

MORRIS 8 CARS 1934 to 1938. STATUTORY LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS AND NOTES FOR CARS USED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

INTRODUCTION

Recent discussions on the Morris Register 8MVS have raised items of concern as to what is and is not legal in the United Kingdom regarding lighting on our 1934-38 Morris 8 cars. Over the past years these items have come up before in various forms, which occasionally has led me to seek and gain information from 'Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations', 'Construction and Use Regulations' and other publications. These are often long-winded and contain a great deal not applicable to our cars.

So I attempt here to put forward my interpretation for our Morris 8 Cars, acknowledging that I have gained information from various documents and expert car enthusiasts, but also drawing upon my own experience. Other than specific comments that I have made *[that apply to our 1934-38 Morris 8 Cars \(written and underlined in blue italics\)](#)*, the information may apply to all cars eligible to be part of the Morris Register. I have assumed that any dimensions given in this article are taken from the centre of the lamp in question.

GENERAL MINIMUM LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CARS BUILT BEFORE 1966

Side (Front Position) Lamps

Must be fitted as a matched pair of white lamps 'aligned to the front' and 'visible to the front from a reasonable distance'. They can be any size or wattage, must be mounted not more than 510mm from the side and not more than 2300mm above ground.

In my opinion this seems to allow LED lamps to be used.

[White 'Pilot' lamps fitted within the headlamp reflector on Pre-Series, Series I and Series II cars as replacements for separate Side \(Front Position\) Lamps appear to comply as they will still be within 510mm from the side.](#)

Tail (Rear Position) Lamps

Must be fitted as a matched pair of red lamps 'aligned to the rear' and 'visible to the rear from a reasonable distance'. They can be any size or wattage, must be mounted 'at or near the rear' not more than 800mm from the side and not more than 2100mm above ground. They must not be mounted on any moveable part of the car.

In my opinion this seems to allow LED lamps to be used.

[However you may be technically contravening the regulations if you have a Pre-Series, Series I or early Series II car which is fitted with a rear carrier upon which a pair of lamps are fitted each side of the registration plate attached to or hinged on the rear carrier; later Series II cars had the registration plate rigidly fixed below the rear carrier and would therefore not contravene the regulations.](#)

Rear Reflectors

Must be fitted with a matched pair of red reflectors 'plainly visible from the rear'. They must be mounted not more than 610mm from the side and not more than 1525mm above ground. They must not be mounted on any moveable part of the car.

Rear Registration Plate Illumination

Must be fitted with one or more white lamps 'capable of adequately illuminating the rear registration plate'. Presumably this allows either the use of rear lamps incorporating an integral clear side panel to illuminate the registration plate, or a separate white lamp.

In my opinion this seems to allow LED lamps to be used.

ADDITIONAL MINIMUM LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS ; CARS FIRST USED AFTER 1st JANUARY 1931

Dipped Beam Headlamps

Cars first used after 1st January 1931 must be fitted with a matched pair of white or yellow dipped lamps switched together. They can be any size but must have 30 watt minimum bulb. *[On our cars they are combined with the main beam lamp.](#)* If the car was first used after 1st January 1952 (eg Series Z van), they must be mounted no more than 1200mm above ground. The alignment of the lamps needs to be adjustable along with the Main Beam Headlamps, and is normally done these days using beamsetter equipment.

[In my opinion the 30 watt minimum requirement appears to make my own car's dipped beams illegal, and also renders the originally specified 24 watt bulbs illegal.](#)

Main Beam Headlamps

Cars first used after 1st January 1931 must be fitted with a matched pair of white or yellow head lamps switched together. They can be of any size, must be aligned to the front and must have a 30 watt minimum bulb. The alignment will be as Dipped Beam Headlamps. It must be possible for the driver to switch both Main Beam Headlamps to Dipped Beam together.

[The above confirms that the 'Dip and Cut' system is no longer legal on our cars. I do remember that this change took place from April 1st 1968, the year I joined the Morris Register!](#)

[In my opinion, the 30 watt minimum requirement again renders the originally specified 24 watt bulbs illegal.](#)

FURTHER ADDITIONAL MINIMUM LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS ; CARS FIRST USED AFTER 1st JANUARY 1936

Stoplamps

Cars first used after 1st January 1936 must have at least one red stop lamp operated automatically from the braking system. They can be of any size or wattage, must be 'visible to the rear' and can be mounted at any height above ground. If a single one is fitted, it must be central or to the offside. If two are fitted they must be a matched pair central to the car and not less than 400mm apart.

