

Brakes and the MoT

I recently took my 33 for its MoT, and discovered that the testing station had a new owner. To to be on the safe side, I said (in a friendly way) “you do know about not putting the DAF on a rolling road when testing the brakes, don’t you?”

He replied that he didn’t do the test but would remind the tester. In the end, it was OK, but I did worry that it might have been a close call.

We all know that as part of the test, front and rear brakes are tested for their efficiency. This is usually done by putting the car on a set of electrically driven rollers in the floor on the garage. The rollers are switched on and the wheels turn. Once up to speed, the examiner applies the car’s brakes and test equipment measures their performance.

On most cars, i.e. manual transmission and standard automatics, this is quite OK and causes no detriment to the car.

However, on certain vehicles including Variomatic cars, putting these (certainly the rear wheels) onto the rollers, could

have a catastrophic effect on the transmission.

Generally, the motor trade does know this, but as Variomatics get fewer and fewer in number, and examiners become younger, there is a danger of some slipping through the net.

The Department of Transport publishes a testers’ guide, which clearly states the fact on page 18, section 3.7 that “cars with belt-drive transmissions should not be tested on the rolling road.” A device called a Tapley Meter, which measures the effectiveness of the brakes on an ordinary road or forecourt, should be used for these types of cars.

But like so many things, it can take just a person on an “off-day” not concentrating, or increasingly the rareness of seeing belt-driven cars, that mistakes may happen.

So, it is suggested that when you do take your DAF/Variomatic Volvo for its MoT, you do mention politely to the staff, that the car is special in this respect.

This really is important.

Richard Butler

