NOx Testing Underway as of September 9

For many years the poor catalytic converter (CAT) has been the most unnecessarily replaced smog component in the attempt to get a customer’s vehicle to pass a Smog Check.

But in data collected in BAR’s pilot Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) study in El Monte in 1994, only 13 percent of the vehicles repaired under the ASM test strategy actually needed catalytic converters replaced.

It is a tempting “quick fix” because it does provide a short-term reduction in emissions. More often than not, however, it may also result in the loss of a long-term customer. The actual problem will destroy that shiny new CAT and the customer will have to pay for a second CAT, as well as make additional repairs to correct the original problem. At the very least, the result will be a loss of confidence in both the shop and the technician.

Information gathered from BAR’s Consumer Repair Education Workforce (CREW) interventions, documented undercover vehicle operations, and consumer complaints show that proper diagnosis too often is not being done under the hoods of vehicles at the engine.

The long-term benefits of making a proper diagnosis, followed by a complete and proper repair, are improved driveability, better fuel mileage, extended engine life, a Smog Check certificate, and a long-term customer.

Until recently, hydrocarbon (HC) and carbon monoxide (CO) failures were the major focus of the Smog Check program. Now, however, technicians are required to diagnose and repair vehicles that fail because of high levels of oxides of nitrogen (NOx).

To begin to conduct a proper diagnosis to determine if a CAT is defective, a technician must consider the requirements of the various CATs, which include the following:
- single bed, oxidation only CO, HC;
- dual bed, reduction and oxidation NOx, CO, HC; and
- monolith, reduction and oxidation NOx, CO, and HC.

The precious metals used in the manufacture of CATs—platinum, rhodium, and palladium—will clean themselves if the input gases are in the correct ratios.

That is why it is critical that a vehicle’s fuel management system and air injection system are operating properly, going from slightly rich to slightly lean, and injecting air at the right places at the right times.

Both the dual bed and the monolith types of CAT need differing oxygen levels to perform the exhaust gas conversions. The platinum or palladium metals require high levels of oxygen to convert CO and HC into water and carbon dioxide. The rhodium element, however, only operates well in the absence of oxygen to convert NOx into NO and O2. By comparison, the single bed CAT only works on the CO.

Taking into account the unique features and needs of each type of CAT is the first step in conducting a proper diagnosis to determine if the CAT is alive and well.

Pat Larson has been a BAR program representative since 1988. He is a member of BAR’s Program Representative Advisory Committee, which is dedicated to providing repair and program advice to BAR management executives and Smog Check technicians and station owners.

In next month’s issue: Second in a Series —“CAT DIAGNOSTIC METHODS”
Many Smog Check Stations Fail First Phase of Undercover Audits; 60 Others Win Praise

In the first phase of undercover audits conducted at Smog Check stations from January through April of 1998, 47 percent failed to perform a proper inspection, and almost half of those stations performed a “Manual Mode” test.

Unlike an “Official Inspection” or “Official Preinspection,” a Manual Mode test does not prompt the technician to perform the visual or functional portions of the inspection. As a result, technicians using the Manual Mode test overlooked the visual and/or functional inducements used in the audits.

The results of the first phase audits, which sampled Test-Only, Test and Repair, Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR), and Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) pilot stations statewide, were presented by BAR and industry leadership to 700 station owners and technicians at forums in northern and southern California.

“Everyone attending the forums was dismayed and disappointed at the findings of these audits,” said BAR’s Chief of Field Operations, Mike Vanderlaan, who conducted the audit program. “We all agreed that shops and technicians must take this program much more seriously if they plan to continue performing Smog Checks.”

Also as part of the forums, Certificates of Acknowledgment were presented to the following stations that performed the audit inspections properly:

