

VEHICLE INTERIOR AIR QUALITY TEST FACILITY

MIRA has made a substantial investment to become the UK's first independent test facility to measure Vehicle Interior Air Quality (VIAQ) by analysing Volatile Organic Compounds.



The purchase of the gas chromatograph mass spectrometer (GC-MS) and thermal desorption (DS) chamber, will enable MIRA to become an EU Centre of Excellence for interior emissions by bringing, in-house, a VOC test facility for materials, components and full-scale vehicle testing according to the requirements of ISO 16000, JAMA and other OEM specifications.

The GC-MS has additional uses in vehicle exterior emissions, H&S monitoring and in-depth analysis of oils, fuels and polymers. MIRA's experience in polymer processing will also assist users in minimising their products' VOC emissions.

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What are VOCs?

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are organic chemical compounds that have high enough vapour pressures under normal conditions to significantly vaporise and enter the atmosphere. VOCs are typically found in paint, carpet backing, plastics and rubbers.

VOCs are recognised as being a hazard to health and much of the legislation is driven around “sick building syndrome”; since the interior of a car is considered a potential workplace. As a consequence, the automotive industry is currently working on reducing the quantity of VOCs, formaldehyde and other toxic substances within the cabin space, by enforcing their own emissions limits.

VOC Standards

The main driver for interior air quality is the automotive OEMs who base their tests around for example ISO 16000 2004. This standard is applicable to indoor environments such as dwellings or work places in buildings (amongst others) which are not subject to health and safety inspections in regard to air pollutants. It also extends to the interior cabins of vehicles.

Whilst not enshrined in legislation, many OEMs have voluntarily adopted the requirements and produced their own in-house standards to assess the VOCs of their components and whole vehicles.

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