

Why vehicle emission testing?

The federal Clean Air Act spells out air quality standards that all areas of the United States must meet. Motor vehicles are one of the major sources of air pollutants in metropolitan areas. Vehicle exhaust emissions include nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. Vehicle testing assures that in-use vehicle emissions are within specified standards.

Why is emission testing required in southeastern Wisconsin?

Southeastern Wisconsin is one of over 90 metropolitan areas in 35 states with air pollution levels higher than federal health standards. Approximately one-third of the volatile organic compounds (mostly hydrocarbons) and 60% of carbon monoxide present in this area are created by motor vehicles.

The purpose of the Wisconsin Vehicle Inspection Program (VIP) is to:

- identify vehicles that exceed exhaust and evaporative emissions
- prevent registration until vehicles meet emission standards

Who sets emission standards?

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sets the emission standards for vehicles. DMV administers the Vehicle Inspection Program.

What vehicles require testing?

Emission tests are required on OBDII-compliant automobiles and trucks with a manufactured gross vehicle weight rating of 8,500 pounds or less which are customarily kept in the southeastern Wisconsin counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Racine, Washington and Waukesha. Exceptions are vehicles manufactured before 1996, diesel-powered vehicles, and motorcycles. Approximately 600,000 tests are performed each year.

Effective January 1, 2010, model year 2007 and later gasoline-, alternative fuel- and diesel fuel-powered vehicles up to 14,000 lbs. GVWR also will be subject to testing.

Who does the testing and what does it cost?

The DMV contracts with Envirotest Systems Corporation to conduct testing. The DMV audits test equipment at each station weekly to assure accurate testing. The required test is without direct charge to the motorist.

When are vehicles tested?

Vehicles are tested biennially based upon vehicle model year. The testing is required at the time of vehicle registration renewal. Renewal notices indicate if testing is required.

Additionally, vehicles more than 5 model years old are required to be tested at the time of change of ownership. DMV mails a letter outlining the testing requirements to the new owner.

Where are vehicles tested?

There are 9 vehicle inspection test facilities located throughout southeastern Wisconsin with 22 test lanes.

How is the test performed?

When motorists enter the test facility, the lane inspector asks for the registration renewal notice and enters essential information into a computer.

Vehicles then receive an on-board diagnostic (OBDII) test, which checks the vehicle's on board diagnostic system rather than measuring tailpipe emissions.

After the emission inspection, motorists receive results on a computer-generated report form. This report contains the results of the emissions test.

When vehicles pass the vehicle inspection, the owner may complete the registration by mail, at the emission test facility, with a Third Party Agent authorized by the Department or in person at a DMV Service Center. The computer automatically matches test records from the inspection stations with the DMV's registration records to verify inspection compliance.

If a vehicle fails the test, the owner must have emission-related repairs performed prior to being retested. Satisfactory completion of the test requirements is necessary before vehicle registration renewal. The inspector provides all motorists with an informational brochure at the initial failed test to explain the repair and retest process.

What happens to vehicles which fail?

For more information contact:

Bureau of Vehicle Services
Dealer and Agent Section
I/M Customer Service Representatives at
(414) 266-1080
or
(800) 242-7510
or
www.wivip.com