



# SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair JUNE/JULY 2000

## EXPANSION OF REPAIR ASSISTANCE STATIONS TO BEGIN JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>

Beginning July 1, 2000, the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) intends to expand the number of stations participating in the repair assistance portion of the BAR's Consumer Assistance Program (CAP).

Repair assistance stations partner with the BAR to provide emissions services to eligible consumers. After being qualified by the state, consumers are directed to these stations for the necessary repairs. After the consumer pays a specified deductible, the BAR pays the station directly for the balance of the repairs. Increased consumer participation is expected in this program due to recent regulations that qualify Test-Only directed vehicles for repair assistance.

Stations will be initially selected to participate using First Quarter (January 1-March 31) test and repair data from this year. To become a repair assistance station, a licensed Smog Check test-and-repair station must meet the following criteria:

1. The station must possess and maintain a valid Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) certification.
2. The station's failure rate for initial tests on pre-1990, non-directed vehicles must be at least 75% of the Test-Only station failure rate for the same group of vehicles in the same geographic area.
3. The station must conduct one (1) repair for every four (4) initial test failures and never have less than eight (8) repairs per quarter.
4. The station cannot have received any citations over the previous one (1) year period.
5. The station must not have any other more formal disciplinary actions (Administrative, Criminal, or Civil) filed against them within the previous five (5) year period, nor can they be serving a probationary period as a result of any of these actions.
6. The station cannot have engaged in any conduct which would be cause for discipline of the station's Automotive Repair Dealer (ARD) registration or Smog Check station license.
7. The station must pass a BAR-administered Quality Assurance (QA) inspection.

**Expansion** (continued page 3)



## Draft Report Evaluating Smog Check Program Effectiveness Released

A draft report from the Air Resources Board (ARB), which will ultimately be presented to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), was released on April 27 for public comment. The report is available at [www.arb.ca.gov](http://www.arb.ca.gov).

The ARB report is based on data collected during the summer of 1999 and on changes to the Smog Check Program made after the 1999 data were collected. Today's program, with nitrogen oxides (NOx) inspection standards more rigorous than those used while data were being collected in 1999, reduces total emissions by an estimated 67 tons-per-day (TPD). This is 60 percent of the 112 TPD reductions anticipated for the program in the 1994

**Draft Reports** (continued page 3)

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Below are the Smog Check testing and repair statistics for the months of March 2000 and April 2000. As always, the "Tests Conducted" data represents **all** Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) and Two-Speed Idle (TSI) tests performed on vehicles by Smog Check stations statewide, with the number of certificates that resulted from these tests shown under "Certificates Issued." The remaining data represent only ASM and TSI **first** (initial) tests performed on vehicles. The differences between Enhanced and Basic/Change of Ownership (COO) Areas of the state are also shown.

