

## Vehicle Inspector

**7:20am**

### Another day begins

*I arrive at the depot about 10 minutes before my shift begins. I get myself a coffee from the lunchroom, and put my lunch box in the fridge. Our lunch room is pretty big, and is the central hub where we meet for breaks. I also come back here when our shift begins and ends. Other Vehicle Inspectors are arriving too, and everyone has a chat before our day starts at 7.30am.*



**7:30am**

### Getting organised

*By now, customers are arriving at the depot with their vehicles that they have booked in to be inspected. The bookings staff allocate my jobs to me, so I take a look at my jobs on the computer and prioritise what order would be best for my work day. I am told that one particular customer is going to wait at the depot for the inspection to be done, so I pick up the job card and car keys for that job first so the customer will not have to wait long.*

**7:45am**

### Master check

*The vehicles are all parked outside in the car park next door, so I go and collect the correct vehicle, which is a Toyota RAV 4, and drive it in to the workshop. This particular job is a Master Check, which is RACQ's most thorough inspection, and I am allocated two hours to complete it. All RACQ Inspections are considered 'non intrusive', or in other words Vehicle Inspectors are never required to pull anything on the vehicle apart, except for brake drums of course. I consider this one of the bonuses of my job in that I am a qualified mechanic but I can go a full day without getting my shirt dirty!*



**8:00am**

### Looking for problems

*I start the inspection by carefully checking the underside and main body areas of the vehicle. I am looking for any previous accident damage, rust or corrosion. I find a bit of rust on the boot door, so I report on it. All Vehicle Inspectors carry a handheld Personal Digital Assistant to record the inspection on. It's really handy, as after each component is inspected, it's just a simple press of a button to record the information. I look for other faults and defects in the brakes, tyres, and basic electrical components. Then I move on to check the vehicle's cooling system, ignition system, engine compression and battery condition. Lowering the vehicle off the hoist and taking it for a test drive completes the inspection. The bookings staff will prepare the report for the customer, and while at the front counter I'll get my next job.*

**9:45am**

### Customer enquiries

*As I am just about to head back to the workshop, for my next job, the phone at the bookings desk starts ringing. I see that the bookings staff are busy with customers so I answer it to help them out. The customer on the line wants to know what kinds of inspections RACQ offers, so I happily explain the types and prices.*

10:00am

### Time for a break

My next job is a Safety Certificate for an old BMW, so once again I collect the car and place it on the hoist. By this time it's 10am, and that means morning tea time for the Vehicle Inspectors. My colleagues and I always have morning tea and lunch together in the lunchroom, so I make my way in there and wonder what goodies I'll find in my lunch box today – it's lamingtons! The lunchroom is a hub of activity with everyone making themselves tea and coffee, getting out their lunch, and finding a seat around the table.

Everyone chats and has a laugh until its time to head back to the workshop. I grab myself a quick coffee to take out to the workshop with me.

11:00am

### Spot check

My next job is another Safety Certificate, but this time it's for a Subaru Outback. I get stuck straight into it, and once it's complete I move on to a job which is a different kind of inspection called a Spot Check. Spot Checks are smaller inspections that require me to find a specific fault that the customer brings to our attention. The Vehicle Inspector's role is to attempt to determine what the fault is and report on it for the customer, who would then take the vehicle to a repairer to have it fixed. In this Spot Check, the customer can hear noise coming from the vehicle's brakes and wants an independent opinion on what the noise could be. I hoist the Ford Fiesta up, and after a quick check I determine that there is a stone stuck in the brake disc – bingo! There is the problem. This spot check has been easy, but sometimes the problem is more challenging and takes longer to diagnose.

12:45pm

### On-site inspection

On-site Inspections can either be at a customer's house or at a Motor Dealership. The traffic is pretty heavy, so I arrive a couple of minutes late. I pull up to the house and see the vehicle to be inspected is a Mazda 626 parked on the footpath. The customer comes out to greet me, we exchange hellos and I apologise for being a bit late. I explain that I require a flat, safe place to perform the inspection and ask if the vehicle could be moved into the garage. The customer explains that the garage is full of furniture, so we agree the next best place is the driveway, which appears safe as well. This inspection will take 1.5 hours, a bit less than a Master Check as I won't be able to place the vehicle on a hoist. There's not much shade where the vehicle is, and it's a pretty hot day. It can get a bit uncomfortable in the heat. I get my hat and some water from the van and start the inspection. This customer is very inquisitive and watches for a while. Sometimes customers aren't interested, so they go inside while I do the job. Once I finish, I let the customer know and print a report from the printer in my van. I give the report to the customer, say goodbye and head back to the depot.

4:00pm

### Finishing up for the day

We finish all our jobs about 10 minutes before end of shift. Tomorrow is Saturday, and I have to work from 7:30am to 12:00pm, but I don't really mind, as I only have to work one Saturday shift every 4-6 weeks. Another thing I really like about being a Vehicle Inspector is the variety of work and vehicles. Tomorrow I am inspecting a 1964 Austin Healey for an interstate customer. I'm looking forward to that job. Interstate buyers often rely on RACQ to provide an accurate condition report before they buy the unseen vehicle. I say bye to everyone and at 4pm and I head out to my car for the drive home.



10:20am

### It's all about safety

I get back to completing the Safety Certificate job from before. The purpose of this job is to check that the vehicle is safe and legal to drive, generally for a sale. Given the content required for the report, only an hour is allocated for me to complete it. I get to work on inspecting the vehicle, but I'm interrupted by a phone call from a customer. She wants clarification on a vehicle report I prepared yesterday for a Holden Commodore she was looking at buying. I stop what I'm doing and speak to the customer straight away. Vehicle Inspectors are always available to provide that extra level of service to RACQ customers. Once the customer's questions are answered, I get back to the Safety Certificate and complete it soon after.

12:00pm

### Lunch time

Lunch time has arrived, so once again my colleagues and I head to the lunch room. During the half hour break, my manager approaches me about doing a mobile inspection for the afternoon. Every Vehicle Inspector is required to do mobile inspections, otherwise known as 'on-sites', but usually they are done in blocks at different times throughout the year. One of the permanent Onsite Vehicle Inspectors has gone home sick, and this is why I'm asked to fill in. I agree in a flash, as I like the change in scenery every now and then. I finish my lunch, grab the onsite job, and head off to my destination in one of the designated Onsite Vehicles.

3:15pm

### Back to the depot

I arrive back at the depot and everyone seems to be on their last jobs for the day. I check with the bookings staff to see if there are any other jobs waiting. There are no more, so I go and lend a hand to my colleague Ben, who is doing a Spot Check. The customer has asked RACQ to re-check an inspection report for a fairly new Mitsubishi Lancer that was obtained from an independent repairer. The customer is concerned, as there seems to be an odd number of 'need to repair' items on the list for such a new car. Ben and I determine that only some of the items on the list are in immediate need of repair. The customer is really grateful for the positive outcome.