- **ANAHEIM**
  - Ira Newman Automotive
- **APPLE VALLEY**
  - Big Apple Automotive
- **ARCADIA**
  - Roy Gasparini Union Service
- **BEVERLY HILLS**
  - Butler Automotive Co., Inc.
- **BISHOP**
  - DKR Automotive
- **BREA**
  - Econo Lube N Tune (privately owned)
- **Camarillo**
  - Barry’s Auto Service
- **CANYON COUNTRY**
  - Halsey’s Auto Service
- **CARMEL AVALON**
  - Carmichael Honda
- **CHATSWORTH**
  - McNally Chevron
- **CONCORD**
  - Clayton Treat Smog Pros
- **COVINA**
  - Covina Auto Service
- **CUPERTINO**
  - DeAnza Smog & Auto Repair
- **ELK GROVE**
  - Dennis Campbell’s Union 76
- **FREMONT**
  - Irvington Auto Service
- **FRESNO**
  - Lamona Service Center, Inc.
- **HAYWARD**
  - Ted’s Automotive Repair
- **LAHABRA**
  - Don Steves Chevrolet
- **LAGUANA HILLS**
  - Elyas Leisure World Mobil
- **LANCASTER**
  - Bob Howle Automotive
- **LIVERMORE**
  - Accurate Auto Care
- **LOMITA**
  - ARCO Smog Pros
- **LOS ANGELES**
  - Ken’s Union Oil Service
- **MISSION HILLS**
  - Chahayed Service, Inc.
- **MORGAN HILL**
  - Monterey Auto Service
- **MOUNTAIN VIEW**
  - Precision Tune Auto Care
- **NORCO**
  - Phillips Pontiac Mazda
- **NORTH HOLLYWOOD**
  - California Auto
- **OXNARD**
  - Sun Arco Smog Pros
- **PALM SPRINGS**
  - Kennard’s Automotive
- **RANCHO CUCAMONGA**
  - Haven’s Unocal 76 Tire & Service Center
- **RANCHO SANTA FE**
  - Rancho Santa Fe Mobil
- **RESEDA**
  - Reseda Auto Electric
- **ROLLING HILLS ESTATES**
  - Smog Pros: Silver Spur Service
- **SACRAMENTO**
  - Car Care Center
- **SAN BERNARDINO**
  - Rollings Chevron Auto Center
- **SAN DIEGO**
  - Rosecrans Unocal 76
- **SAN FRANCISCO**
  - Kashani Union
- **SAN JOSE**
  - Taylor Automotive Service
- **SANTEE**
  - D & R Automotive
- **STOCKTON**
  - Auto Tune & Brakes
- **THOUSAND PALMS**
  - Pete’s Automotive
- **TORRANCE**
  - George’s Automotive
- **UPLAND**
  - Wall’s Auto Service
- **WEST COVINA**
  - Smog Pros
- **YORBA LINDA**
  - Savi Tire & Auto Center
New Committee Establishing Award Criteria

BAR’s Program Representative Advisory Committee (PRAC) is currently developing criteria they will use to publicly honor technicians and stations that are “Clearing The Air” about the new Smog Check Program.

“This will be a communications award, not an award for technical achievement,” said BAR Field Representative Pat Larson, a spokesperson for the PRAC. “We’d like to reward those stations and individuals who are taking the time to ‘clear the air’ about this program.”

Larson said the PRAC expects to announce within the next several weeks, the criteria stations and individuals will be required to meet to receive the award.

“Those of us who are out there inspecting stations and assisting technicians are well aware that many people are making a real effort to communicate with their customers and help them understand,” Larson added.

Using Your New Digital Oscilloscope

Wayne Brumett of BAR’s Manuals and Publications Branch demonstrates the hand-held Digital Storage Oscilloscope (DSO), a tool that produces a live picture of electrical circuit activity. A graph of the electrical signal allows the technician to see exactly how the charge is moving through a circuit. Electrical signal voltage images over time can be used to determine voltage levels, and frequency and pulse width, to locate electronic glitches that create intermittent driveability problems, and to gauge the overall integrity of electrical circuits.

Name & Address Change Notification Required

Licensees who change their name and/or address are required to notify DCA BAR’s Licensing Division within 14 days. Here’s how to do it.

▲ Put the change in writing and forward it along with your original Automotive Repair Dealer business registration and all associated station licenses (a photocopy of the business license may be posted at the place of business until the new license arrives); or

▲ Contact DCA/BAR’s Licensing Division at (916) 322-4000 to request a change of name/address form. When you receive the form, complete and mail it, along with your original Auto Repair Dealer business registration and all associated station licenses (a photocopy of the business license may be posted at the place of business until the new license arrives) to:

Licensing Division
400 R Street, Suite 3080
Sacramento, CA 95814

If you’re a Smog Check technician at a testing site, ask the test proctor for a Change of Candidate Information form, fill it out and return it to the proctor.

Back Issues of Smog Check Advisory Soon on the Web

Most back issues of the Smog Check Advisory will soon be available on the World Wide Web. If you are a technician or shop owner new to the Smog Check program, or if you are missing an issue and would like a copy, check out the Smog Check website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov.
**SNAPSHOT**

Following are the Smog Check ASM Testing and Repair Cost Statistics collected since the program began on June 8.

