



NEWS RELEASE

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CHULA VISTA SMOG CHECK STATION'S LICENSES SUSPENDED

State Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges "clean plugging" by Martinez Smog Check

CHULA VISTA – The California Department of Consumer Affairs Bureau of Automotive Repair suspended the license of Chula Vista Smog Check station Martinez Smog Check and its owner, Alfredo Martinez, after Bureau investigators found multiple instances of "clean plugging," an illegal practice used to get around the state's Smog Check test.

"Clean plugging' is a serious problem that undermines the integrity of the Smog Check program and adversely impacts the air we breathe," said Bureau Chief Sherry Mehl. "The Bureau is committed to taking swift action against Smog Check station owners and technicians who engage in this practice."

"Clean plugging" consists of using another vehicle's properly functioning On Board Diagnostic (OBD II) system to generate passing test results in order to illegally issue a Smog Certificate to a vehicle that doesn't pass a Smog Check on its own.

"Auto pollution is a threat to public health," said Department of Consumer Affairs Acting Director Brian Stiger. "The Bureau will continue to prosecute smog check station operators and technicians who defraud and endanger the public by keeping polluting cars on the road."

An administrative Law Judge granted the Bureau's request for Interim Suspension Orders to immediately suspend the Automotive Repair Dealer registration and the Smog Check Test-Only station license of Martinez Smog Check, and licenses of owner Alfredo Martinez and employee Richard Ochoa Valenzuela.

An administrative hearing will be held at a later date to address the violations found during the investigation. The case has also been submitted to the San Diego County District Attorney for criminal prosecution.

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The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers who wish to file a complaint against an auto repair facility can contact the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.autorepair.ca.gov.