	MARCH	APRIL		MARCH	APRIL
<b>PROGRAM VOLUME</b>			<b>FAILURE BY STATION TYPE</b>		
Tests Conducted*	1,108,721	972,164	Test & Repair		
Vehicles Tested	919,033	829,696	- Enhanced	32,711 (10.4%)	31,932 (10.7%)
- Enhanced	593,627	537,325	- Basic/COO	14,478 ( 6.9%)	13,065 ( 6.8%)
- Basic/COO	325,250	292,189	GSGR		
Vehicles Failed	105,113 (11.4%)	94,804 (11.4%)	- Enhanced	14,847 (11.2%)	13,477 (10.9%)
- Enhanced	80,915 (13.6%)	73,098 (13.6%)	- Basic/COO	5,475 ( 9.0%)	5,044 ( 9.0%)
- Basic/COO	24,175 ( 7.4%)	21,668 ( 7.4%)	GPC		
Vehicles Repaired			- Enhanced	2,615 (13.7%)	2,327 (13.1%)
- Enhanced	49,466	43,672	- Basic/COO	3,594 ( 7.2%)	3,175 ( 7.0%)
- Basic/COO	19,212	16,407	Test-Only		
Certificates Issued	934,771	818,083	- Enhanced	30,229 (24.3%)	25,478 (24.1%)
			- Basic/COO	417 (18.9%)	396 (18.7%)
<b>TYPE OF FAILURE</b>			<i>By Vehicle Type</i>		
Tail pipe	75,262 ( 8.2%)	68,627 ( 8.2%)	High Emitter Profile (HEP)	19,062 (31.1%)	15,103 (35.5%)
- Enhanced	59,658 (10.1%)	55,056 (10.1%)	Random 2%	1,934 (24.9%)	1,503 (32.5%)
- Basic/COO	15,049 ( 4.6%)	13,571 ( 4.6%)	Volunteers	9,650 (16.8%)	9,240 (16.7%)
Gross Polluters**	34,018 ( 3.7%)	30,838 ( 3.7%)			
- Enhanced	26,934 ( 4.5%)	24,746 ( 4.5%)	<b>AVERAGE REPORTED REPAIR COSTS</b>		
- Basic/COO	6,853 ( 2.1%)	6,092 ( 2.1%)	Average Cost (statewide)	\$124	\$120
Visual	22,722 ( 2.5%)	19,949 ( 2.3%)	Test & Repair Stations	\$102	\$100
- Enhanced	16,858 ( 3.4%)	16,569 ( 3.1%)	GSGR Stations	\$112	\$112
- Basic/COO	4,099 ( 1.3%)	3,380 ( 1.2%)	GPC Stations	\$193	\$183
Functional	54,966 ( 6.0%)	49,180 ( 5.9%)	Repair Assisted Vehicles***	\$410	\$424
- Enhanced	37,515 ( 7.5%)	37,910 ( 7.1%)	Enhanced Areas	\$127	\$122
- Basic/COO	13,599 ( 4.9%)	11,593 ( 4.0%)	Basic/COO Areas	\$120	\$120
			<b>CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b>		
			Vehicles with Repair Assistance	787	342
			Vehicles Retired	333	155
			Repair Cost Waivers Issued	125	84
			Economic Hardship Extensions Issued	138	85

\* Includes multiple tests on same vehicle

\*\* Subset of tailpipe failures

\*\*\* Includes consumer co-pay

## Expansion (continued from page 1)

The BAR intends to temporarily “grandfather” all existing repair assistance stations. These stations will remain in CAP for an additional 90 days (one calendar quarter), allowing them time to measure their performance under the new criteria.

Participating stations will be required to attach a new, small sign to their GSGR sign that reads: “**Repair Assistance Station**” (see illustration on page 1). This additional sign will hang on the bottom of the GSGR sign with “S” type hooks.

Repair assistance stations will be chosen from existing GSGR stations. The BAR will directly notify GSGR stations that qualify.

Licensed Smog Check test-and-repair stations can become a GSGR station by filing an application that can be obtained at any BAR Field Office or off our website at

[www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov). Once certified, a GSGR station may write BAR at the following address to request participation as a repair assistance station:

**Bureau of Automotive Repair  
GSGR Program  
10240 Systems Parkway  
Sacramento, CA 95827**

The BAR will analyze the performance of a GSGR station using the above criteria for the most recent and complete calendar quarter that preceded their request. Those that qualify will be provided with an opportunity to participate as a repair assistance station at the beginning of the **next** calendar quarter.

**NOTE: Issues involving individual station performance data will not be discussed over the phone. These questions should be submitted in writing to the above noted address.**

*You can move them around, but you can't hide them...*

## Los Angeles Clean Piping Operation Busted

The largest Bureau of Automotive Repair Smog Check investigation in the Los Angeles area in the past five years has shut down the largest known cartel involved in selling illegal smog certificates.

“Californians are serious about clearing the air, and BAR is serious about clearing the industry of unscrupulous Smog Check activities,” says BAR Chief Doug Laue. “Most Smog Check inspections are conducted by honest, hard-working technicians. Our goal is to continue to protect California consumers and clean our air by stopping illegal certifications.”

