



Frequently Asked Questions

Emission Exemption for Racing Motorcycles and Other Competition Vehicles

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has adopted emission standards for recreational vehicles, including snowmobiles, off-highway motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles. This information sheet addresses questions we have heard from owners about vehicles that are used for racing.

Is EPA regulating racing vehicles?

In the 1990 Amendments to the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Congress directed EPA to set emission standards for nonroad engines that contribute to air pollution, including motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and snowmobiles. However, Congress excluded nonroad vehicles that are “used solely for competition.” We therefore adopted regulations that generally exclude from the new regulations vehicles used for competition.

What qualifies as competition?

For snowmobiles, motorcycles, and ATVs, we generally consider the term “competition” to include only organized racing. It may include both amateur and professional racing, but is limited to closed-course racing and open-course racing that is formally sanctioned by a recognized racing organization. All other uses are considered to be “recreational.”

What about existing vehicles?

Our regulations do not require manufacturers to certify vehicles before 2006. Therefore, the EPA restrictions related to competition generally do not apply to vehicles that were manufactured before 2006. We do not restrict how you may use these older vehicles.

How do I know if my vehicle is excluded?

Manufacturers generally already label most racing vehicles to show that they are competition models. We allow manufacturers to put those labels only on those vehicles that we determine will be used solely for competition. Manufacturers will need to certify that all their other vehicles meet our standards and add a label showing that these are EPA-certified vehicles. If you use an EPA-certified vehicle for competition only, it does not need to meet emission standards. This would allow you to modify it however you want, but only if you use it solely for competition and not for any recreational purpose. These criteria are summarized in the following table.

Restrictions on Use and Maintenance

If your motorcycle was built in 2005 or earlier	Then, there are no restrictions on its use or maintenance		
If your motorcycle was built in 2006 and later	And has been EPA-certified	And is used for some recreation	Then, you may use it however you like, but you may not modify it to increase emissions
If your motorcycle was built in 2006 and later	And has been EPA-certified	And is used only for competition	Then, there are no restrictions on maintenance or modifications
If your motorcycle was built in 2006 and later	And has been exempted	Then, it may only be used for competition, and may not be used for recreation	

Which vehicles may a manufacturer label as competition vehicles?

We adopted a general provision under which we will allow a manufacturer to label new vehicles for competition whenever that manufacturer can show us that the vehicles will be used only for competition. We also include specific guidance to help manufacturers make this showing. We worked with manufacturers throughout the rulemaking process to ensure that we properly treat vehicles that are used for competition in our regulations.

Are motorcycles, ATVs and snowmobiles treated the same?

No. We created special provisions for motorcycles that will make it easier for manufacturers to get permission to label their competition motorcycles. Unlike ATVs and snowmobiles, a very large fraction of off-highway motorcycles are used for amateur racing. It is important to note, though, that we will not exempt any model and allow a manufacturer to label it for competition if we do not believe it will be used only for competition.

What kinds of vehicles may I use for competition?

You may generally use any of three kinds of vehicles for competition:

- A vehicle with an EPA label showing that the manufacturer has produced it under our competition exemption
- A vehicle that was built before 2006
- An EPA-certified vehicle

It may be surprising to think that EPA-certified vehicles would be used in competition, but all four-stroke motorcycles should meet emission standards without any loss of performance. So, we expect most manufacturers to market EPA-certified four-stroke motorcycles for racing. We also included an optional standard for motorcycles to encourage manufacturers to produce and certify clean two-stroke competition motorcycles.

May I modify a vehicle for competition?

You may modify your vehicle's engine or emission controls in any way if it is not subject to our standards. This applies to all vehicles built before 2006 and all vehicles that have the EPA label for competition from the manufacturer.

You may also modify EPA-certified vehicles if you will use them only for competition. However, you may not modify your EPA-certified vehicle in a way that increases emissions if you use the vehicle for both recreation and competition.

May I use an uncertified vehicle just for fun?

You may use any older vehicles that were built in 2005 or earlier. For 2006 and later models, you may not use an uncertified vehicle for non-competition use. You are not allowed to use an excluded competition vehicle for recreational purposes if it was built in 2006 or later.

What requirements apply to excluded vehicles?

There are two EPA requirements that apply to competition vehicles that are excluded from the regulations. First, as described above, if we exclude a vehicle, you may not use it for recreation. Second, if your vehicle is excluded because you modify an EPA-certified vehicle, you must destroy the original emissions label to show that it is no longer “certified” and may only be used for competition. Once you modify your vehicle, you may no longer use it for recreation. If you sell or give one of these engines to someone else, you must tell the new owner in writing that it may be used only for competition.

In addition to these EPA requirements, state and local governments may have requirements or restrictions that apply to excluded vehicles. For example, a state may require you to register your competition vehicle, or may prohibit use of excluded vehicles on public land.

Where can I get more information?

You can access documents on recreational vehicles on the Office of Transportation and Air Quality Web site at:

www.epa.gov/otaq/recveh.htm

You can also contact us at:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Transportation and Air Quality
Assessment and Standards Division
2000 Traverwood Drive

Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Voice-mail: (734) 214-4636
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See additional fact sheets:

- Emission Standards for New Nonroad Engines— Large Industrial Spark-ignition Engines, Recreational Marine Diesel Engines, and Recreational Vehicles (EPA420-F-02-037)
- Environmental Impacts of Newly Regulated Nonroad Engines (EPA420-F-02-033)
- Frequently Asked Questions from Off-Highway Motorcycle Riders (EPA420-F-02-039)