



FACT SHEET

The New Massachusetts Vehicle Inspection Program

- **New Name & Slogan.** Massachusetts Vehicle Check - “Cleaner Air. Safer Roads.”
- **New Contractor.** Parsons Commercial Technology Group Inc., a unit of Parsons Corp., takes over operation of the state’s vehicle emissions testing and safety inspection program on Wednesday, October 1, 2008.
- **Business as Usual for Most Motorists.** About 1,400 local stations across the state will continue to perform inspections for their customers and the inspection fee will remain at \$29. The cost of an inspection has not gone up since 1999.
- **Emissions Test.** Most vehicles will be tested annually instead of every other year, to more quickly identify those that have emissions control problems and need to be repaired.
 - Model year 1996 and newer cars, trucks and SUVs will receive annual on-board diagnostic (OBD) emissions tests, as will model year 1997 and newer light-duty diesel vehicles (weighing 8,500 pounds or less), model year 2007 and newer medium-duty diesel vehicles (weighing 8,501 to 14,000 pounds), and model 2008 and newer medium-duty vehicles (weighing 8,500 pounds or less).
 - Model year 1995 and older cars, trucks and SUVs will no longer receive tailpipe emissions tests, but will continue to be checked for visible smoke.
 - Heavy-duty diesel vehicles (weighing more than 10,000 pounds) will receive opacity tests for visible smoke beginning in April 2009.
- **Economic Hardship Repair Extension.** A private passenger vehicle can fail its emissions test but remain on the road if it needs a major and expensive repair, such as a transmission replacement or engine overhaul. In this situation, the motorist may apply for an extension of the deadline for the vehicle to pass its re-test due to economic hardship. This gives the motorist a one-time, one-year sticker to continue operating the car, truck or SUV while budgeting for repairs or a replacement.
- **Waiver Thresholds.** An emissions waiver is available to a motorist whose private passenger vehicle fails both its initial emissions test and the re-test, even after repairs by a state-registered emissions repair technician that exceed a specific cost threshold depending on model year and adjusted annually based on changes in the Consumer Price Index.

- **Safety Inspection.** All vehicles will continue to receive annual safety inspections, with some new features.
 - Aftermarket lights will be rejected if they do not meet U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) or Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) standards.
 - Air bags will be checked. If they are missing, have been deployed, or the air bag malfunction indicator light is illuminated, the vehicle will not pass its safety inspection.
 - Rear view mirrors originally equipped on the vehicle must be in good working order. For example, a vehicle manufactured with mirrors on both sides will not pass its safety inspection if one of those mirrors is damaged or missing.
 - All windows and glass originally equipped on the vehicle must be in place. Repairs using plastic sheeting will no longer be acceptable.
 - License plates must be readable from 60 feet away. If they are damaged, worn or faded, the vehicle will fail inspection.

- **One-Stop Shopping for Commercial Vehicles.** The annual state safety inspection for commercial vehicles will now meet Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements. In the past, commercial vehicles had to be inspected twice annually to ensure they met both federal and state safety standards. The new one-stop safety inspection will be more convenient and a time saver for commercial vehicle owners.

- **Enforcement.** A motorist whose vehicle fails its safety inspection and does not have defects repaired immediately could be cited by police and may be subject to penalties and insurance surcharges. The Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) may suspend the registration of any motorist whose vehicle does not pass its emissions and/or safety re-test within 60 days of initial inspection.

- **New Motorist Assistance Centers (MACs).** Conveniently located across the state, from the Berkshires to Cape Cod, the MACs will provide advice and technical assistance to repair technicians as well as motorists who are referred to them, including problem vehicle diagnosis and evaluation of applications for emissions waivers and economic hardship extensions.

- **New Toll-Free Motorist Hotline Number.** Motorists can call 866-941-6277 for general program information, inspection station and registered emissions repair shop locations, advice and referrals when vehicles fail their inspections, application procedures for emissions waivers and economic hardship failure extensions, and other inspection-related information. Hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with extended hours (until 8:00 p.m.) on Tuesday and Thursday.

- **New Website.** To be launched on October 1, the Massachusetts Vehicle Check website (<http://www.mass.gov/vehiclecheck>) will include inspection station and registered emissions repair shop lookups and other helpful information for motorists and automotive service professionals.