



I/M Fact Sheet

I/M = Cleaner Air

Motor vehicle inspection/maintenance (I/M) programs are now operating in a number of jurisdictions throughout the United States in keeping with provisions of the Clean Air Act. Some of the common questions car owners have about I/M programs are answered in this fact sheet.

What is the purpose of I/M programs?

I/M works to lower air pollution levels by requiring periodic *inspection* of the emissions systems of cars and light trucks and *maintenance*, when necessary, to keep those systems functioning properly.

How does I/M work?

Inspections generally are carried out by state-controlled facilities or garages authorized by the state to do the checks. While the vehicle is running, the probe of an exhaust gas analyzer is placed in the tailpipe. This analyzer checks the amounts of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons in the exhaust.

What if I fail the test?

In most cases, all a car needs is an emissions tune-up which reduces air pollution and can improve the vehicle's performance and gas mileage. Testing programs in several states have shown that about 15 to 30 percent of cars require maintenance work, with typical costs ranging from \$18 to \$35. The most common repairs required are: (1) carburetor adjustments, (2) air filter replacement, (3) idle speed adjustment, (4) choke adjustments, (5) spark plug replacement. Some repairs may be covered under the car's emissions warranty.

What pollutants come from car exhausts?

Cars emit three major polluting gases—carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and oxides of nitrogen.

Carbon monoxide goes directly to the bloodstream and reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood. In large quantities, it is deadly. In smaller amounts, carbon monoxide can cause dizziness, loss of appetite, nausea, blurred vision and headaches.

Hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen react together in the presence of sunlight to form smog, which is made up of ozone and other photochemical oxidants. Ozone can cause difficulty in breathing, chest pain, chest and nasal congestion, coughing, eye irritation, nausea and headaches.

The people most susceptible to high levels of carbon

monoxide and ozone are infants and small children, elderly people, those with respiratory and heart ailments, and active people such as joggers.

More than 90 percent of the carbon monoxide and one-third of the hydrocarbons in the atmosphere come from motor vehicles. The primary causes of high emission levels are maladjustments and inadequate maintenance.

Apart from the tailpipe check, what does an inspection cover?

Some states include an emissions control tampering check as part of the I/M program. Data collected by EPA since 1978 show that one out of five vehicles has had at least one part of its emissions control system disabled. In some I/M programs, vehicles are checked for air pollution control equipment that was required for that particular model and year. The check could include inspection of some or all of the following: catalytic converter, fuel inlet restrictor, air pump, positive crankcase ventilation, evaporative canister, and exhaust gas recirculation valve.

Don't cars run better without this control equipment?

No. Cars are now designed to perform most efficiently when the emissions control system is fully operational and correctly adjusted. Mileage is better and long-term maintenance costs are reduced. Fuel switching—using leaded gasoline in cars designed for unleaded gas—can ruin emissions control systems, run up maintenance costs and force the replacement of expensive parts.

Isn't I/M unfair to people who own older cars?

Older cars are not expected to meet the same standards as newer models with sophisticated emissions controls. The pass/fail standards for each model year are set to be within the design capacity of the automobile. In addition, some states set cost limits to avoid penalizing people who drive older cars which might require expensive repairs (such as ring or valve jobs) to meet emissions standards.

Why must we have I/M programs?

The Clean Air Act required states to meet certain air quality standards by December 31, 1982, but Congress also provided that areas with severe pollution problems could be granted extensions to 1987 if they agreed to initiate I/M programs. Implementation of I/M was emphasized because the payoff in emissions reductions is significantly greater than can be achieved through alternative control strategies. In addition, programs already in operation had demonstrated that I/M was feasible, reasonable in cost, and acceptable to the public.

Where are I/M programs in operation now?

Listed below are all urbanized areas currently running an I/M program, including areas under 200,000 population. The latter areas are indicated with asterisks. The list also includes counties which have all or a part of their population within the urbanized area boundary, as defined by the 1970 census. A particular I/M program may include counties which do not appear on this list because they are outside the urban area. Also, a program may exclude one or more counties which are part of the urbanized area. Where this occurs, the excluded counties appear on this list in parentheses.

