Vehicle Retirement
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is Vehicle Retirement?

The Vehicle Retirement option is administered by the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) and is designed to help improve California’s air quality by reducing vehicle emissions. The Vehicle Retirement option offers incentives of $1,000 or $1,500 to consumers who meet eligibility requirements in exchange for voluntarily retiring their operational vehicle. Participation is available on a first-come, first-served basis each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) until funds are exhausted.

2. What are the requirements to retire my vehicle?

Eligibility requirements are available on BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov. Requirements must be met at the time the application is submitted.

3. I noticed there are two options. What are the differences?

For a chart comparing the two options, visit BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov.

4. Why do I have to pay for a Smog Check inspection on a vehicle I plan to retire?

The purpose of CAP is to improve California’s air quality by reducing vehicle emissions. The Smog Check requirement is a way of verifying that a participating vehicle is operational and capable of being driven, while measuring emissions reductions.

5. I noticed that under Option 2, I have to prove that my vehicle has been continually registered or driven in California for the previous two years?

The purpose of CAP is to improve California’s air quality by reducing vehicle emissions. This requirement is intended to verify that a participating vehicle has been polluting California for at least two years prior to applying, justifying financial incentive to take it off the road permanently.

6. How do I participate in Vehicle Retirement?

You must submit a completed application to CAP online or by mail. To apply online, visit BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov. To request an application be mailed to you, contact the Department of Consumer Affairs Consumer Information Center at (800) 952-5210. Note: Applying online may result in faster processing.
7. Are there documents I should submit with my application?

Consumers applying for the $1,500 incentive may be required to provide documentation verifying their income eligibility. To reduce processing time, you are encouraged to submit acceptable income documentation with your mailed application. When applying online, you are advised to mail income documentation with a copy of your confirmation notice. Visit BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov for income eligibility requirements and a list of acceptable income documents.

After your application is processed, you will be notified by mail if additional documents are required.

8. How long does it take to process my application?

Generally, completed applications for the Vehicle Retirement option are processed within four (4) to six (6) weeks. Until your application has been processed, CAP is unable to determine your eligibility.

9. How will I be notified of the status of my application?

After your application is initially reviewed, you will be mailed a letter. If you have your CAP ID number and vehicle license plate number, visit BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov to check the status of your application.

10. If approved, what can I expect?

If approved, you will be mailed a Letter of Eligibility which will provide specific instructions on how to retire your vehicle through CAP.

11. Where do I take my vehicle?

Enclosed with your Letter of Eligibility will be a list of BAR-contracted automotive dismantlers for your use. The list is also available at BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov or by calling the Department of Consumer Affairs, Consumer Information Center at (800) 952-5210. Note: Always contact the dismantler prior to arriving to ensure they are able to accept CAP vehicles. Some dismantlers require appointments and/or additional documents.

12. Is there a deadline to take my vehicle to the dismantler?

Yes. You must take your vehicle to a BAR-contracted dismantler prior to the expiration date indicated on your Letter of Eligibility. It is recommended you retire your vehicle as soon as possible. This will allow you time to address any issues that may arise that may prohibit you from driving the vehicle to a dismantler site. Also, funding is limited and participation is based on a first-come, first served basis each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

If you are unable to use the Letter of Eligibility by the expiration date, but are still interested in retiring your vehicle, you will need to re-apply and meet all eligibility requirements at that time.
13. What if I do not have the original California Certificate of Title to my vehicle, the title is issued by a state other than California, or the title to my vehicle is altered (e.g., crossed out information)?

Contact the automotive dismantler you plan to visit for further instructions.

14. Do all owners listed on the vehicle’s registration need to be present at the dismantler site to retire the vehicle?

No. If any of the registered owner(s) cannot be present, the registered owner(s) may designate someone else to retire their vehicle. The designee will be required to provide the dismantler with a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Power of Attorney form (REG 260 or REG 262) completed by the owner(s) AND a copy of the owner(s) driver license or other photo identification. The designee will also be required to present their driver license or photo identification.

15. Where can I get the DMV forms I need?

You can obtain DMV forms at www.dmv.ca.gov, at any DMV office, or by contacting DMV at (800) 777-0133.

16. Do I need to show the dismantler photo identification?

Yes. All registered owners and designees must present their driver license or other photo identification.

17. Does my vehicle have to be running?

Yes. There are equipment and operational requirements that must be met. This includes that the vehicle must be driven to the dismantler site under its own power. Visit BAR’s website at www.bar.ca.gov for a complete list of the Equipment and Operational Requirements.

18. When will I get paid for my vehicle?

At the time your vehicle passes the equipment and operational inspection, the dismantler will issue a check made out to the registered owner(s) indicated on the Letter of Eligibility.

19. Can the dismantler give me a ride home?

No. You are responsible for arranging your own transportation home.

20. Where can I get more information?

Contact CAP at (866) 272-9642. CAP agents are available to answer calls Monday through Friday from 8:10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the exception of state holidays.