

Frequently Asked Questions - Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program

What is the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program?

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program is part of Missouri's continuing effort to improve air quality in the St. Louis region. The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program is a combined emissions testing and safety inspection program for vehicles registered in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area. The nonattainment area includes the City of St. Louis and the Counties of St. Charles, St. Louis, and Jefferson.

History

In summer 2005, the Department convened the Emissions Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Summit to bring the St. Louis community together to consider and build consensus for a redesign of the vehicle emissions I/M program in St. Louis. Based upon the consensus of the I/M Summit, the Missouri General Assembly passed Senate Bill 583 in 2006. As a result of this legislation, the Gateway Clean Air Program, the centralized emissions inspection and maintenance program, ended in 2007. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri State Highway Patrol jointly administer the decentralized Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program.

What is an emissions inspection?

The emissions inspection in Missouri consists of a test of a vehicle's On-Board Diagnostics, Generation II (OBDII) emissions system. The inspector mechanic plugs a computer device into the OBDII data port of a vehicle and tests the emissions system, including but not limited to the Catalytic System, Oxygen Sensors, Evaporative System, and Exhaust Gas Recirculation System. The state mandated maximum fee for an emissions inspection is \$24.

Why does my vehicle need to be tested?

Motor vehicles are a leading source of air pollution in the St. Louis area due to the large number of vehicles on the road and amount of miles traveled daily. Previously, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designated the counties of Franklin, St. Charles, St. Louis, and Jefferson, and St. Louis City as an ozone nonattainment area as they did not meet the federal health-based air quality standards for ground-level ozone, a strong lung irritant.

Studies show those most affected by poor air quality are those with respiratory illnesses. When passenger vehicle emissions react with heat and sunlight, ground-level ozone is formed. Because ground-level ozone is highly reactive, high concentrations can cause throat irritation, congestion, chest pains, nausea and labored breathing for anyone exposed to this pollution. Ozone can also aggravate the breathing of those with lung or

heart conditions.

The federally-required I/M program is designed to reduce passenger vehicle emissions. As a result of years of effort by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, regulated facilities, and citizens working together to reduce air emissions, beginning July 1, 2022 vehicles registered in Franklin County are exempt from emissions inspection requirements. For more information regarding the Franklin County exemption, please see the **FAQ-Termination of Vehicle Emission Testing Requirements for Franklin County Residents**.

Which vehicles require emissions testing?

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program will test gas-powered vehicles 1996 and newer and diesel-powered vehicles 1997 and newer that are registered in the City of St. Louis and the counties of St. Charles, St. Louis, and Jefferson. The program will also test vehicles with at least 51 percent of their annual miles driven in the ozone nonattainment area, regardless of where the vehicle is registered.

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program will emissions test even model year vehicles during even calendar years and odd model year vehicles during odd calendar years. An emissions test is also required any time an eligible vehicle undergoes a title change.

Which vehicles will not require emissions testing?

All vehicles that do not contain on-board diagnostic computer equipment will be exempt from the emissions testing requirements, however a safety inspection may still be required. For safety inspection requirements please visit the Missouri Department of Revenue's [Safety Inspections](#) webpage. If you are selling a vehicle, please visit the Missouri Department of Revenue's [Selling a Vehicle](#) webpage for more information.

Effective July 1, 2022, vehicles registered in Franklin County no longer need an emissions inspection for vehicle registration. Over the past 20 years, ground-level ozone concentrations in the St. Louis region have steadily declined, making it possible to pursue the removal of these mandated requirements. More information can be found about the removal of Franklin County from emissions testing requirements in the **Termination of Vehicle Emission Testing Requirements for Franklin County Residents-FAQ**.

Exempted vehicles include

- 1995 and older gas-powered vehicles;
- 1996 and older diesel-powered vehicles;
- New motor vehicles, not previously titled and registered, for the four-year period following their model year of manufacture, with fewer than 40,000 miles at the first required biennial safety inspection;
- New and unused vehicles, with model years within two years of the calendar year, that have odometer readings of less than 6,000 miles at the time of original sale by the manufacturer or dealer; and
- Motor vehicles that are driven fewer than 12,000 miles between biennial safety inspections.

Other exemptions include

- Motorcycles and motortricycles;

- Vehicles powered by fuels other than gasoline, ethanol or diesel;
- Vehicles that are domiciled and operated exclusively in an area of the state not subject to the emissions inspection requirements;
- Historic Vehicles registered pursuant to section 301.131 RSMo;
- School buses;
- Tactical military vehicles; and
- Visitor, employee or military personnel vehicles on federal installations provided appointments do not exceed 60 calendar days.

