

DID YOU KNOW???

TINTED WINDOWS NOW SUBJECT TO ANNUAL INSPECTION

If you are someone that has had tinting applied to your vehicle's windows, beware! Beginning January 1, 2017, NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) has been amended to require that safety inspections test motor vehicle windows for conformance with light transmittance standards as set forth in Section 375(12-a) of the VTL. The test must determine whether any window is composed of, covered by, or treated with any material which has a light transmittance of less than 70 percent.

Light transmittance standards have been in effect for motor vehicles in NYS since 1982. These standards are not changing. The only thing changing now is that this item has been added to the items checked for conformance with VTL to the annual inspection of vehicles required in NYS. Now your inspection will include the measuring of the amount of light transmittance. You should have nothing to fear if you haven't done anything to modify your vehicle's windows, nor have you purchased a pre-owned vehicle that has been modified in any way by a previous owner. Factory vehicles almost always conform to NYS light transmittance standards. Problems generally arise when people take their car to an automobile shop for extra tinting, often in another state.

NYS light transmission standards for motor vehicle windows and windshields are:

1. The front windshield below the top six inches, and the windows on either side forward or adjacent to the driver's seating position, shall not have a light transmittance less than 70 percent for 1992 and newer vehicles or 35 percent light transmittance for 1991 and older vehicles.
2. Any rear side windows in a 1992 or newer vehicle shall not have a light transmittance of less than 70 percent if the vehicle is classified as a station wagon, sedan, hardtop, coupe, hatchback or convertible. A vehicle is so classified if it is labeled "Passenger Car" on the Federal ID label found on the left front door panel.
3. For vehicles that are not equipped with a side-view mirror on both sides of the vehicle, the rear window shall not have a light transmittance of less than 70 percent for 1992 and newer vehicles or 35 percent for 1991 and older vehicles.

In summary, windshields and windows in motor vehicles are allowed to be tinted but the tinting must allow at least 70 percent of the possible light transmission to pass through for 1992 or later vehicles. Laws like this are in place to protect enforcement officers from potentially dangerous situations resulting from not having a clear view of the people inside a vehicle when stopping it for a violation. Heavily tinted windows also prevent other motorists and pedestrians from making eye contact with drivers which can be a safety issue.

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