

This is much quicker and more effective than the traditional “tailpipe” test. Arizona is equipping most emissions inspection stations with OBD-only lanes to take advantage of this more efficient testing.

Are repairs covered by warranty?

Warranty coverage varies, depending on the specific failure. However, the federal Clean Air Act requires that major emissions control components such as the catalytic converter be warranted for eight years or 80,000 miles and most emissions-control components are covered for at least two years or 24,000 miles.

Contacts for Further Information



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**ON-BOARD
DIAGNOSTICS**





On-Board Diagnostics

This technology is built into all 1996 and newer light-duty cars and trucks. Commonly known as OBD, the computer-based system monitors the performance of many of the engine's major components, including individual emission controls. The system provides owners with an early warning of malfunctions by way of a dashboard "Check Engine" light (also known as a Malfunction Indicator Light or MIL). By giving vehicle owners this early warning, OBD protects not only the environment but also consumers, identifying minor problems before they become major repair bills.

How does it work?

The OBD system is integral to the computer system within the vehicle. The OBD system is connected to and monitors the principal components of the emissions control system, as well as several of the engine's operating systems or components. When the vehicle begins to operate outside of predetermined conditions -- elevated emissions or engine overheat for example -- the OBD system first tries to compensate for the problem. If that doesn't work, the system illuminates the MIL light to alert the driver, while storing the information about the problem. The driver can then have the problem checked out by a service technician before there is a breakdown or a more costly component failure.

Can I tell if it is working?

When you turn on the ignition, the "Check Engine" or "Service Engine Soon" light should flash briefly, indicating that the system is active. After this brief flash, the light should stay off while you drive as long as no problems are detected. If it stays off, you can be assured that your vehicle is being monitored by an early warning system that could save you time, money and fuel while protecting the environment.

Check Engine

What should I do if the light comes on?

If the light comes on and stays on, the OBD system has detected a problem. Your vehicle might have a condition that wastes fuel, shortens engine life, or causes excessive air pollution. If left unaddressed, these conditions could also damage your vehicle and lead to increasingly expensive repairs. For example, OBD can identify a loose or missing gas cap (which wastes fuel and contributes to smog) or an engine misfire (which can lead to severe or permanent engine damage). If your "Check Engine" light comes on, don't panic. The vehicle is telling you to seek attention soon. When you reach your destination, make sure the gas cap is not loose or missing. Always turn off your engine when refueling. If the light does not go out after a few short trips following gas cap replacement or tightening, have your vehicle serviced by a qualified repair technician.

What if the light is blinking?

If the light is blinking, a severe engine problem is occurring, such as a misfire, which could cause engine and catalyst damage. Again, there is no need to panic, but seek attention as soon as possible. The blinking light means that damage could result.

Are repairs more expensive?

Generally, repairs made in response to the OBD system are no more expensive than those made in response to traditional tailpipe emissions-related repairs. If repairs are made soon after the OBD "Check Engine" light coming on, you may save yourself more costly repairs that you might not have identified without the OBD warning.

How is emissions testing done on OBD-equipped vehicles?

One of the benefits of the OBD system is the ability to "ask the computer" how the engine is performing. At an emissions inspection station, the technician simply connects the station computer to the vehicle computer through a cable called a diagnostic link connector. The vehicle computer then directly communicates the specific operating and emissions information needed for the test.



Arrow points to OBD connector under dashboard.