



<b>ATTENTION: Official Inspection Stations, Quality Assurance Officers, and Pennsylvania State Police</b>		
<b>BI24-01</b>	<b>Vehicle Inspection Division Bulletin</b>	<b>August 2024</b>

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### **Inspections Application Domain Change**

Please note that the Inspections Application has been migrated to a new domain. The Inspections Application is now accessible through the new domain, ([www.inspections.penndot.pa.gov](http://www.inspections.penndot.pa.gov)). If you have the old domain ([www.inspections.penndot.gov](http://www.inspections.penndot.gov)) bookmarked, please update it with the new domain address. For any issues related to password resets or locked accounts, please contact the Help Desk at 717-783-8330. If you require assistance with logging into the Inspections Application, please contact our support team at 717-787-2895. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this transition. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our support team.

### **Tire Tread Depth and Other Gauges to Measure Brake Lining**

The Vehicle Inspection Division (VID) has received reports from multiple inspection stations indicating challenges in procuring brake measuring gauges that conform to the current regulations. The VID discussed this challenge, exploring acceptable alternatives and discussing these alternatives with the Inspection Advisory Board. The VID aims to ensure that inspection stations are equipped with appropriate tools to accurately measure both riveted and bonded brake linings during annual safety inspections.

Inspection stations are now permitted to use tire tread depth gauges and other similar gauges as alternatives to traditional brake measuring gauges for both riveted and bonded brake linings. This substitution is permitted provided the gauge can accurately measure the amount of usable brake lining in precise increments of 1/32 inch. While many gauges default to metric measurements, they should be adjustable to display readings in 32nds of an inch as required. During audits, stations must be prepared to demonstrate that their chosen gauge can accurately measure brake lining in 1/32-inch increments, ensuring compliance with inspection regulations. This flexibility in gauge selection allows stations to maintain accuracy and consistency in brake lining measurements while utilizing more readily available tools.

## Insurance Requirements for Vehicle Inspection Station

Inspection stations must ensure they have valid garage keeper liability insurance and maintain an up-to-date certificate of insurance on the premises. Additionally, they should update their insurance information in the inspection application. Stations are reminded that, per Section 175.22(b)(4) of the regulations, “cancellation of the bond or insurance shall automatically void the certificate of appointment. Inspections shall cease until the Bureau receives a new bond or proof of insurance.”

## Ball Joint Gauge Replacement

The existing ball joint gauge (pictured below), although still serviceable, may not be suitable for inspecting newer vehicles due to its size and design limitations. The gauge's dimensions may prevent it from accessing certain areas of the suspension system, hindering a comprehensive inspection.

According to the regulations under Section 175.26, inspection stations are required to maintain all tools and equipment in good operating condition, ensuring they can inspect each type of vehicle they service. Since this ball joint gauge or others like it may not be compatible with all vehicles the station intends to inspect, it is advisable to acquire a new ball joint gauge designed specifically for newer vehicle models.

To ensure compliance with regulations and maintain the ability to inspect a wide range of vehicles effectively, stations may want to purchase the new vice grip-style ball joint gauge. This updated tool is designed to accommodate the evolving automotive industry and provide accurate measurements for both older and newer vehicle models.



*Existing Ball Joint Gauge Example*

## Beneath the Vehicle Inspection

The procedure for inspecting the vehicle frame is found in the “Beneath the Vehicle Inspection” instructions in Section 175.80(e)(5). Note that a vehicle is to be rejected if one or more of the following apply:

- the frame is not in solid condition,
- repairs are made with tape, tar paper or cloth, or made in another temporary manner,
- the frame components are missing, cracked, rotted or broken or are in a deteriorated or dangerous condition,
- body mounts do not hold as required,
- a body mount is broken, cracked, deteriorated or missing, or
- the difference in the body floor and the top of the frame rail exceeds 4 inches.

### *Unibody Vehicles*

In unibody vehicles, body panels are an integral part of the structural integrity and rigidity of the vehicle by design. If the determination is made by an inspector that a body panel is deteriorated to the point where it is no longer providing the structure it was intended to, the vehicle is to be rejected for failure under the frame section.

#### *Body on Frame Vehicles*

Body panels on vehicles that are constructed as a body on frame are not a stressed structural member and their deterioration would not change the structural integrity of the vehicle or its handling on the road.

### **Inspection Advisory Board Membership Opportunities**

Inspection Advisory Board (IAB) is currently seeking two new volunteer members to join its 11-member team: a licensed driver from the general public and a certified mechanic. This board, established under Section 4732 of the Vehicle Code, plays a crucial role in advising the department and reviewing proposed regulations related to vehicle inspection requirements and the operation of official inspection stations.

Individuals interested in this opportunity to contribute to Pennsylvania's vehicle safety standards are encouraged to contact Tim Langlet, the IAB Secretary and Field Operations Section Manager with the Vehicle Inspection Division, at 717-787-2895 for more information or apply for consideration at <https://paiedprod.powerappsportals.us/PennDOT-Advisory-Committee-Membership-Application/>. All appointments are officially made by the Secretary of Transportation.

Copies of previous Safety Bulletins are available to view online at [www.dmv.pa.gov/safetybulletins](http://www.dmv.pa.gov/safetybulletins).

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