

With respect to irtec, the vehicle technician licensing scheme, is it time to put our foot back on the ball?

I agree with most of Brian Tinham's views, as expressed in his comment in the February issue of Transport Engineer, and would add that even old hands (like myself) may benefit from refresher courses.

But taking a course does not entitle me to be called a technician. And being able to diagnose a fault using a laptop still requires a skilled individual with a ton of spanners to repair it.

Tinham questions why there is a headlong rush towards irtec certification. He believes it is to do with proving competence and I agree. But I also think some workshop managers may have lost trust and confidence in the abilities of their mechanics and technicians.

One of the major reasons for this may well be spurious decisions made by VOSA staff, both at annual tests and roadside checks. It is easy to blame technicians for their apparent failures, but too often it is VOSA at fault, with incorrect and inconsistent approaches.

How can anyone have confidence in VOSA, when the organisation exhibits what might be described as double standards? For example, any power steering oil leak will fail an MOT and yet will not receive even a defect notice on the side of the road.

Similarly, trailers are designed with a 40% brake efficiency and yet need 45% to pass an MOT. And between 6-12% of vehicles fail their annual test on headlamp alignment, which is often rectified on the line by the driver. But this is marked as a failure before being passed.

Such examples not only distort the figures and reflect an unreasonable picture of the condition of vehicles used on our roads. They also give no credit to technicians for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

The irtec scheme is important, but so is consistent application of standards used to judge technician competence and vehicle roadworthiness.



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