



INSPECTION UPDATE

WINTER 2023
VOLUME #24, ISSUE 3

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PROGRAM CHANGES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024:

As a new year approaches, we want to remind you of the changes that will take effect on January 1, 2024, relative to the model years of vehicles subject to Massachusetts Vehicle Check emissions testing, repair waiver expenditure limits, and economic hardship repair extension criteria.

Vehicle Model Years Required to Receive an Emissions Test

Vehicle model years 2010 and newer will still be required to receive emissions tests, but 2009 and older model year vehicles will be exempt. Below is an applicable model year schedule for calendar year 2024.

2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Exempt
Five model years old or newer					Over five but not ten model years old					Over ten model years old				

New Repair Waiver Expenditure Limits

This new information is provided on the bottom of the second page of the VIR for vehicles that fail their emissions tests. Below are the calendar year 2024 Consumer Price Index (CPI)-adjusted waiver expenditure limits chart:

\$1,110	for vehicles five model years old or newer,
\$1,010	for vehicles over five but not exceeding 10 model years old, and,
\$910	for vehicles over 10 model years old.

Economic Hardship Failure Repair Extension Diagnostic Limits

This new information is provided on the Massachusetts Vehicle Check Program website for vehicles that fail their emissions tests. Below is the calendar year 2024 CPI-adjusted economic hardship failure repair extension diagnostic limits chart:

\$1,665	for vehicles five model years old or newer,
\$1,515	for vehicles over five but not exceeding 10 model years old, and
\$1,365	for vehicles over 10 model years old.

NEW YEAR / NEW STICKERS:

Delivery of stickers expiring in 2025 and associated supplies to inspection stations is underway. If you have not yet received your first quarter 2025 sticker supply, here is what you need to know:

- The color for these stickers is **YELLOW**.
- Stickers for any inspection stations located in Worcester or west of Worcester in MA, will be hand delivered beginning the week of November 27. The delivery person will bring the Q1 stickers along with the number of ribbons needed. The delivery person will assist a Station Inspector with scanning the sticker books into your workstation, then you can store them in a safe place until January 1, 2024.
- In the beginning of December, stickers for the 1st quarter of 2024 (2025 expiration stickers) will be shipped to all other stations in the network via UPS. The packages will have a colored label on the side that has **“INSPECTION MATERIALS OPEN IMMEDIATELY.”**
- Each package will contain sticker printer ribbons needed for Q1 as well as the stickers. When the UPS labels are created, an email will be sent to the email address on file from UPS, notifying you of the shipment.
- Stations should expect to receive the shipment within 1 - 5 business days from the date of the email. Once the shipment is delivered to your station, please receive the sticker books into your workstations as soon as possible, then, store them in a safe place following the standard procedures until needed.



At the beginning of the new year, place all unused 2024 (RED) stickers in a secure place for your RMV Field Representative to collect.

Please be sure to contact us if you have not received your 2024 inventory or should you have any questions about the inventory received 1-844-358-0135.

MOTORCYCLE STATION STICKERS

Motorcycle Inspection Station Transactions Available Using the Online eServices Portal

You can now purchase 2024 Motorcycle Certificates of Inspection and Request a Rebate or Credit of Unused 2023 Motorcycle Certificates of Inspection through the RMV's eServices Portal (if you do not have access to the eServices Portal please see below)

Ordering 2024 Motorcycle Certificates of Inspection

Once signed into the eServices Portal select the [Order Motorcycle Inspection Stickers hyperlink](#).

- Review transaction information page. To begin the transaction, select NEXT.
 - Enter the number of sticker packages requested (100 stickers per pack)
 - Enter your email address and confirm the address, select NEXT
- Verify fees due (Sticker fee per package \$250.00 / UPS shipping fee \$8.50), select NEXT
- Select Payment method (Checking Account / Credit/Debit Card), select Next
- Enter banking or credit card information, select NEXT
- Review transaction and accept terms to continue, select SUBMIT

Once your transaction has been submitted you will receive a confirmation email, certificates will be mailed to the address provided to the RMV via UPS next-day delivery.

When you receive your 2024 stickers, you may start issuing them on January 1, 2024, the stickers will already be loaded into your station inventory.

Request Rebate of Unused 2023 Motorcycle Certificates of Inspection

Once signed into the eServices Portal select the Motorcycle Inspection Sticker Rebate hyperlink.