### Program Volume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests Conducted</th>
<th>1,022,992 *</th>
<th>1,044,120 *</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles Tested</td>
<td>751,996</td>
<td>720,316</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicles Failed</td>
<td>66,638 (8.9%)</td>
<td>67,773 (9.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates Issued</td>
<td>672,556 (89.4%)</td>
<td>638,996 (88.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Type of Failure

- **Tailpipe:**
  - Gross Polluters: 51,049 (6.8%)
  - Visual: 18,239 (2.4%)**
  - Functional: 3,752 (.5%)
- **Failure by Station Type**
  - Test & Repair: 25,308 (3.4%)
  - GSGR: 19,444 (9.6%)
  - GPC: 1,794 (12.8%)
  - Test-Only: 9,559 (26.4%)
  - Other (fleets): 18 (4.3%)

### Failure by Station Type

- **Test & Repair:** 35,823 (7.2%)
- **GSGR:** 19,444 (9.6%)
- **GPC:** 1,794 (12.8%)
- **Test-Only:** 9,559 (26.4%)
- **Other (fleets):** 18 (4.3%)

### Consumer Assistance/Referee Centers

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<th>Tests</th>
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<th>2,006</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failures</td>
<td>1,188 (62.2%)</td>
<td>1,027 (51.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Polluter Tests</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross Polluter Failures</td>
<td>24 (32.4%)</td>
<td>20 (38.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificates Issued</td>
<td>1,276</td>
<td>1,255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost Waivers Issued</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardship Extensions Issued</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>133</td>
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### Average Repair Costs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vehicles Repaired</th>
<th>66,919</th>
<th>57,433</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Cost (statewide)</td>
<td>$ 93</td>
<td>$ 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test &amp; Repair Stations</td>
<td>$ 96</td>
<td>$ 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSGR Stations</td>
<td>$ 99</td>
<td>$ 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPC Stations</td>
<td>$ 167</td>
<td>$ 165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes multiple tests on same vehicle.
** Subset of tailpipe failures.
In another federal Clean Air Act case, Ford Motor Co. agreed to recall and reprogram 60,000 1997 (Federal) Econoline vans. It was accused of illegally setting emissions equipment to improve fuel economy and increasing NOx emissions at highway speeds on the vans.

Neither manufacturer admitted wrongdoing in the settlements.

- As we reported in the August edition of the Smog Check Advisory, because of temporary technical difficulties in issuing licenses and badges, Smog Check technicians who have passed the examination and received a letter from the DCA confirming their positive exam results may continue to perform inspections until the license and badge arrives by posting the “pass letter” and manually entering the new and/or renewed license number into the BAR-90 Test Analyzer System (TAS) or the BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS) machines.

- BAR-97 units manufactured by Worldwide Environmental have received provisional BAR certification, and stations may call their nearest BAR field office to have the equipment initialized.

- BAR staff participated in the first national conference on the future of the auto repair industry held September 2-4 in Anaheim. Issues covered at the conference, Automotive Repair Leadership 2000: Strategies for Success, included recruiting new talent, improving the industry’s professionalism and image, and improving education and training on a national level. More than 100 representatives from across the nation attended.

THE BOTTOM LINE

▲ 108 Cut score on the current smog exam.
▲ 81.8 Percent of technicians who passed EA Smog Check exam in July 1998.
▲ 6,960 Technicians completed the BAR-97 eight-hour Transition Training.
▲ 2,871 Technicians completed the 20-hour update course (as of July 1998).
▲ 2,214 Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair stations (as of July 31, 1998).
▲ 110 Test-Only stations with 182 lanes (as of July 1998).

STAY TUNED

For notification about possible changes to the Smog Check program as the result of new legislation currently pending action by Governor Wilson…
DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND CITATIONS

The following is a list of citations issued and disciplinary actions taken against Smog Check stations and technicians over the last several months.

Previously, this information has been published in the Repair Reporter, the Bureau of Automotive Repair’s sister publication for all automotive repair dealers. However, violations of the Smog Check program laws and regulations will now be published monthly in the Smog Check Advisory. Under Business and Professions Code Section 9882.4, the DCA/BAR is required to publish disciplinary actions taken against licensees and registrants. Since the Repair Reporter has traditionally been published only twice a year, a backlog of unpublished citations and disciplinary actions has occurred, resulting in the untimely release of information to the public and industry.

While the Smog Check Advisory will publish only violations of the laws and regulations by Smog Check stations and technicians, the Repair Reporter will continue to publish violations by other auto repair stations and technicians engaged in general auto repair work. In addition, plans are being made to publish the Repair Reporter quarter-ly (beginning in 1999) rather than semi-annually as a result of industry recommendations made at joint BAR/Industry workshops on automotive-related issues held statewide in March and April.

