vic roads

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Oldies but Goodies 2

In edition 18 of Testing Times we talked about the sorts of things that deteriorate through normal wear and tear as a car gets older but we did not look into the big problem of RUST - that insidious eating away of the car's structure which is often not all that apparent at a glance.

In this issue:

In recent years vehicle manufacturers have got much better at corrosion protection and eliminating or specially treating rust prone areas so rust does not appear to be as big a problem as it was.

However, many of the older cars have rust characteristics in locations that are common and prevalent throughout particular models. You will all know about the Holdens that rusted out behind the headlights and the Falcons that rusted out in the bottom of the front guards just in front of the doors and there are many other similar characteristic examples. But just because a particular vehicle does not exhibit the typical gross rust characteristic of its model does not mean that it is a “goodie”. The damage may have been properly repaired - **GOOD** or it might have been cleverly bogged over and hidden - **DEFINITELY NOT GOOD!**

When looking at these “Oldies but [maybe not] Goodies” you need to look carefully all over the vehicle for even slight signs of rust damage. Not so much rust caused by poorly repaired or un-repaired crash damage [although this should also be thoroughly checked out] but that rust that is occurring under the paintwork and perhaps only appears as slight paint bubbling or blistering at the moment. This is a sign that the vehicle is getting close to its last legs and is potentially a rust bucket. Where there are any signs like this you will need to look much more closely for serious rust and for signs that it has been concealed or poorly repaired.

You are not expected to pick off the duco or poke or prod likely areas with a screwdriver in cosmetic locations but some gentle tapping in those areas listening for signs of body filler and then examination of the rear of the area may well be required. “Oldies” that have fresh body deadener or deadener in placed that the OEM did not put it are almost a “cert” for hidden rust damage.

Many of these older vehicles may look OK on the outside but when you look closer and perhaps lift up the carpets as above, it turns out that the “Oldie” is NOT a “Goodie”.

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Braided Flexible Brake Hoses

Way back in Testing Times 9 we talked about braided brake hoses but they were not in common use back then. However, they have now become much more popular so it is time to review the issue.

Braided flexible brake hoses used to look like normal flexible brake hoses covered with stainless steel braiding. They were often about the same overall diameter as normal flexible brake hoses, too. It may have been this overall size that made it difficult for them to pass the Australian Design Rule (ADR) No 7 whip test.

The ADR 7 test involves fixing one end of the hose and "whipping" the other end many thousands of times to simulate typical road use.

The early braided hoses often could not cope with their own mass and stiffness and failed at the swaged ends where the flexing was most severe.

If you look at current braided flexible brake hoses you will note that they are much smaller in diameter than the comparable un-braided hose.

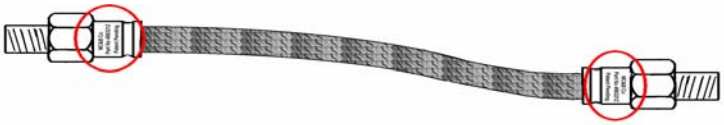
The new designs addressed flexibility and improved the swage system. Consequently, there are now many braided flexible brake hoses that do not have a problem passing the ADR 7 whip test.

However, all the points made in Testing Times 9 are still valid. Braided flexible brake hoses should only be accepted in a roadworthiness test if they meet one of the following:

- they were supplied as original equipment by the vehicle manufacturer;
- they have the manufacturer's identification mark (ie trade mark, or trade name);
- they are on a modified vehicle such as a rally car and covered by an engineer's report; or
- they are fitted to a pre1970 vehicle (these vehicles do not have to meet the ADRs).

The manufacturer's identification mark should be clearly visible. It is often on a snug fitting sleeve placed over the hose before the end fittings are crimped on.

The mark may also be stamped into the end fittings themselves as below.



In addition to the above requirements the end fittings MUST be a machine swaged type. Self assembled or screw together type fittings are not acceptable.

The hose and end fittings should not show any sign of leaking or weeping and there should be no signs of bulging or displaced braids that could indicate internal damage. As the strength of these new type braided flexible hoses is largely provided by the outer braiding, there should be no signs of broken braids or fraying or abrasion that could weaken the braiding or any evidence of the braiding becoming detached from the swaged fittings.

As many braided flexible brake hoses will have been fitted aftermarket it is also very important to check that the hose is the correct length for the vehicle and does not foul, rub or pull tight throughout the whole suspension movement and lock to lock of the steering.

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For vehicles fitted with supplementary restraint