



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1625 North Market Boulevard, Suite N-323, Sacramento, CA 95834

P (916) 574-8170 F (916) 574-8612 | www.dca.ca.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Glenn Mason

(916) 574-8168

RIVERSIDE COUNTY SMOG CHECK STATION'S LICENSE SUSPENDED

*Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges "clean piping" and "clean plugging" by
Primo's Smog Check Only*

RIVERSIDE – The California Department of Consumer Affairs Bureau of Automotive Repair (Bureau) has shut down Primo's Smog Check Only and suspended the licenses of the station owner and a technician. The action on the Riverside station happened after state investigators discovered multiple instances of "clean piping" and "clean plugging," the illegal practice of sneaking cars past the mandatory state smog check.

"Clean piping and clean plugging are serious problems that undermine 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 these practices."

An Administrative Law Judge granted the Bureau's request for Interim Suspension Orders (ISO) to immediately suspend the Automotive Repair Dealer registration, Smog Check Test Only Station license, and Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license for owner Eric Lariz. The judge also suspended the Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license of Miguel Angel Herrera at the same location.

"Clean piping" is when a vehicle that would not pass a Smog Check inspection on its own or is not present for testing is fraudulently certified as passing. To accomplish this, a technician or other individual uses a clean exhaust sample from another vehicle that will pass a Smog Check while entering data for the vehicle for which the Smog Certificate is required.

“Clean plugging” consists of using another vehicle’s properly functioning On Board Diagnostic (OBD II) system to generate passing diagnostic readings to illegally issue smog certificates to vehicles that are not in smog compliance and/or not present for testing.

The Bureau is seeking to permanently revoke all suspended licenses. An administrative hearing will be held to address the violations found during the investigation. The case has also been submitted to the Riverside 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.