Five people have been convicted and a warrant is still outstanding for one other

person as a result of the year-long investigation completed by the BAR Culver City Field Office in 1998. The sophisticated “clean piping” conspiracy involved three shops working together. Specialist Auto Repair and Ron’s Smog Pro Auto Care were shut down. The owners face 60-90 days in the county jail, as well as assorted penalties and fines. Lea Auto Repair faces similar action. “This is the largest known cartel that we’ve broken up, in terms of the number of stations involved,” according to Culver City Field Office Supervisor Greg Allen. The BAR’s Luis Marin, who took part in the investigation, says the BAR’s work was made harder

**Los Angeles (continued page 5)**

## Draft Report (continued from page 1)

State Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP is the state’s “road map” for reducing ozone pollution as required by the 1990 Clean Air Act.

The report also shows that the Smog Check Program achieved significant emissions reductions in 1999. In the summer of that year, using roadside test data from more than 9,000 randomly inspected vehicles, ARB estimated that the program cut 45 TPD of smog-forming hydrocarbon (HC) and NOx emissions from the state’s smoggiest areas.

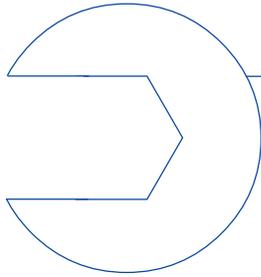
When the USEPA approved the SIP in 1997, the emission-reduction strategies in the plan became federally enforceable. ARB stated that the shortfall in emissions reductions can be made up by improving the program’s efficiency and getting increased ozone reduction from other sources.

“We’re pleased that ARB’s scientific review and analysis shows that Smog Check is working to clear California’s

air,” said BAR Chief Doug Laue. “We look forward to working with all interested parties in finding the best ways to improve the Program, while keeping the inconvenience to California drivers to a minimum.”

A workshop was held in Sacramento on May 2 to receive public comment before finalizing the report. ARB accepted written comments through May 27. The final report should be issued in June and presented to the USEPA and the state’s Inspection and Maintenance Review Committee (IMRC), a legislatively created committee charged with analyzing the effectiveness of the Smog Check Program.

The IMRC is required by law to submit a smog check program evaluation report to the Governor and the Legislature on an annual basis. The IMRC is working to finalize its draft report, which is expected to be completed this summer. When completed the IMRC report may be obtained by calling (916) 322-8181.



## Technical Tip:

*This applies when marking Top Dead Center (TDC) on any piston-powered internal combustion engine. Here is a bulletproof method of making sure the engine is actually at true TDC.*

**STEP 1:** Most shops remove No. 1 cylinder spark plug or the plug from whichever the vehicle manufacturer uses for ignition timing. Rotate the engine in the same rotation as it runs until you are on the compression stroke and using a screwdriver or wood dowel or other object to determine when the piston stops moving upward to the top of the cylinder and mark it there. Guess what? It's probably not *true* TDC. You'll never know unless you try Step 2.

**STEP 2:** After you're sure the piston is at TDC, apply at least 90 to 125 pounds per square inch of air pressure to the cylinder you're checking. If it rolls over, you were not at TDC. If the piston does not move, you're right on! Mark it there.

Whether you know it or not, you probably already have the tools you need for Step 2 – your compression tester, with the right air hose adapter hooked up.

**CAUTION:** Be certain to remove any tools, fingers or other body parts from the crankshaft and any other moving parts before you perform Step 2. Also make sure the vehicle is in park or neutral!

The second step is necessary because the piston actually spends up to 10 – 20 degrees at TDC depending on crankshaft offset (stroke) or rod length. To my knowledge this is the only way to be sure your mark is accurate. (See Editor's note below).

Remember that timing is a critical item to many diagnostics complaints or smog failures. If this step is done properly, you will find that the ping-pong rate may drop and you may build consumer confidence and ultimately reduce customer complaints.

— *Michael Penner, Smog Masters # 3, Fresno, CA.*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** A piston stop inserted into a spark plug opening can be used, as well. Be sure to get one with instructions, if you don't understand this procedure. Piston stops are sold to assist in correct camshaft installation when the cylinder head is not removed to verify TDC.

