

Pressure points

Where is TPMS heading, and what opportunities does it provide for the workshop? Sykes-Pickavant hopes to shed some light.

The EEC has decreed that all new models designed from 2012 must have TPMS, and that all new cars sold in Europe must have TPMS fitted from 2014 at the latest. Despite this, many manufacturers have been fitting TPMS for some years now either as an option or as standard on some models. More relevant for the workshop, is that TPMS is likely to become part of the MOT test at some point in the not-too-distant future, as they form part of the vehicles' safety systems.

Early TPMS systems were linked to the ABS system, using wheel speed data to determine the dimension (and hence the pressure) of the wheel and tyre. However these basic systems are now being replaced by dedicated TPMS sensors fitted within the wheel as part of the tyre valve assembly. These sensors gather data which is then transmitted wirelessly to the relevant ECU, and if a fault is detected this will be displayed as part of the dashboard display. The data typically consists of tyre pressure, temperature, valve status and condition, any one of which could lead to a fault being displayed.

Warning lights

If a warning light is being displayed, this then leads to a requirement to be able to identify, and then test, the appropriate sensor to ensure it is transmitting a signal for the ECU to receive. Additionally, with many vehicles, changing the position of wheels on the vehicle will also be seen by the ECU as a 'fault', therefore the ability to 'enable' or 're-programme' becomes relevant.

From the workshops' point of view, as TPMS is part of the vehicle's safety system, it is relevant to be able to satisfy the vehicle owner that the TPMS system is working correctly, not simply a case of turning off the light on the dashboard display which can be achieved by most scan tools nowadays.

But what tools, equipment and information are required? TPMS testers have been around for some years but typically these were



'generic' test tools which would pick up a signal from any sensor in the area (e.g. the car in the next work bay) and usually involved at least two products – one to 'waken' the sensor, and another to 'test' the sensor.

A new tool from Sykes

As with TPMS systems, the technology for TPMS testers has also evolved, and the new TPMS TOOL from Sykes-Pickavant is not only 'model specific', it is actually two tools in one: it has a built-in ability to 'waken' the sensor before testing it.

The tool has a vehicle database which is model and sensor specific, so there is no risk of picking up stray signals from adjacent vehicles, includes OEM sensor references to ensure the correct replacement sensor is ordered, and has

all relevant fitting data for a particular sensor displayed on the screen. The TPMS TOOL is available in two versions: a 'basic' version which tests the sensors, scans the full TPMS system, and provides replacement valve programming information; or a higher specification model, which includes enabling and re-programming ability via the EOBD socket. Both versions are supported by PC software and connections, allowing periodic updates, combined with PC printing, technical information and library of test results.

MORE INFORMATION

To request a leaflet or brochure offering more information about the Sykes-Pickavant TPMS TOOL circle 113