How are vehicles emissions tested?

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program will use On-Board Diagnostics or OBDII testing to conduct the emissions test. This testing method accesses an advanced computer system installed in all 1996 and newer gas-powered and 1997 and newer diesel-powered vehicles 8,500 pounds or less in Gross Vehicle Weight Rating. OBDII is an early-warning system that continually monitors the vehicle's emissions-control devices and other engine-related components to ensure all are functioning properly.

When the vehicle is presented for an emissions test, an inspector will attach a connector cable to the OBD port generally located below the dash on the driver's side of the vehicle. The OBD information will be sent to the computer. Any emissions-related OBD diagnostic trouble codes or other OBD failures will be printed on the Vehicle Inspection Report.

OBDII systems provide valuable emissions information that allows motorists to invest in needed repairs and preventive maintenance to ensure that their vehicle continues to perform efficiently. The outcome of the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program will be cleaner cars on the road and cleaner air for everyone to breathe. For more information about the emissions test, see the **FAQ – On-Board Diagnostics (OBDII)**.

How do motorists know when to have their vehicles emissions tested?

The Missouri Department of Revenue will mail vehicle registration papers 60 days prior to plate expiration to notify motorists when to have their vehicles emissions tested and safety inspected. Vehicles with an even model year are tested in even years, and vehicles with an odd model year are tested in odd years. An emissions test is also required any time an eligible vehicle undergoes a title change. At the time of the title transfer, the seller is required to provide the purchaser with a valid emissions inspection compliance certificate or compliance waiver.

Where can I go to have my vehicle emissions tested?

The state licenses auto shops in the St. Louis area to conduct the emissions testing. For more information and to find the nearest inspection station to you visit the online [Missouri GVIP Station Directory](#).

What is a safety inspection?

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program combines the safety inspection and emissions testing requirements for vehicles registered in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area. Model year vehicles 1995 and older are not subject to the emissions portion of the program, but are still subject to all safety inspection requirements.

A vehicle safety inspection insures that vehicles on Missouri roads meet a minimum

standard of safety. For a complete listing of all items inspected please visit the Missouri State Highway Patrol's [Motor Vehicle Inspection Checklist](#). The state mandated maximum fee for a safety inspection is \$12.

Which vehicles require a safety inspection?

For safety inspection requirements please visit the Missouri State Highway Patrol's [Motor Vehicle Inspection Checklist](#). If you are selling a vehicle, please visit the Missouri Department of Revenue's [Selling a Vehicle](#) webpage for more information.

What are the costs of emissions and safety inspections?

The emissions testing fee shall not exceed \$24, and the safety inspection fee shall not exceed \$12. The station shall determine the acceptable forms of payment. The fees shall include one free reinspection, if the same licensed station conducts it within 20 business days.

How long is my emissions test valid?

Once a vehicle receives a passing emissions test, the test is valid for registration purposes for 60 days. If the vehicle owner allows the emissions test to expire, the vehicle will have to be reinspected.

My check engine light is on, should I get an emissions inspection?

Yes, when your check engine light is on, that indicates your vehicle's emission system is not working properly and is excessively polluting. **In order to be eligible for a waiver, you will need an emissions inspection prior to making any repairs.** This will allow the Department to ensure repairs are effective at correcting the issue. The station should test the vehicle in **as-received condition**.

I failed my emissions inspection, now what?

If you receive a failing emissions inspection, it means that your vehicle's emission system is not working properly and is excessively polluting. You must repair your vehicle until it is able to pass a retest or until it meets the requirements for either a cost-based or an estimate-based waiver.

An important thing to remember is that vehicles driven under 12,000 miles total in the prior two year period may qualify for a mileage-based exemption. For more information on Mileage-Based Exemptions and other waiver options, see **FAQ – Waivers and Exemptions**.

If a vehicle fails an emissions test, the cause of the failure(s) must be diagnosed and repairs need to be made that are appropriate for the failure. The vehicle must be retested after repairs have been made to determine the effectiveness of the repairs. The vehicle must have a properly working dashboard warning light, communicate with the test equipment and have readiness monitors set to ready before it can qualify for a waiver.

What is a waiver?

There are multiple different kinds of waivers that exist in order to help motorists achieve compliance with emission requirements. If you failed your test visit **FAQ - Waivers and Exemptions for more information and potential options**.

If my vehicle fails, where can I go to have it repaired?

