

## Vehicle Emissions: Frequently Asked Questions July 2009

### **DOES MY NEW CAR NEED TO BE TESTED?**

New cars are not required to be tested until they have been registered for five years. Certain vehicles, like alternative fueled vehicles, have different requirements. Find more details at [www.myAZcar.com](http://www.myAZcar.com).

### **WHERE DO I GO TO HAVE MY CAR TESTED?**

Emissions testing is available at any of the Phoenix and Tucson area inspection stations. For locations and current traffic at a station located near you, click on [www.myAZcar.com](http://www.myAZcar.com).

### **WHAT DO I DO IF MY VEHICLE FAILS?**

If your vehicle fails the test you must have it repaired and reinspected. The reinspection is free if you return within 60 days of your original or subsequent paid test with the repair information completed on the back of the vehicle inspection report.

### **CAN I HELP MY VEHICLE PASS?**

Yes! Vehicles benefit from regular tune-ups, oil and filter changes, and generally good maintenance. When going for an emissions test, have the vehicle thoroughly warmed up. If it has been serviced (especially service requiring the battery to be disconnected) drive the vehicle for a few days to enable the computer and On-board diagnostic (OBD) monitors (if your car has them) to reset.

### **WHAT DOES THE GAS CAP HAVE TO DO WITH EMISSIONS TESTING?**

Most vehicles have a "closed fuel system." With the gas cap in place there is moderate pressure in the fuel tank and lines. This pressure is part of the emissions control system. If the cap cannot maintain pressure in the system, the air/fuel mixture can be compromised, resulting in elevated emissions.

### **DO ALTERNATIVE FUELED VEHICLES NEED TO BE TESTED?**

All alternative fuel vehicles (except electric, solar and hydrogen powered) registered in or used to commute into metro Phoenix or Tucson are required to be emissions-tested before the vehicle can be registered. New alternative fuel vehicles are subject to an in-lieu fee until the third registration year. If you have a new alternative fuel vehicle, you may pay the in-lieu fee or submit a current emissions test to the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD).

### **HOW DO I FIND A GOOD REPAIR FACILITY?**

The State of Arizona cannot recommend individual repair facilities. However, the Vehicle Emissions program tracks repair information on vehicles that have failed the test. You can review the effectiveness of repair facilities in your area at [www.myazcar.com](http://www.myazcar.com) by clicking the tab "Locate a Repair Facility" on the right.

### **MY VEHICLE IS DUE FOR INSPECTION, BUT IT IS OUT OF STATE. WHAT DO I DO?**

If your vehicle is out of the State of Arizona for at least 90 days before it is due for emissions testing, you may have it tested in the area it is located. If there is no testing available, you may submit an "Out of State Exemption." A service fee applies. See "Exemptions" at [www.vei.azdeq.gov](http://www.vei.azdeq.gov).

### **WHERE CAN I REPORT A SMOKING VEHICLE?**

Both Maricopa and Pima counties operate programs to notify owners when their vehicles have been emitting excessive smoke. In Maricopa County, call (602) 372-2703, or visit itsWeb site at: [www.maricopa.gov/eq/contact\\_us/report\\_violation.aspx](http://www.maricopa.gov/eq/contact_us/report_violation.aspx) To report a smoking vehicle in Pima County, call (520) 622-5700, or visit: [www.deq.co.pima.az.us/air/smokingvehicle.html](http://www.deq.co.pima.az.us/air/smokingvehicle.html)

## **I AM NEW TO ARIZONA. WHAT DO I DO TO REGISTER MY CAR HERE?**

If you reside in the emission control areas of Pima or Maricopa counties, you should have your vehicle emissions-tested first. Check [www.myazcar.com](http://www.myazcar.com) to see if your car is required to be tested. Then take your passing test result and your vehicle to any MVD office to register in Arizona. You can look for an MVD office at: [www.azdot.gov/mvd/index.asp](http://www.azdot.gov/mvd/index.asp)

## **HOW MUCH DOES AN EMISSIONS TEST COST?**

Fees vary by location and vehicle size and type. A complete schedule of the test fees can be found at [www.myazcar.com](http://www.myazcar.com)

## **WHAT IS OBD AND HOW DOES IT WORK?**

On-board diagnostic systems (OBD) were developed in the 1980s to help technicians diagnose and service the computerized engine systems of modern vehicles. A new generation of these systems is found on 1996 and newer vehicles. These systems monitor the same components, use the same computer "language" and have the same criteria for evaluating the systems and for indicating the problems to the driver and the repair technician.

The OBD system provides drivers with an early warning of malfunctions through a dashboard "Check Engine" light (also known as a Malfunction Indicator Light or MIL). This early warning light helps protect the environment and identifies problems before they become major repair bills.

## **WHY DOES OBD TESTING REPLACE TAILPIPE TESTING ON NEWER VEHICLES?**

The OBD II system is required on 1996 and newer vehicles. While the tailpipe test looks at the vehicle

exhaust to determine if the vehicle is running efficiently, OBD looks for broken or malfunctioning components which are causing or will cause emissions failure if not repaired. OBD often identifies failing components before tailpipe emissions would fail. This often allows for repair at a much lower cost than a malfunctioning component damaging the engine or catalytic converter.

## **HOW DOES THE DRIVER KNOW THERE IS A PROBLEM?**

When the OBD system determines that a problem exists, a corresponding "Diagnostic Trouble Code" is stored in the computer memory. The computer also illuminates the dashboard "Check Engine" light, informing the driver that service is needed. If the light is flashing, the problem is serious and needs immediate attention.

## **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

There are two Web sites; [www.vei.azdeq.gov](http://www.vei.azdeq.gov) and [www.myazcar.com](http://www.myazcar.com) can provide most of the information you need to find an inspection station, repair facility, test fees, exemptions and much more.

We have an On-Board Diagnostics (OBD) Test Fact Sheet similar to this and an OBD informational brochure that is also available. They can be found on the ADEQ Web site [www.azdeq.gov](http://www.azdeq.gov), click on the heading "Brochures & Fact Sheets".

For vehicle specific information, or for information not covered in the above resources you may contact Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program staff in Phoenix at (602) 771-3950 or in Tucson at (520) 745-4536.