued. Modifications will almost certainly be required, and it is possible that some vehicle types cannot be converted economically to comply with European standards. Remember though that left-hand drive vehicles only require a standard SVA examination.

Anti-Theft Requirement

All vehicles manufactured after 1 October 1998 will require an immobiliser approved to EC standards or equivalent to be fitted, together with a certificate from an approved installer.

Environmental Standards

Emissions Testing

If evidence can be provided that a vehicle which has a date of manufacture on or after 1 January 1997 complies with US, Canadian, Japanese or any other standard which requires control of evaporative emissions, only the Type 1 test specified in the relevant emissions directive needs to be carried out. This must be carried out in accordance with the relevant Directive but with the following exceptions:

It has been agreed that:

- The applicant may choose to submit a vehicle that has not completed 3,000 km of running in;
- The test should be carried out with the tank filled to capacity with UK pump fuel;
- For vehicles for which a model report is *not* required (see below), only one test is needed provided each pollutant is within the limit value for that test. Deterioration factors (to compensate for 80,000 km) will not be applied;
- For vehicles for which a model report is required, the deterioration factors (as prescribed in the Directive) will be applied to new vehicles (i.e. less than 3,000 km), but for older vehicles, they will be applied on a reducing pro-rata basis with the recorded distance up to 80,000 km after which no deterioration factor is applied.

Noise Testing

The Directive procedures (drive-by and static tests) will apply except that the exhaust silencer(s) do not require pre-conditioning. The only exception to the requirement for a drive-by test would be if the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of an authorised laboratory that the vehicle is identical to an EC type approved model in all relevant respects and that the Directive static noise test on the vehicle gives a result no higher than for the type approved model.

Authorised Test Laboratories

The services that test laboratories may provide are:

- Testing, to noise and emissions requirements that are applicable at the time of manufacture of the vehicle;
- Production of documents (drawings, photos) to enable DVA examiners to be able to identify (without dismantling) vehicles that are sufficiently similar to the subject vehicle that had undergone the tests;
- Back to back examination of vehicles, for which there is a claim of EC specification but for which no evidence of type approval exists, against an EC type approved vehicle, which is of the same specification, and the production of a model report.

- In some cases if required, testing to braking, seat belts anchorages and protective steering requirements.

Laboratories that have been authorised for ESVA testing are listed on the application form SVA1 which is available from the Driver & Vehicle Agency. In addition, any laboratory from another country, which is already recognised by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) as a Type Approval Technical Service, may also carry out this work.

NB The cost of such tests must be borne by the applicant. An emissions CO₂/fuel consumption test is expected to cost about £500 but you should check with the laboratory concerned.

Model Reports for Identical Vehicles

A model report is a collection of documents provided by the applicant where subsequent applications are proposed for identical vehicles or those with a very similar specification. The purpose of a model report is to enable an examiner to check that the specification of subsequent vehicles is the same as the one tested in the laboratory. The Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA) in Great Britain will be responsible for compiling model reports, although the applicant will own them. DVA have an agreement with VOSA to enable the use of model reports by DVA customers where the appropriate permissions have been obtained from the report owner. VOSA envisage that most model reports will consist of test reports and vehicle specification details from the test laboratory. For some vehicles e.g. where comparison on protective steering is required, the laboratory will provide evidence to support the similarity of a non type-approved vehicle with one that has full type approval. Where a vehicle is considered to be a "UK" specification, that is the same as a vehicle that has a European approval, the laboratory can again undertake a comparison test, for example, on seat belt anchorages and brakes in addition to the emissions and noise tests that may be required.

Model reports have considerable commercial value. The confidentiality of model reports will be protected to ensure that only those staff with a need to know their contents are able to see them. However, applicants can, if they so wish, allow the use of model reports by others. DVA will only use such reports where there is a written agreement between both parties and a copy of the agreement is available with the application.

Individual (one-off) Vehicles

An ESVA test may be conducted without the need for a model report. The advantage of this arrangement for the applicant is that they would require the laboratory to provide less documentation at lower cost. A model report would not be needed where the vehicle presenter just has a single vehicle (of a given type) to submit for an ESVA examination. The vehicle would have to pass the relevant type approval test at an authorised test laboratory. DVA would have to see the satisfactory test report, and would conduct a basic SVA examination plus a check that the vehicle had the same identity as that tested at the laboratory.

