

California to start new smog check program

Central Valley Business Times, October 19, 2012 8:12am

Will end tailpipe testing for many cars. Instead, testers will probe cars' computer memories

Few drivers may realize it, but their car's onboard computer is busily collecting all sorts of data as they drive. And soon, the state of California will be picking those little under-the-hood brains.

The California Air Resources Board is readying plans for a new smog check program that eliminates sticking a probe up the tailpipe to measure emissions while simulating driving conditions in a shop.

Instead, for 2000 model-year and newer vehicles, the new test siphons off the data stored in the on-board diagnostic systems that are standard equipment on all

newer vehicles.

"By utilizing the on-board diagnostic system already built into all newer cars, owners can be assured that they are getting the most accurate measure of their vehicles condition at the lowest possible cost," says CARB Chairman Mary Nichols. "The move away from tailpipe testing and the expensive equipment required by shops will benefit consumers, service providers and the environment."

Older vehicles will continue to be inspected using tailpipe emissions but stations will be subject to new performance and evaluation

standards. Only stations meeting what CARB terms "the tough new standards" will be rated as "STAR Certified" and permitted to inspect 1999 and older vehicles. The changeover to the new testing requirements will take place over the next year.

- Starting Jan. 1, 2013, all 1999 model-year and older vehicles (the model years most likely to have high emissions) will be directed to new STAR inspection stations.

- Sept. 1, 2013, all 2000 model-year and newer vehicles will be inspected using the OBD-based test.

<http://www.centralvalleybusinesstimes.com/stories/001/?ID=22124>

510-537-1796

California seems to give priority to Global Warming and Air quality with support of the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) that is reported to provide up to \$4000.00 to crush a car that might be more affective if a random remaining useful life audit was considered. Also 1,000,000's of cars are tested resulting in 100,000's failing the test with up to \$1,500.00 in repairs but many parts identified as failure faults have sales volume that might indicate opportunities to improve the performance of the CAP program.

A CAP secret shopper audit might find we can do better, if the Controller has the check book and an audit team or Sierra Research can provide the data showing improved air and California jobs with improved CAP performance, more bang for the buck.

A one minute phone call from Governor Brown to DCA/BAR Chief John Wallauch can start improved performance tomorrow morning.

The Junior College BAR referee does 500 VOLUNTARY/FREE tests in a day that can start a secret shopper audit with our Governor's help with a one minute conference call to the BAR-Wallauch team. Is it time for change?

CAPP contact: Charlie Peters (510) 537-1796 cappcharlie@earthlink.net

New numbers show emission fail rates are down

By Gitte Laasby, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Oct. 22, 2012

The rate of vehicles that fail Wisconsin's emissions tests is down nearly 1 percentage point so far, when compared with last year.

Earlier this year, Wisconsin's new contractor for testing, Systech International LLC, said the percentage of vehicles that failed the test in the first two weeks of July was up to 8.9%. That's a significant increase from the 2011 average of 6.4%.

The contractor, which oversees the 200 or so auto repair shops and dealerships conducting the tests, now says it erroneously over-reported fail rates for those first two weeks by including vehicles that couldn't be tested in the number of vehicles that failed.

Vehicles are rejected if their onboard computer does not send a signal to the emissions testing equipment, for instance if the data connector is damaged, a fuse is blown or aftermarket security or navigation has been improperly installed.

Scott Selbach, state supervisor of the vehicle emissions testing program under the state Department of Transportation, said Systech supplied different data than the state had requested.

"Certainly, it was not our intent," Selbach said. "We thought we had good data and that wasn't the case."

Jack Pierce, manager of Systech's Wisconsin program, took responsibility but called the error "a miscommunication" of what the state wanted.

Pierce couldn't immediately say what the fail rate would be if the number of rejected vehicles were taken out.

However, fail rates are down to 5.5% for the first three months, from July through September, according to fresh data released to the Journal Sentinel.

"I really don't have an explanation as to why we'd be running at 5.5 (%) as opposed to 6.4 (%)," Selbach said. "I think it's a good thing, but I don't have an explanation."

The demographic area where a test facility is located can play a role.

Some mechanics and store managers also told the Journal Sentinel in July that if they discover a sure reason a vehicle wouldn't pass the test - such as the "check engine" light being on - they recommend fixes beforehand. Some drivers take their advice, which can lead to higher pass rates at that facility.

Others may not have the money or time to get problems fixed and hope their vehicle will "squeak by" so they have it tested anyway. When it doesn't pass, it adds to the facility's failure rate. The state does not rate or punish the facilities based on fail rates.

The erroneous data released in July showed that eight facilities in southeastern Wisconsin had a fail rate of over 20%. Seventy-three had a fail rate of 10% or above. Several businesses subsequently complained that the data released did not reflect the results they registered in their businesses.

Under the new data, only 17 facilities have a higher fail rate than 10%.

The high rates released in late July also raised questions with motorists.

State officials and representatives from businesses conducting the tests said the people conducting the tests can't tamper with the results and make a vehicle fail that otherwise wouldn't have or the other way round.