[In my opinion this seems to allow LED lamps to be used.](#)

[In my opinion if stoplamp\(s\) are retro-fitted to an earlier car they must comply fully.](#)

[In my opinion if a single lamp is fitted to the offside of the registration plate, it can still be used in conjunction with a matched pair fitted elsewhere; this means that an original lamp could remain in use partly for registration plate illumination provided it is used in conjunction with, say, a pair of wing mounted Tail\(Rear Position\) Lamps.](#)

Trafficators (Semaphore Indicators)

Cars first used after 1st January 1936 must have 'lamps to indicate that the driver intends to change direction'. Trafficators lit amber with a working festoon bulb, provided that they can be seen by the driver in use (*[e.g using the small internal circular mirrors](#)*) and can be 'plainly visible to the front and the rear from a reasonable distance', do therefore comply.

All indicators 'shall when in operation perform efficiently regardless of the speed of the vehicle'.

Flashing Indicators

Cars first used after 1st January 1936 must have 'lamps to indicate that the driver intends to change direction'. Flashing Indicators do comply, but must be 15-36 watt, can be of any size, must be 'plainly visible to the front and rear from a reasonable distance, and must flash 60-120 times per minute. *[They should normally be amber, but because our cars were first used before 1st September 1965, those at the front can be white and those at the rear can be red if we so prefer.](#)* They must be mounted not less than 350mm above ground and must not be mounted on any moveable part of the car (*[see also MY OWN SUMMARY](#)*).

All indicators 'shall when in operation perform efficiently regardless of the speed of the vehicle'.

[In my opinion the switch has to be self cancelling, and/or must show a 'tell tale' indicator lamp inside the car.](#)

OPTIONAL LIGHTING

Reversing Lamps

A matched pair of white reversing lamps of any size, but not exceeding 24 watt each, can be fitted to our cars. They must be 'aligned to the rear'. No mention appears to be made of any requirement for a 'tell tale' indicator lamp inside the car.

Front Fog/Spot Lamps

Any number of white or yellow fog/spot lamps can be fitted of any size or wattage provided they are mounted less than 1200mm above ground. If used in fog in lieu of dipped headlamps, they must be mounted less than 400mm from the side and aimed down '3 degrees below horizontal'.

Rear Fog Lamps

Any number of red fog lamps can be fitted of any size or wattage. They must be mounted at least 100mm from a stop lamp. No mention appears to be made of any requirement for a 'tell tale' indicator lamp inside the car.

MY OWN SUMMARY OF LIGHTING ON MORRIS 8 CARS 1934-38

- *Apart from requiring 30 watt (minimum) filaments to all main and dip beams, double dipping headlamps (no dip and cut), two rear reflectors, an extra matching stop/tail lamp on the nearside of the rear registration plate, the original equipment on our cars appears to comply with the regulations. Whether or not the individual DOE tester can easily confirm this is another matter!*
- *LED lamps (eg SVC conversions) fitted at the front within the original type Sidelamp body appear to comply.*
- *Flashing Indicators fitted at the front within the original type Sidelamp body, with white pilot lights positioned in the Headlamp reflectors to replace separate sidelamps, appear to comply.*
- *LED Stop/Tail lamps (eg SVC ST38 replicas) fitted as a pair at the rear each side of the rigidly mounted registration plate within the original type stop/tail lamp body appear to comply.*
- *LED Stop/Tail/Flashing Indicator lamps (eg SVC ST38 replicas) fitted as a pair at the rear each side of the rigidly mounted registration plate within the original type stop/tail lamp body appear to comply, but they may be at or near the minimum height limit for the Flashing Indicators element of the lamp.*
- *LED Stop/Tail/Flashing Indicator lamps fitted as a pair to the rear (eg on the rear wings) appear to comply.*
- *Tail and Stop/Tail (Rear Position Lamps) and Flashing Indicator Lamps mounted on the rear carrier appear to contravene the regulations.*
- *Flashing Indicator Lamps at the rear (either separate or combined with the stop/tail lamps) must be at a minimum height of 350mm above ground; this means that Flashing Indicator Lamps fitted at the same height as (or combined with) other rear lamps each side of the registration plate are very likely to contravene the regulations; this is because a registration plate complete with lamps, fitted to the original Morris 8 rear valance indentation, or at the same height on a separate bracket, is likely to result in lamps mounted lower than the required 350mm minimum above ground.*

I hope this is of some use. I would be grateful of any additions, feedback or constructive criticism.

By the way, does anyone remember the amber indicator 'ears' that were available in the 1950s and 60s intended to supplement the old trafficators/semaphores? They were fitted to the side of the roof above the gutters halfway along the car. I reckon that they would be of great use on our Morris 8s if they were still available, as they do not appear to contravene any of the regulations.

Finally, I have attempted to be as concise as I can here, but this is my personal interpretation only and therefore I cannot confirm everything to be entirely correct or accurate.

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