For some vehicles, a model report containing additional documents will be necessary. If the other key areas are not covered by approvals that we are able to recognise, then a back-to-back comparison examination will be required by an authorised test laboratory in each of the areas not covered by a recognised approval. The report of the comparison will then form the model report for that vehicle, together with the reports on the emissions and noise tests.

Compliance Checks

Because model reports contain only certain details that examiners can check, DVA may select a subsequent vehicle that has been presented for test on the basis of a model report for a full examination at an authorised test laboratory. When a vehicle is selected for this it is known as a 'Compliance Check'. The purpose of the check is to ensure that the model report allows DVA to identify components or features on the vehicle that could affect the result of an enhanced test and to confirm that subsequent vehicles submitted on a model report are to the same specification as that of the original vehicle that was the basis on which the report was created.

If the outcome of the check is that the vehicle passed the relevant tests and was of the same specification as that originally tested then no action will be taken. Where the vehicle passed the tests but there were inconsistencies in the vehicle specification, then the model report may need expanding to include additional critical items that would be checked during future use of a model report. Finally if the vehicle failed the tests by more than a specified tolerance, it will mean that the model report can no longer be used.

DVA will compensate the customer for the cost of their transport from the DVA test centre to their residence or place of work. However the vehicle will be unavailable for the period of time required for testing (approximately 4 to 6 weeks).

SVA Inspection Manual

DVA use the same Inspection Manual as the Vehicle Operator and Services Agency (VOSA) in GB. Full details of what is tested and how is described in VOSA's SVA Inspection Manual. A copy can be purchased from:

VOSA
P O Box 12
SWANSEA
SA1 1BP

What does the SVA test cost?

For Passenger Cars

Enhanced SVA test with model report	£265
Enhanced SVA test without model report	£255
Re-test for SVA or ESVA	£45
Cancelled Test application [‡]	Full fee
Duplicate/replacement certificate	£10.00

For Goods Vehicles

Standard SVA Test	£85
Standard SVA Test with E Certificate	£80
Enhanced SVA Test with model report	£125
Enhanced SVA test without model report	£115
E Certificate & ESVA test with model report	£120
E Certificate & ESVA test without model report	£110
ESVA for new vehicle with EC	
Whole Vehicle Type Approval without a Certificate of Conformity (CoC)	£50
Retest for SVA and ESVA	£21
Re-test for a vehicle with EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval but no CoC	£10
Cancelled Test Application [‡]	Full Fee
Duplicate/replacement Certificate	£10

Full details of SVA fees are available from the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA). The fees may change.

[‡] If you are unable to keep your appointment, you must give us at least 1 clear days notice. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your fee.

How do I apply for a test?

The first step is to decide what class the vehicle is in and whether SVA inspection is required. If you know the vehicle class and are sure inspection is required, you can apply for SVA direct to DVA. Otherwise you should apply to DVA LICENSING NI for vehicle registration. DVA LICENSING NI will assess the application and decide on vehicle class and if SVA is required.

DVA LICENSING NI may need you to provide documentary evidence to help make its decision.

If DVA LICENSING NI decides that SVA is required, it will send you an SVA application form by return of post. Forms are available from DVA LICENSING NI and DVA offices. The completed SVA application form should be returned with documentary supporting evidence and the fee to:

DVA
SVA Section
Balmoral Road
BELFAST
BT12 6QL

You will then be sent an appointment letter stating the time and place of the test.

The SVA application form will ask you to provide certain technical details about the vehicle, such as its maximum speed, maximum design weights and unladen weight. You may be able to get these details from the manufacturer's vehicle handbook, the manufacturer or its agent. DVA may check stated design weights against certain criteria to ensure they are realistic. If you do not state these weights, DVA may establish them using the same criteria. Any documentary evidence of the standards to which the vehicle was originally approved will always be helpful and **must** be provided for certain ESVA items as described previously.

If you wish to utilise an existing model report you must provide DVA with the number of the model report you wish to use along with a copy of the written permission from the report owner authorising its use.