### **The Smog Check Advisory Chat Page**

*is where you can ask tough questions, share technical tips, and reference handy information. Submit your questions or tips by mail, fax, or e-mail . . . and watch for them each month. Let's hear from you!*

#### **BY MAIL**

BAR Communications Team  
Smog Check Advisory Chat Page  
400 R Street, Suite 3060  
Sacramento, CA 95814

#### **BY FAX**

916-445-8796  
Attn.: Smog Check Advisory Chat Page

#### **BY E-MAIL**

scachatpage@dca.ca.gov

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**DISCLAIMER** — *The Bureau of Automotive Repair does not necessarily endorse or guarantee the technical tips shared by technicians on the Chat Page.*

## Los Angeles *(continued from page 3)*

“because they (the stations) kept moving the vehicles around.”

The stations used “runners” in the area of the Hope Street DMV office in Los Angeles to target drivers looking for illegal smog certificates. A motorist would be directed to one station that might issue an illegal certificate or it might refer the vehicle on to a second station. In some cases, that second station would refer the vehicle certification to a third station without the driver’s knowledge. The certifying station would then substitute the clean tailpipe emissions of a vehicle that could pass the smog test for those of the vehicle that might otherwise fail.

“The people involved in this cartel went to a lot of trouble to try to hide their illegal activities from BAR investigators,” Laue said. “Our job at BAR is to make sure the people of California are not deprived by these perpetrators, or any others, of the protection afforded by the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program. BAR investigators take that responsibility seriously.”



# Brake & Lamp Adjuster Exams to Resume in August

**B**AR has finished developing new licensing exams for Brake & Lamp Adjusters. Experior Assessments will begin administering the exams in August.

Initial license applicants who are waiting for an exam date will receive eligibility notification, a Candidate Handbook, and scheduling instructions during June.

Currently, BAR renews existing adjuster licenses based on previous exam performance. Effective August 1, applicants for adjuster license renewal will have to pass the applicable examination.

Adjuster license applications can be downloaded from the BAR Web site ([www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov)), can be picked up at any BAR field office, and are available from the Consumer Information Center by calling 800-952-5210.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

*As of May 1, 2000*

### TECHNICIAN DATA

- 117 Number of scored items on the smog exam.
- 83 Number of correct answers required to pass the smog exam.
- 8,255 Technicians that have completed the BAR-97 eight-hour Transition Training.
- 8,852 Advanced (EA) technicians licensed.
- 4,444 Basic (EB) technicians licensed.

### STATION DATA

- 4,845 Test & Repair stations statewide.
- 1,909 Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) stations statewide.
- 329 Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) stations statewide.
- 432 Test-Only stations statewide.
- 558 Test-Only lanes statewide.

### CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DATA

- 83 GPC stations providing repair assistance.
- 6,098 Vehicles repaired.
- 32 Dismantler sites for vehicle retirement.
- 2,051 Vehicles retired.

# DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS



## Northern California

### ALL PRO AUTOMOTIVE

—Riverbank

David W. Coonfield, Partner—Modesto  
Frances J. Coonfield, Partner  
Martin J. Cruz, Technician

*Order:* ARD registration permanently invalidated, Smog Check Station license, Official Brake Station license, Official Lamp Station license, Basic Area Technician license, Intern Technician license, and any other license issued in the name of David W. Coonfield, Frances J. Coonfield, and Martin J. Cruz are revoked. (04/11/00)

### HI TECH AUTOMOTIVE

—Madera

Inderjit Singh, Owner/Technician  
*Order:* Smog Check Station license and Basic Area Technician license revoked, stayed, placed on three years' probation, and suspended for ten days. Further ordered to report to BAR as directed, and reimburse BAR \$1,800 for costs of investigation. (04/11/00)

### PETE'S AUTO SERVICE

—Oakland

Peter J. Choi, Partner/Technician—San Leandro  
Dong W. Cho, Partner  
*Order:* ARD registration, Smog Check Station license, and Basic Area Technician license revoked. Reimburse BAR \$14,378.36 for costs of investigation and prosecution. (04/24/00)

### THE SMOG DOCTOR—Santa Rosa

Stephen Lowery Hensley, Owner/  
Technician

*Order:* ARD registration, Smog Check Station license, and Basic Area Technician license revoked. (04/05/00)

### SUPERIOR AUTOMOTIVE & SMOG CENTER—Rancho Cordova

Gideon Cody, President

Gideon Cody Incorporated

*Order:* ARD registration permanently invalidated, Smog Check Station license revoked. Reimburse BAR \$15,244.83. (04/06/00)

