

Frequently Asked Questions – Waivers and Exemptions

All 1996 and newer gasoline and 1997 and newer diesel powered vehicles will be tested solely using the OBDII system. Currently, 99% of tested vehicles pass the initial or subsequent emissions test. Some of the remaining vehicles may qualify for an emissions exemption or an emissions waiver depending on certain criteria. The below details some information regarding different exemptions and waivers that may be available.

Mileage-Based Exemption

A vehicle registered in the counties of Jefferson, St. Charles or St. Louis or the City of St. Louis, may be exempt from the required emissions test for registration, if it qualifies for a mileage-based exemption. Mileage-based exemption requirements include:

- 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
- Motor vehicles that are driven fewer than 12,000 miles between biennial safety inspections

Other exemptions include:

- 1995 and older gas-powered vehicles
- 1996 and older diesel-powered vehicles
- 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
- Visitor, employee or military personnel vehicles on federal installations provided appointments do not exceed 60 calendar days.

Out-of-area waiver

Vehicles registered in the counties of Jefferson, St. Charles, or St. Louis or the City of St. Louis, for which an emissions inspection is required for registration renewal, may qualify for an “Out-of-Area” waiver from the emissions inspection provided the vehicle:

- Is currently located and being driven in the State of Missouri
- Will be operated exclusively outside of the emission inspection requirement area for the next 24 months

If the vehicle returns to the St. Louis ozone non-attainment area prior to the 24 month authorization period, then it must document compliance with emissions inspection requirements.

If a vehicle is registered in the GVIP area, but being driven outside of the state of Missouri, you may qualify for a reciprocity waiver or a Department of Revenue Form 768.

Reciprocity Waiver

If your vehicle is registered in the Missouri counties of Jefferson, St. Charles, St. Louis or the City of St. Louis in which an emissions inspection is required for registration, but the vehicle is:

- Not required to document safety inspection compliance for registration due to model year (Less than 10 years old and under 150,000 miles)
- Able to obtain a passing OBD emissions inspection from a state or jurisdiction participating in pass/fail OBD inspections
- Documented as meeting emissions inspection requirements in the last 60 days from the state it was tested in

You may apply for a reciprocity waiver, which if approved, will allow you to register your vehicle in Missouri. If a vehicle is in a state other than Missouri and that state conducts pass/fail on-board diagnostics, also known as OBD testing, the motorist may choose to have the vehicle emissions inspected in that state and apply to the Department for a reciprocity waiver application.

If I fail the test, what waivers am I eligible for?

The Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program tests 1996 and newer gasoline powered vehicles and 1997 and newer diesel powered vehicles using on-board diagnostic equipment. This advanced computer inspection system determines whether 1996 and newer vehicles pass or fail the emissions inspection. Vehicles failing the OBDII test must be repaired to pass the vehicle emissions test. Some vehicles, meeting certain criteria, may qualify for either an estimate-based waiver or a cost-based waiver.

When a vehicle is OBDII tested, motorists will receive a Vehicle Inspection Report. This detailed report identifies any areas of concern including the specific diagnostic trouble codes (DTC) the vehicle is experiencing at the time of the test.

What are Diagnostic Trouble Codes?

When a vehicle's emissions-control system detects an emissions-related problem it generates diagnostic trouble codes. These codes are stored in the vehicle's computer and indicate a specific system or component that might be malfunctioning. A detailed report listing the codes found during the OBDII test is provided on the Vehicle Inspection Report to owners at the conclusion of the test. Diagnostic trouble codes assist trained repair technicians in pinpointing areas of concern, allowing quicker and more effective repairs that save both time and money for the motorist.

Just because the Vehicle Inspection Report lists a particular diagnostic trouble code does not mean the component described should be automatically replaced or repaired. Repairs should only be performed after a thorough diagnosis of the reason for the setting of the code in the vehicle's computer has been made. If the problem that caused the diagnostic trouble code to be stored isn't properly repaired, then the code that caused the vehicle to fail its emissions test will return, and the vehicle will remain unrepaired. For this reason, the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program encourages all motorists to enlist a trained repair technician to perform this diagnostic service prior to beginning any repair work. This diagnosis is required if the vehicle owner applies for an emissions waiver.

Does every vehicle that fails an emissions test automatically qualify for a waiver?

No. If a vehicle fails an emissions test, the cause of the failure(s) must be diagnosed. From there, the motorist may qualify for an estimate-based waiver or a cost-based waiver. See below for more information about estimate and cost-based waivers and what is needed to qualify for each.

Estimate-Based Waiver

When your vehicle has failed the initial emissions inspection or reinspection you may be eligible for an estimate-based waiver. The following are necessary to qualify for an estimate-based waiver:

- The most recent emissions inspection reports a single diagnostic trouble code (DTC)*;
- The vehicle has passed the following:
 - The bulb check test
 - The data link connector test
 - The communications test
 - The readiness monitor test
- The subject vehicle cannot have received either a cost-based waiver or an estimate-based waiver during a previous biennial inspection cycle for the same single DTC;
- The vehicle owner has paid for a diagnostic test of that DTC by a recognized repair technician or a vehicle repair business that specializes in a particular make of vehicle or type of repair (e.g., transmission repairs), with the items tested and the results described on the repair estimate; and
- The diagnostic test results and parts required for the repair of the single DTC are documented by the shop to exceed \$450.

*There is an exception to the single DTC requirements when diagnostic testing determines two DTCs have the same cause.

If your vehicle has more than one nonrelated DTC or repairs have already been made, you may consider applying for a **cost-based waiver** (more information below). Note: Estimated costs of repairs made to correct a MIL-KOEO, data link connector or communications failure cannot be applied toward the estimated expenditure for this waiver.