But drivers pointed out that unlike the previous nine centralized testing stations operated by Envirotest Systems Corp. - which only

conducted emissions testing - the independent businesses that have conducted the tests for the state since July 2 can make additional money by making repairs on cars that didn't pass the test. Some drivers felt repair shops were trying to sell them unnecessary services. Mechanics and dealerships make only about \$2 for conducting each test and signed up in the hopes of attracting new customers and generating more income.

Garages drop out

As it turned out, some businesses got more new customers than they bargained for.

Since July, several test facilities have voluntarily left the program while others have been added. Some businesses said the program attracted so many customers that the shop couldn't inspect all of them in a timely manner and still meet the needs of their other customers, Pierce said.

"The common denominator for this group that left," he said, is "it was too busy for them. This is a nice add-on to their business, but their business is fixing cars, adding oil or washing cars, but if they were too busy to do that, it doesn't make any sense."

Under the contract with the state, Systech is obligated to ensure a minimum of 190 facilities.

Email: PI@journalsentinel.com

Phone: (414) 223-5385

Twitter: @GitteLaasbyMJS

Address: Public Investigator

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

333 W. State St.

Milwaukee WI 53203

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/pi/new-numbers-show-emission-fail-rates-are-down-o476ges-175319461.html>

Is this the "New" Mary and John Smog Check CCEEB, \$2.00 tests with lots more testers in the Que? Must be good it is quick and cheep AND a low fail rate, great stuff CCEEB.

That's no problem because the company has a waiting list of about 135 businesses that would like to provide services, Selbach said.

Pierce said Systech's website and hotline information on businesses that are part of the program are always up to date because the lists are automatically updated as soon as a test station is added or taken out.

State officials said the new contract with Systech will save the state about \$600,000 per year.

Under the old system, Envirotech received \$3.2 million in 2011 - about \$4.95 for each of the 645,611 tests conducted. Systech won a new, five-year, contract with a bid of nearly \$2.6 million for 2012 - an expected \$4.02 per test, assuming the same number of tests. The test facilities get half that.

At the time, state officials said customers would benefit from the convenience of decentralized locations, which should mean a shorter drive - especially in rural areas - and shorter wait times.

The federal Clean Air Act mandates that vehicles are inspected in areas with air quality problems. That includes seven Wisconsin counties: Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Washington and Waukesha.

CAPP contact: Charlie Peters (510) 537-1796 cappcharlie@earthlink.net

"California to start new smog check program" / CARB's Mary Nichols Smog Check III(?)

From: "Wallauch, John@DCA" <John.Wallauch@dca.ca.gov>

To: 'charlie peters'

Subject: RE: "California to start new smog check program" / CARB's Mary Nichols Smog Check III

Date: Oct 23, 2012 9:44 AM

God morning Charlie, hope you are doing well, not heard from you for some time. We are looking at a modification to the program to evaluate repairs on CAP vehicles. When you have time we can give you an overview of what we are thinking of doing. Tim Corcoran is the leader on evaluating CAP repairs-----

From: charlie peters [mailto:cappcharlie@earthlink.net]

Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2012 1:07 AM

To: Wallauch, John@DCA

Subject: "California to start new smog check program" / CARB's Mary Nichols Smog Check III

CAPP contact: Charlie Peters (510) 537-1796 cappcharlie@earthlink.net

RE: New numbers show emission fail rates are down

From: "Wallauch, John@DCA" <John.Wallauch@dca.ca.gov>

To: 'charlie peters'

Subject: RE: New numbers show emission fail rates are down

Date: Oct 23, 2012 2:05 PM

Charlie,

we are in the process of putting together some data on pass/fail trends prior to the start of STAR.

Current indications are that there is a slight increase in failure rates for make and year models of certain models.

Too early to say for sure what the motivates are, but let's hope that there is a renewed spirit in the industry to do the right thing-----

-----Original Message-----

From: charlie peters [mailto:cappcharlie@earthlink.net]

Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2012 11:55 AM

To: Wallauch, John@DCA

Subject: New numbers show emission fail rates are down

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/pi/new-numbers-show-emission-fail-rates-are-down-o476ges-175319461.html>

CAPP contact: Charlie Peters (510) 537-1796 cappcharlie@earthlink.net

Clean Air Performance Professionals

(CAP)
21860 Main Street Ste
Hayward, California 94541
Tuesday, May 31, 2011

Hayward City Hall
Mayor Michael Sweeney, & Council members
4th floor,
777 B Street,
Hayward 94541
510-583-4400 (City Clerk)
Fax 510-583-3636

RE: PZEV emissions performance for motorist

Good evening Mayor and Council members,

California has the best car emissions system but we need support to improve performance.

Improved car fleet toxic impact will provide better health and economic performance.

Will Hayward City Council consider a resolution in support of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) efforts to improve compliance with the California Partial Zero-emission Vehicles (PZEV) standards.

CARB contact: Manager of the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) of the Mobil Source Control Division. Elise Keddie, (916) 323-8974, ekeddie@arb.ca.gov.

Attachment

Cc: interested parties.

Clean Air Performance Professionals


Charlie Peters
(510) 517-1796

CAPP contact: Charlie Peters (510) 537-1796 cappcharlie@earthlink.net