## Southern California

### ALL IN ONE AUTO CENTER

—Fontana

Carl Bradford, Partner  
Willie Webb, Partner  
Michael Frank Moran, Technician  
*Order:* ARD registration permanently invalidated. Smog Check Station license revoked. Reimburse BAR \$7,037.97 for costs of investigation and enforcement.  
Advanced Emission Specialist Smog Check Technician license revoked. Reimburse BAR \$1,135.50 for costs of investigation and enforcement. (04/05/00)

### DL SMOG CHECK & REPAIR

—Garden Grove

Jonathan Hoa Nguyen, Owner  
*Order:* Probation revoked. ARD registration permanently invalidated. Smog check Station License permanently revoked. (04/11/00)

### GURROLA'S SMOG CHECK

—Baldwin Park

Frank Gurrola Jr., AKA Francisco Gurrola, Jr., Owner  
Roberto M. Vazquez AKA Roberto Moreno, Technician  
*Order:* Automotive Repair Dealer Registration permanently invalidated. Smog Check license revoked. Advanced Emission Specialist Technician License issued to Roberto M. Vazquez AKA Roberto Moreno is revoked. Respondents ordered to reimburse BAR \$16,790.73 within 90 days for investigation and prosecution costs, unless BAR agrees in writing to payment by installment plan due to financial hardship. Liability for such costs shall be joint and several. (04/18/00)

### ANTHONY JOHN IVANKOVICH

—Freedom

*Order:* Basic Area Technician license revoked. (04/11/00)

### SMOG CO.—Riverside

Khalid Kamal Sayegh, Owner  
*Order:* ARD registration and Smog Check Station license revoked. Further ordered to pay \$2,353.58 to BAR for cost of investigating and enforcing the case. (04/18/00)

### THUNDERBIRD SMOG SHOP

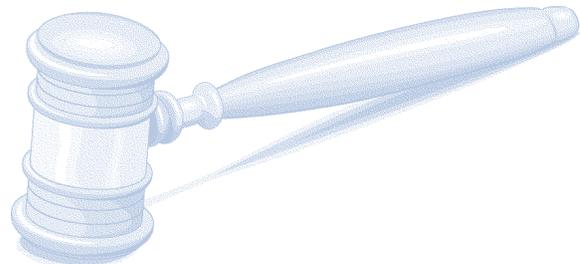
—National City

Elvira Villanueva, Owner  
*Order:* ARD registration and Smog Check Station license revoked. (04/11/00)

### UNION AUTO ELECTRIC

**SERVICE** —Los Angeles

Oladele O. Aina, Owner  
Ramiro G. Escalera/Technician—Wilmington  
*Order:* ARD registration and Smog Check Station license revoked. Advanced Emission Smog Check Technician License issued to Ramiro G. Escalera revoked. Respondents shall pay costs totaling \$2,145.88 to complainant. (04/18/00)



# SMOG CHECK STATION CITATIONS

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	LEVEL	ARD NUMBER	CITATION NUMBER	ASSESS AMOUNT	ASSESS DATE	DATE MAILED
San Clemente ARCO***	2749 N. El Camino Real	San Clemente	92672	1	AA 129960	C-99-509	\$250	04/20/00	06/02/99
Quick Check Smog Check	5436 W. Holt Blvd.	Montclair	91763	2	AC 198497	C-00-261	\$750	04/14/00	02/28/00
Western Auto Inspection C	3534 S. Western Ave.	Los Angeles	90018	2	AJ 142037	C-00-265	\$750	04/03/00	02/28/00
Smog Check 2000	2400 West Manchester	Inglewood	90304	1	AG 206010	C-00-274	\$250	04/11/00	03/15/00
Precision Tune Auto Care	435 East 3rd Ave.	San Mateo	94401	1	AC 182898	C-00-278	\$250	04/03/00	03/21/00
Quick Check Smog Check	621 W. Whittier Blvd.	La Habra	90631	2	AH 206826	C-00-282	\$750	04/21/00	03/29/00

\* Stations that have had their Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) certificates withdrawn (none reported).