The estimate-based waiver is good only for the current registration period. The purpose of allowing a waiver based on an estimate is to permit you to acquire the repairs necessary to resolve the cause of the diagnostic trouble code reported by your vehicle between the current biennial inspection period and the next. No waiver of any type is available for the vehicle if the DTC the estimate-based waiver is given for now is still reported or if the monitor related to the DTC is 'Not Completed', on a future emissions inspection. The vehicle may not be sold without correcting the cause of the DTC the waiver may be given for. This should be documented on an emission inspection obtained immediately prior to the sale of the vehicle.

Cost-Based Waiver

A vehicle registered in the counties of Jefferson, St. Charles or St. Louis or the City of St. Louis, may have emission testing requirements waived for registration, if it qualifies for cost-based waiver. In order to qualify for a cost-based 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.**
- The motorist has spent more than \$450 on emissions-related repairs and labor after the initial test for an emissions related failure. Labor costs can only apply toward the waiver amount if a Missouri Recognized Repair facility performs the repairs.
- The motorist has spent more than \$450 on parts appropriate for the emissions-related failure after the initial test at a shop that is not a Missouri Recognized Repair facility.
- The motorist performs the repairs themselves after the initial test and spends at least \$400 in qualified emissions-control parts. Qualified emissions-control parts are listed on the waiver application form.

If a motorist is financially dependent solely on state and federal disability benefits or other public assistance programs, they may qualify for a cost-based financial waiver. The motorist must provide reasonable and reliable proof to the Department of their financial status and spend at least \$200 on emissions-related repairs and labor after the initial test to qualify.

The application for a cost-based waiver requires:

- An emission inspection prior to any repair being made that indicates:
 - a. 'Pass' for the MIL-KOEO, On-Board Diagnostics Communications and Readiness Result portions of the inspection
 - b. A Diagnostic Trouble Code (DTC) Result: Fail
- A qualifying repair performed by a Vehicle Repair Technician to repair causes of Diagnostic Trouble Code(s)
- Repair costs that meet the requirements of qualifying repair

- An emission re-inspection after repairs are completed
- Submittal of the completed application along with repair receipt/ invoice information

Should repairs, for registration renewal, totaling less than \$450 be made that correct all but one of the DTCs, and the repair for that single diagnostic trouble code is determined to be more than \$450, you may consider applying for an estimate-based waiver.

If you receive a cost-based waiver, you are encouraged to continue emissions repairs to correct the causes of the DTC(s) that prevented an “Emissions Inspection Result: Pass” during the inspection cycle, so that you may achieve a “Pass” during the next cycle. An estimate-based waiver is not available for the vehicle at the next emissions inspection cycle for any DTC reported on a VIR during the current inspection cycle.

If my vehicle fails the bulb check portion of the emissions test, will those repairs qualify towards a waiver?

No. Repairs to pass the bulb check portion of the OBD test do not count toward the waiver spending minimums. The orange dashboard warning bulb also known as the malfunction indicator lamp, or Check Engine/Service Engine Soon light, is the only visual indicator the vehicle’s OBD computer has determined something is wrong with a vehicle’s emissions-control system. The MIL alerts the driver so they may take the vehicle to a trained repair technician to diagnosis and repair the vehicle. The functionality of the MIL is essential to maintaining the effectiveness of the OBD system.

If my vehicle fails to communicate with the OBD test equipment, will those repairs qualify towards a waiver?

No. Repairs made so the vehicle properly communicates with the test equipment do not count toward the waiver spending minimums. A valid vehicle emissions test requires the test equipment to be connected to the vehicle and for the vehicle’s OBD computer to be capable of downloading its emissions status. If the diagnostic link connector is damaged, tampered, or blocked, or if the vehicle cannot communicate with the test equipment, then the vehicle must be repaired so an emissions test can be completed.

How do I request a waiver?

Waiver applications are available on the [Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program’s website](#). After you or your repair technician complete the waiver application, you will need to email, fax, or mail the application, along with your repair receipts to:

- Email to: imunit@dnr.mo.gov
 Include Name, VIN, waiver/exemption type
 Your Phone number
- Fax to: Missouri Department of Natural Resources
 Inspection Maintenance Section
[314-416-2971](tel:314-416-2971)
- Mail to: Missouri Department of Natural Resources
 Inspection Maintenance Section
 7545 Lindbergh Blvd., Suite 210
 St. Louis, MO 63125

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources will process each request upon receipt. Applicants will be contacted within five business days of receipt of the request. The Department is not responsible for any penalties associated with late registration due to

failure to submit a waiver or exemption request in a timely manner. The Department reserves the right to investigate all waiver and exemption requests. Fraudulent requests will not be approved.

Motorists will be notified of the approval or denial of their request. If the request is approved, the Department of Natural Resources will notify the Department of Revenue electronically of the approval and send the motorist a letter with the waiver approval. Motorists can then register the vehicle. If the request is denied, the Department of Natural Resources will contact the motorist to let them know why the waiver request was denied.

Who do I contact to discuss my vehicle repair and/or waiver/exemption questions?

You may contact the Department of Natural Resources' Air Pollution Control Program's Inspection/Maintenance Team by phone at [314-416-2115](tel:314-416-2115) or by e-mail at imunit@dnr.mo.gov.

For more information call or write:
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program
St. Louis Regional Office
7545 S. Lindbergh, Suite 210
St. Louis, MO 63125
[314-416-2115](tel:314-416-2115) office
[314-416-2970](tel:314-416-2970) fax
imunit@dnr.mo.gov email