Anyone may perform necessary repairs for the vehicle. Customers are not required to

have repairs completed at the station that performs their vehicle's emissions test. It is important to note that waiver criteria may affect where a motorist chooses to have repairs performed.

Anyone may repair your vehicle. However, labor costs can only be applied to a cost-based waiver if the work was done by a Missouri Recognized Repair Technician (MRRT). At the bottom of the failing vehicle inspection report, you will find a list of the ten nearest MRRTs. An advantage of going to an MRRT is that the technician is certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence in A6, A8 and L1 areas of expertise and approved to work with the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program as an MRRT.

What is required for retesting my vehicle?

If your vehicle has been repaired, it's time to get ready for a retest. Retests are required until your vehicle passes or until you obtain a waiver from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Once repairs are completed, the vehicle must return to the initial testing station within 20 business days to qualify for one free reinspection. After 20 business days, you will be required to pay the full emissions test fee again.

The vehicle owner must have a failing inspection completed prior to making repairs, this allows the program to determine waiver eligibility. Once repairs are made, the vehicle should be retested in order to ensure the repairs were effective. For more waiver requirements, see **FAQ - Waivers and Exemptions**.

Before you retest...drive your repaired vehicle normally for several days before returning to the station that initially performed the emissions test. Doing so can help reset your vehicle's readiness monitors. For more information on readiness monitors, see the **FAQ - On-Board Diagnostics (OBDII)**.

Vehicle owners must apply for all emissions waivers with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. To apply please visit the [Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program](#) website and complete the appropriate waiver request form.

What if I purchase a used vehicle?

State law requires automobile dealers to sell vehicles that will pass the emissions test. The dealer may choose to test the vehicle prior to the sale and provide the motorist with the passing emissions test or a cost-based waiver. Purchasers should understand that if the vehicle received a waiver, it will likely fail future emissions tests. If the dealer chooses not to provide either a passing test or waiver, the owner should get the vehicle tested within 10 days or 1,000 miles of the purchase date. Should the vehicle fail the emissions test, the owner may return it to the dealer for repairs needed to get it to pass the emissions test (no waivers allowed). If the dealer cannot get the vehicle to pass the emissions test, the dealer must reach another agreement with the vehicle owner. State law requires private sellers of vehicles to provide the purchaser with a current emissions test approval or waiver for the vehicle prior to the sale. The vehicle purchaser has 60 days from the date of the emissions test to register the vehicle. For more information, see the [Consumer Protection Information for Used Car Buyers](#) fact sheet on the Department's website.

I had my vehicle tested last year when I purchased it; why do I have to test it again

this year?

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program tests even-model year vehicles biennially during even calendar years and odd-model year vehicles biennially during odd calendar years. An emissions test is required any time an eligible vehicle undergoes a title change. In some cases, when a used vehicle is sold, an emissions test may be required in two successive years.

For example, if a 2016 vehicle is purchased in 2021, the seller is required to provide a passing emissions test to the buyer to register the vehicle. **The seller, not the buyer, should pay for the test that occurs in 2021.** In 2022, the vehicle would be required to pass another emissions test paid for by the new owner based on the even model year testing schedule. In this instance, the vehicle was required to have an emissions test in two successive years. However, the vehicle would not be scheduled for another emissions test until 2024.

Now that my vehicle has passed its inspections, how do I renew my license?

Vehicle owners may register online at www.plates.mo.gov. The vehicle owner can also visit a license fee office for vehicle registration and plate renewal purposes. For a list of Missouri Department of Revenue's contract license fee offices, visit <http://www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/offloc>.

What is required of local auto shops to participate in the program?

To participate, local auto shops will apply to the state for an emissions inspection license. Licensed stations will conduct emissions inspections and have the option to repair failing vehicles. The cost of the station license is \$100 per year, and will be prorated the first year the business is licensed so safety and emissions inspection station licenses can be synchronized.

Emissions inspectors will also be licensed with the state. The emissions inspector license is valid for three years and provided at no cost. The contractor will train all emissions inspectors. The inspectors will be required to pass a written and practical exam offered by the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

The contractor, Worldwide Environmental Products Inc. (WEP), works together with the state to implement the equipment and technical requirements of the GVIP. Auto shops will work with WEP and the state to obtain inspection equipment and testing authorizations. The licensed emissions inspection stations are required to obtain Internet connections to facilitate real-time, paperless vehicle registration verification. For more information regarding equipment and payments for shops, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions – Equipment for Auto Shops/Inspectors](#) fact sheet.

For more information call or write:

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