ARIZONA

Phoenix:
Maricopa Co.
Tucson:
Pima Co.

CALIFORNIA

South Coast Air Basin:
Los Angeles Co.
Orange Co.
Oxnard - Ventura
Thousand Oaks:
Ventura Co.
San Francisco/Oakland:
Alameda Co.
Contra Costa Co.
Marin Co.
Napa Co.
San Francisco Co.
San Mateo Co.
Solano Co.
San Bernardino/Riverside:
San Bernardino Co.
Riverside Co.
San Diego:
San Diego Co.
San Jose:
Santa Clara Co.
Sacramento:
Placer Co.
Sacramento Co.
Yolo Co.

COLORADO

Denver area:
Adams Co.
Arapahoe Co.
Boulder Co.
Jefferson Co.
Colorado Springs:
El Paso Co.

CONNECTICUT

[statewide program]
Hartford:
Hartford Co.
Middlesex Co.
Tolland Co.
New Haven:
New Haven Co.
Bridgeport:
Fairfield Co.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[tri-state]

DELAWARE

Wilmington:
New Castle Co.

GEORGIA

Atlanta:
Cobb Co.
(Clayton Co.)
DeKalb Co.
Fulton Co.
(Douglass Co.)
(Gwinnett Co.)

INDIANA

Chicago suburbs:
Lake Co.
Porter Co.
Louisville suburbs:
Clark Co.
Floyd Co.

KENTUCKY

Louisville [bi-state]:
Jefferson Co.

MARYLAND

Baltimore:
Anne Arundel Co.
Baltimore Co.
Howard Co.
District of Columbia area:
Montgomery Co.
Prince Georges Co.

MASSACHUSETTS

[statewide program]
Boston:
Middlesex Co.
Norfolk Co.
Plymouth Co.
Suffolk Co.
Springfield:
Hampshire Co.
Hampden Co.
Worcester:
Worcester Co.
Lawrence:
Essex Co.

MISSOURI

St. Louis area:
St. Charles
St. Louis City
St. Louis Co.

NEVADA

Las Vegas:
Clark Co.
Reno:*
Washoe Co.

NEW JERSEY

[statewide program]
Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton:
Warren Co.
New York City area:
Bergen Co.
Essex Co.
Hudson Co.
Middlesex Co.
Monmouth Co.
Morris Co.
Ocean Co.
Passaic Co.
Somerset Co.
Union Co.
Philadelphia area [bi-state]:
Burlington Co.
Camden Co.
Gloucester Co.
Trenton [bi-state]:
Mercer Co.
Wilmington area [bi-state]:
Salem Co.

NEW YORK

NY metro area [bi-state]:
Bronx Co.
Kings Co.
Nassau Co.
New York Co.
Putnam Co.
Queens Co.
Richmond Co.
Rockland Co.
Suffolk Co.
Westchester Co.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte:
Mecklenburg Co.

OREGON

Portland area [bi-state]:
Multnomah Co.
Clackamas Co.
Washington Co.
(Clark Co., WA)

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia [bi-state]:
Bucks Co.
Chester Co.
Delaware Co.
Montgomery Co.
Philadelphia Co.
Pittsburgh:
Allegheny Co.
Beaver Co.
(Lawrence Co.)
Washington Co.
Westmoreland Co.
Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton:
Lehigh Co.
Northampton Co.

RHODE ISLAND

[statewide program]
Providence:
Bristol Co.
Kent Co.
Providence Co.
Washington Co.

TENNESSEE

Memphis:
Shelby Co.

UTAH

Salt Lake City area:
Davis Co.

VIRGINIA

District of Columbia area:
Arlington Co.
Fairfax Co.
Alexandria City
Fairfax City
Falls Church City

WASHINGTON

Seattle area:
King Co.
(Pierce Co.)
Snohomish Co.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee:
Milwaukee Co.
Ozaukee Co.
Racine Co.
Washington Co.
Waukesha Co.