

## **New ways to improve air quality all across Texas.**

Residents of Central Texas are probably well aware of the increase in traffic and the resulting air pollution problems. In fact, in Travis and Williamson counties over 60 percent of lung damaging ozone pollution comes from automobile exhaust.

Recognizing the trouble ahead, local steps must be taken to reduce pollution and avoid being designated as “non-attainment” for the Environmental Protection Agency’s air-quality standards. Like Texans always do, we’re rising to the challenge.

## **Texans working together for better air quality.**

In 1990, the state of Texas began testing vehicles in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for hydrocarbon and carbon monoxide emissions. In 1996, the pilot program was upgraded to include testing for carbon dioxide emission, and expanded to Houston and El Paso. The program was again enhanced in 2002 to utilize a vehicle’s own computer system with the addition of On-Board Diagnostics testing.

Today, the inspection and maintenance program is a key part of the annual safety inspection for gasoline-powered vehicles from two through twenty-four (2-24) years old (except motorcycles) in seventeen Texas counties. It is a crucial and effective way to reduce ozone pollution and air toxins.

Thank you for doing your share for cleaner air.



**All about  
the new  
high-tech  
emissions  
testing  
program.**

### What does this mean to you?

If your vehicle is registered in Travis or Williamson counties, it must pass a new emissions test in conjunction with your annual vehicle safety inspection. Depending on the model year of your vehicle, it will receive one of two new tests:

#### *The Two Speed Idle (TSI) test for model years 1995 or older*

This test uses a gas analyzer, which measures emissions directly from your vehicle's tailpipe with the engine idling at two different speeds. It's a cost-effective way to get accurate and realistic results.



TSI measures all of the common factors in ground-level ozone formation, including hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. A vehicle will fail the test if there is an excessive amount of hydrocarbons or carbon monoxide.

#### *The On-Board Diagnostic II (OBDII) test— for model years 1996 or newer*

All newer vehicles feature a built-in computer that monitors the fuel, ignition and emission system components while adjusting and recording system operations. The OBDII test uses this computer to quickly and accurately check all the emissions-related parts of the vehicle.



The OBDII system can detect malfunctioning components and systems before serious failures

occur—even before the driver knows there is a problem. When there is an emissions-control malfunction, the "Check Engine," "Service Engine Soon," or engine symbol light will illuminate on your dashboard. A diagnostic trouble code is also stored in the computer's memory. A repair technician can easily retrieve this code and make the necessary repairs before a more serious (and more expensive) problem develops.

### Where do I get my vehicle tested?

All public inspection stations are offering both of the new emissions tests. Look for a yellow checkmark on the Official Vehicle Inspection Station sign at your local service center. For a list of the testing facilities nearest your ZIP Code, please **visit [www.airchecktexas.com](http://www.airchecktexas.com)** or call 1-800-493-5486.



### How much will the new tests cost?

The combined safety and emissions test (TSI or OBDII) may cost a maximum of \$28.50, but inspection stations may offer a discount on the emissions testing portion of the fee. If your vehicle fails the test, repair costs will vary depending on the problem.

### What causes smog and ozone pollution?

When fuel in the engine doesn't burn completely, hydrocarbons (unburned fuel) are emitted into the atmosphere. Ground-level ozone pollution—a major component of smog—is formed when hydrocarbon emissions interact with sunlight and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). NOx can form when nitrogen and oxygen atoms in the air react to the high pressure and temperature in an engine. (Catalytic converters are used to reduce NOx in the exhaust.)

### What can I do to drive clean across Texas?

- Use the proper type of oil and gasoline for your vehicle, and change oil regularly.
- Get a complete car tune-up as recommended by your auto maker.
- Replace or clean your air filter and spark plugs, following manufacturer's recommendations.
- When a dashboard light reads "Service Engine Soon," "Check Engine," or indicates a need for service, have your vehicle checked. By investigating a potential problem early, you could avoid a major repair bill.
- Look for vacuum lines or electrical connections that are loose or cracked. Also check for corroded air intake and exhaust pipes.
- Avoid idling your vehicle for long periods of time. To warm up your vehicle, drive it. Excessive idling causes spark plug fouling, which can decrease your fuel efficiency.
- Avoid quick stops and rapid acceleration.
- Maintain your tire air pressure and braking system and keep your wheels properly aligned. Under-inflated tires, dragging brakes and unbalanced wheels can decrease fuel efficiency and increase harmful emissions.
- Make sure you have a gas cap that is the correct type for your vehicle and seals tightly. A faulty (or missing) gas cap allows harmful emissions into the atmosphere.