If your vehicle does not have a manufacturer's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), which is normally stamped on the chassis, manufacturer's data plate under the bonnet or around the door aperture you will have to apply to your nearest Local Vehicle Licensing Office for one to be assigned before the SVA inspection. DVA LICENSING NI officials may wish to inspect the vehicle to check that it is not stolen.

You will be allowed to travel (within the UK) to and from the test centres for the pre-arranged appointment without the vehicle having been registered and licensed and, if necessary, to and from a pre-arranged appointment at a garage or other place where modifications are done to enable compliance with the requirements. You are responsible for ensuring that you have insurance cover and that the vehicle complies with the requirements of the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (NI) 1999 and the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (NI) 2000 when driven to and from the test location. Otherwise, driving or keeping an unregistered vehicle on a public road is an offence.

Where will the test be?

All Passenger Car and Light Goods Vehicle SVA inspections will take place at Newtownards Test Centre, initially (address on last page).

Under what circumstances may my vehicle be refused a test?

SVA inspection may be refused for any of the following reasons:

- the vehicle is not presented for examination at the stated time and place;
- the wrong vehicle is presented;
- the appropriate fee has not been paid;
- the vehicle cannot be driven or has insufficient fuel or oil to enable the test to be completed;
- the vehicle is presented in a dangerous or such a dirty condition that the test is not feasible;
- a load or items on the vehicle are not secured or removed as required;
- a proper examination cannot be carried out because any door, tailgate, boot lid, engine cover, fuel cap or other device designed to be readily opened cannot be opened;
- the condition of the vehicle (in the opinion of the examiner) is such that its proper examination would involve a danger of injury to any person or damage to the vehicle or any other property;
- the vehicle does not display, permanently, in an accessible position and readily legible, the required vehicle identification number;
- the driver does not remain in the vehicle or its vicinity and operate the controls etc. as requested.
- the vehicle is already registered under the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994.

What happens afterwards?

If your vehicle passes the SVA test, you will get a Department's Approval Certificate. With this, you can go to any Local Vehicle Licensing Office to get your vehicle registered and licensed.

If your vehicle fails the SVA test, you will be allowed to take your vehicle away for repairs and modification. You can then apply for subsequent retests within six months of the date of the original full test.

As mentioned earlier, the vehicle user will remain responsible for ensuring that the vehicle continues to comply with all relevant 'Construction and Use' and 'Lighting' Regulation requirements. However, for vehicles, which have obtained a Department's Approval Certificate, several existing requirements may be relaxed. For instance, they will not need EU **type-approved** components such as lamps, mirrors, seat belts and glazing, if they remain fitted with the same components as when inspected at SVA – these having been assessed as providing an equivalent level of safety.

What documents are needed to register the vehicle?

DVA LICENSING NI will need:

- Department's Approval Certificate
- Completed V55/4 or V55/5 application form along with documentation confirming applicant's name and address
- Insurance certificate/cover note
- The appropriate registration and vehicle excise duty fee

In certain circumstances, the following will also be needed:

- V25 Declaration of Personal Importation or Declaration of Newness
- VAT documents – evidence of payment of, or intention to pay, VAT, including invoice
- An original Customs & Excise form 386, 388 or 389
- An MOT certificate if the vehicle is 4 years old or more.
- A Goods Vehicle Certificate if the vehicle is 3 years old or more
- From 1st January 2004 anyone registering a used or imported vehicle not previously registered in Northern Ireland needs to produce identification at a DVA LICENSING NI Office.

How do I get more information?

For general advice on SVA, please contact:

DVA LICENSING NI

County Hall
Castlerock Road
Coleraine
BT51 3TA
Tel 028 7034 1461

For information on the test procedure and standards, please contact:

DVA
SVA Section
Balmoral Road
BELFAST
BT12 6QL
Tel 028 90541841

DVA's Fee Information Line: 0845 7581416

The test is currently available at the following centre:

DVA
Jubilee Road
Newtownards
BT23 4XP
Tel 028 91813064

For information on accredited test laboratories, please contact:

The Vehicle Certification Agency
1 The Eastgate Office Centre
Eastgate Road
Bristol
BS5 6XX
Tel: 0117 951 5151
Fax: 0117 952 4103

This booklet and other information is available from web site www.sva-ni.gov.uk

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