\*\* Stations that have had their Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot authority withdrawn (none reported).

\*\*\* Stations that have had their GPC and Repair Assistance authority withdrawn.

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

### JUNE

**June 15, 2000** Consumer Assistance Program  
Informational Presentation  
7:00 PM–9:00 PM  
Agricultural Labor Relations  
711 North Court Street, Visalia

**June 21, 2000** Test-Only Informational Meeting in  
Merced  
6:30 PM–7:30 PM  
Jalapeno's Restaurant  
1500 West 13th Street, Merced

### JULY

**July 4, 2000** Independence Day (State Holiday);  
the BAR offices will be closed

## LITTLE SCOOPS

- ✓ **New smog technician exams** are expected to be implemented in late 2000. BAR is developing *separate* licensing exams for Advanced [EA] and Basic [EB] Smog Check Technicians. When that happens, technicians will no longer be able to upgrade from Basic Technician to Advanced Technician without meeting the additional prerequisites and passing the Advanced exam.
- ✓ **Cheating on exams** is against the law. The laws pertaining to exam cheating are printed on the Smog Check Technician License application form. They are also printed in the Candidate Handbook, along with further security requirements of Exporior Assessments. When a candidate is caught cheating, their license application is denied for a year. A candidate can appeal the denial. In such cases,

(Continued on page 8)



## SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

State of California  
Gray Davis, Governor

California Department  
of Consumer Affairs  
Kathleen Hamilton, Director

Bureau of Automotive Repair  
Douglas E. Laue, Chief  
10240 Systems Parkway  
Sacramento, CA 95827

### BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS

Bakersfield ..... (661) 833-6304  
Canoga Park..... (818) 596-4400  
Culver City ..... (310) 410-0024  
Fresno ..... (559) 445-5015  
Fullerton ..... (714) 680-7851  
Oceanside ..... (760) 439-0942  
Richmond ..... (510) 243-9410  
Riverside ..... (909) 782-4250  
Sacramento ..... (916) 255-4200  
San Jose ..... (408) 277-1860  
South El Monte... (626) 575-6934

DCA Cashiering (916) 322-7002  
BAR Licensing ... (916) 322-4000  
ET Help Desk..... (916) 255-4476  
MCI ..... (800) 731-SMOG  
*(Then press 5 for technical support)*

Consumer Assistance and  
Referee Center..... (800) 622-7733

**DCA HOTLINE: (800) 952-5210**

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Oakland, CA  
Permit No. 2101

## LITTLE SCOOPS

*(Continued from page 7)*

BAR is represented by the California Attorney General's Office.

Do not bring materials to assist you in passing the exam into the exam room. The computer system allows you to mark questions for review. Attempting to remove a list of your responses from the exam room is also illegal.

- ✓ **Updated training requirements**  
The BAR is training certified instructors for On-Board Diagnostics II (OBD II) courses. Completion of a certified OBD II course, or passage of a **one-time** challenge exam, will be required of **all Advanced [EA] and Basic [EB] Smog Check Technicians**, with licenses expiring after

January 31, 2001 or initial licensure applications postmarked after January 31, 2001. Some schools will begin providing the course as early as August 2000. **Be sure to plan ahead if you will need this course to renew your Advanced [EA] or Basic [EB] Smog Check Technician License.**

- ✓ **Under regulations** being proposed by BAR, L-1 Certification will be required for Basic [EB] Smog Check Technicians. The proposed regulations will require Basic [EB] Smog Check Technicians to have L-1 certification for renewal of licenses expiring after January 31, 2001. Automotive Service Excellence

[ASE] notified BAR that they will not conduct exams in August 2000. If your Basic (EB) Smog Check Technician license expires between February 1, 2001 and August 1, 2001, the November 2000 ASE exam will be the only chance you have to get L-1 certification from ASE to renew your license. Alternative courses from BAR-certified schools will be accepted and are readily available. **Be sure to plan ahead if you will need the ASE certification/alternate course to renew your Basic [EB] Smog Check Technician License.** Be advised that you must hold a valid ASE A-8 (Engine Performance) Certification to be eligible to take ASE's L-1 Exam.