

DID YOU KNOW???

VEHICLE INSPECTIONS IMPORTANT PART OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

It's a foggy night and you meet an oncoming vehicle with only one headlight – is it really a car with one headlight, or might it be a motorcycle? If it's a motorcycle, not a problem, but if it's a one-headlight car, you don't know which light is out and therefore, which side of the one light is the rest of the car on.

Motor vehicles are required, by law, to be in safe operating condition whenever they are driven on a public street or roadway in New York State. In one of my retirement jobs, that of tour bus driver, I was required to inspect my bus before and after every trip, and if on a multiple-day trip to inspect it daily. This inspection included all lights, turn signals, brakes, oil levels, tires, and more. Unfortunately, the average driver does not inspect his/her vehicle daily; in fact, drivers rarely inspect their vehicles at all.

The New York State vehicle safety inspection program helps make sure every vehicle registered in this state meets the minimum standards for safe operation on public streets and highways. In addition, most vehicles are subject to an emissions inspection to help reduce air pollution. Be advised that if the Malfunction Indicator Lamp (MIL), also known as the "check engine" light, is on the vehicle will not be inspected.

All vehicles registered in New York State must get a **safety inspection** at a DMV-licensed inspection station annually or whenever the vehicle ownership is transferred, and display a valid inspection sticker on the vehicle. A properly maintained vehicle is safer, performs better, uses fuel more efficiently and saves the owner money. You can help by doing your own equipment safety checks between annual inspections, and by following a program of regular vehicle maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer.

Safety items inspected on cars and light trucks include seat belts, brakes, steering, front end, suspension, chassis, frame and wheel fasteners, tires, lights, windshield wipers and blades, horn, mirrors, fuel leaks, and windshield and other glass, including *tint*.

Tinted Windows

Effective January 1st 2017, examination of tinted or shaded windows is required during motor vehicle inspections. Section 375 (12-a) of the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law does **not allow** a windshield or front side windows that are dark. The windshield and front side windows cannot block more than 30% of the light. Seventy percent or more of the light from the outside must pass through the window. This law also applies to the rear window unless the vehicle has outside rear-view mirrors on both sides.

Rear side windows must also allow at least seventy percent of light from the outside to pass through the window if the vehicle is classified as a station wagon, sedan, hardtop, coupe, hatchback, or convertible. A vehicle falls into one of these categories if it is labeled "Passenger Car" on the Federal ID label found on the left front door panel.

Lastly, it is illegal to sell, offer for sale, or install glass that does not comply with this law. It is also illegal to operate a vehicle with glass that does not comply. 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 – not a good idea.