Disciplinary Actions

ECONO SMOG N TUNE — El Monte
ABBAS HASSAN MOUSSAOUI, Partner
HOSAIN KOBAAESSI, Partner
Order: ARD registration (AL 181277), Smog Check Station License (RL 181277), Smog Check Technician License (EU 043080), ARD registration (AM 192144), Smog Check Station License (RM 192144) are hereby revoked; Smog Check Station License (RM 192144) and ARD Registration (AM 192144) revocation stayed; 5 years’ probation on the following conditions: obey laws and regulations; report to BAR quarterly; report any financial interest in any auto repair facility; retain all parts replaced but not returned; submit any proposed advertising copy, whether revised or new, 30 days prior to its use; provide BAR unrestricted access to inspect all vehicles undergoing repairs or inspections. (04/17/98)

GOLDEN WRENCH AUTOMOTIVE — Lake Forest
REZA KUCHEKI, Partner
ALI MOHAMMAD MADANEN, Partner
Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked; Reza Ray Kuchecki — Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)

LE, HUNG T. — Escondido
Order: Application for licensure as an Advanced Emission Specialist is hereby denied. (05/15/98)

LONE TREE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE & REPAIR — Antioch
MICHELE D. CANNITO, Owner
FRED LOUIS BUCH, Employee
Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated; Smog Check Station License revoked; Buch — Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)

MODERN TECH ENGINEERING — Aliso Viejo
RAY R. KUCHEKI, a.k.a. REZA RAY KUCHEKI, Owner
Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked; Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)

PETE’S SMOG — Pacoima
PETER JAMES BARTOLOTTO, Owner
Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked. (05/12/98)

RICO’S AUTO SMOG & SERVICES — Los Angeles
BERTHA ALICIA RICO, Owner
Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated; Smog Check Station License revoked. (05/12/98)

SEVEN BROTHERS AUTO REPAIR — South Gate
Wilbur H. Hooker, Owner/Employee
Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked; ARD revocation stayed: 5 years probation on the following conditions: obey laws and regulations; report to BAR quarterly; report any financial interest in any auto repair facility; 30 day suspension; post a sign stating reasons for suspension; pay BAR $9,000; Smog Check Technician License revoked. (04/14/98)

SO, SIENGHAY — Stockton
Order: Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license application of respondent Sienghay So is denied. (02/03/98)

UNIVERSAL SMOG — Los Angeles
JUAN ARRIAGA, Owner
Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked. (05/12/98)

VERMONT GARAGE — Carson
HUGO ALBERTO VECCHI, Owner
Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated; Smog Check Station License revoked; any other license issued in the name of Hugo Albert Vecchi revoked. (05/12/98)

VILLA, ALBERT — Compton
Order: Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)
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<tr>
<th>FACILITY NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>ZIP</th>
<th>VLV</th>
<th>ARD NUMBER</th>
<th>CITATION NUMBER</th>
<th>ASSESS AMOUNT</th>
<th>ASSESS DATE</th>
<th>DATE MAILED</th>
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<td>Morro Bay Shell</td>
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<td>93442</td>
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<td>Foothill Texaco</td>
<td>3 Santa Rosa St.</td>
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<td>Bob Andrews Automotive</td>
<td>234 E Haley St.</td>
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<td>250</td>
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<td>Muñoz Union Service</td>
<td>1101 E Clark Ave.</td>
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<td>Tyerman's Automotive</td>
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<td>Smog Doctor</td>
<td>2270 Camden Ave.</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
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<td>Montgomery Ward &amp; Co. Inc.</td>
<td>1600 Saratoga Ave.</td>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>95129</td>
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<td>980154</td>
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<td>Greenslip Inc.</td>
<td>815 E El Camino Real</td>
<td>Sunnyvale</td>
<td>94087</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>AA192719</td>
<td>980055</td>
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<td>AA192719A</td>
<td>980227</td>
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<td>Freedom Tune-Up</td>
<td>1400 Freedom Blvd.</td>
<td>Watsonville</td>
<td>95076</td>
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<td>Preventive Maintenance Svc.</td>
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The Issues & Answers column is for readers to ask questions about topics that are of general interest to the auto repair industry and the Smog Check program. Answers to your questions will be researched and published here. You are encouraged to submit your questions to:

Smog Check Advisory
P.O. Box 188978
Sacramento, CA 95818

All questions must be accompanied by a name, address, and telephone number and will be verified before publication. Questions will be answered and published on a space-available basis. — The Editor

Q I don’t recall anything official coming down about a change in cost limits. The normal gossip, but I want to always wait till the directive is in my hand and my hands are empty. Recently a referee told a Gross Polluter—who spent his $450 to repair—that we charged him beyond what the state now requires. Since when? Phone calls to BAR locally and in Sacramento turned up even more conflicting information and left us scratching our heads with one very unhappy customer. How about using the TAS screen to confirm rapid changes in the law? Thomas Pribanic, San Rafael.

A In the Smog Check Advisory, we often have urged shops and technicians to check their test analyzer screens early and often for electronic transmission (ET) messages, especially when we expect a significant change in the program to take effect. In addition, all the current information can be found on BAR’s web site at <www.smogcheck.ca.gov> which is updated regularly. If you are not receiving your messages, please call your local field office.