Review transaction information page. To begin the transaction, select NEXT.

- Enter the appropriate Rebate request information:
 - Enter the year of the inspection stickers for which you are requesting a rebate.

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- Enter your email address and confirm the address.
- Select the REBATE toggle button.
- Select NEXT.
- Review transaction (# of stickers returned, rebate amount (\$2.50 per sticker), rebate type (Rebate), and accept terms to continue. Select SUBMIT.

Once your transaction has been submitted you will receive a confirmation email.

Do not destroy or dispose of your inventory of 2023 certificates of inspection; once your transaction has been submitted your RMV field investigator will be notified. To complete the rebate request you must hold all unused certificates for the RMV field investigator to pick up and reconcile before your rebate or credit can be approved and finalized.

eServices Portal

The portal is easy to use, convenient, and free for inspection stations and enables stations to:

- View current inspection station license details.
- Renew inspection station licenses.
- Replace inspection station licenses (if lost or damaged).
- Order motorcycle inspection stickers.
- Request rebate or credit of unused motorcycle inspection certificates.

If you do not currently have access to the portal, go to: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/renew-your-vehicle-inspection-station-license> and click on How to Obtain Access to Inspection Station eServices Portal. Click on How to request and the plus sign next to Online. You must complete both the RMV Business Partner Contact Form and the eServices Administrator Access Form.

Questions?

Send an email to the Vehicle Safety & Compliance Services team at RMVinspection@dot.state.ma.us.

HOW TO PRINT A VEHICLE INSPECTION REPORT (VIR) FROM THE DASHBOARD

The screenshot displays the I/M Dashboard interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with options: MOTORIST, REPORTS, REPAIR, STATION (highlighted), and ADMIN. A search bar is located to the right of the menu. Below the navigation, there are several email notifications in an inbox view. The main content area is titled 'VIR Reprint' and contains a 'VIR Information' section. This section has three input fields: 'VIN' with the value '1N6AA1F41JN520470', 'Plate Number' with the value '533DC5', and 'Plate Type' with a dropdown menu set to 'SELECT'. At the bottom of this section are two buttons: 'SEARCH' and 'CLEAR'. A blue arrow in the image points to the 'STATION' menu item, and another blue arrow points to the 'VIR Reprint' option in the dropdown menu.

You may reprint any VIR back to October 2017 by entering the vehicle's VIN and Plate Number. Then, click SEARCH.

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You may click on any VIR number to print the desired Inspection Report.

2018 Nissan Titan XD / VIN 1N6AA1F41JN520470 / Plate 533DC5

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Inspection Type	VIR	Station	Inspection Date	Emissions Test Type	Emissions Test Result	Safety Test Type	Safety Test Result	Test Counter
Regular	V00962494152690	PB004648	11/15/2023	Reinspection	Pass	NonCommercial Safety Inspection	NA	2
Regular	V00962493483455	PB004648	11/07/2023	Initial	Fail	NonCommercial Safety Inspection	Pass	1
Regular	V00962459855124	PB004648	11/14/2022	Initial	Pass	NonCommercial Safety Inspection	Pass	1
Regular	V00104429620195	PB005178	10/28/2020	Initial	Pass	NonCommercial Safety Inspection	Pass	1
Regular	V00962398005462	PB004648	10/28/2020	Initial	Pass	NonCommercial Safety Inspection	Pass	1
Regular	V00104366024656	PB005178	10/24/2019	Initial	Pass	NonCommercial Safety Inspection	Pass	1

PROGRAM MANAGER TRANSITION

Earlier this month, the MA Vehicle Check program bid farewell to Anne Hagerty, who had served as Program Manager since 2018.

Anne retired from Opus Inspection Technologies, Inc. on December 1 after spending her entire career on the program management side of vehicle inspection programs. Beginning in 1986, she worked on programs in northeast Ohio (Cleveland), Broward County, Florida, Arizona, and Washington State prior to coming east to manage the MA Vehicle Check program.

Opus's John Morrissey, who has 16 years of experience working for the MA Vehicle Check program, and 40 years of experience in the automotive repair industry, will take over as Program Manager.

As Program Manager, John's goal for the MA Vehicle Check Program is to continue to be successful serving the best interests of the Motorist, the Inspection Stations, the Inspectors, and the Repair Community. He can be reached at (508) 452-8520 or John.Morrissey@opusinspection.com.

MAC CORNER

OBD Communication Struggle

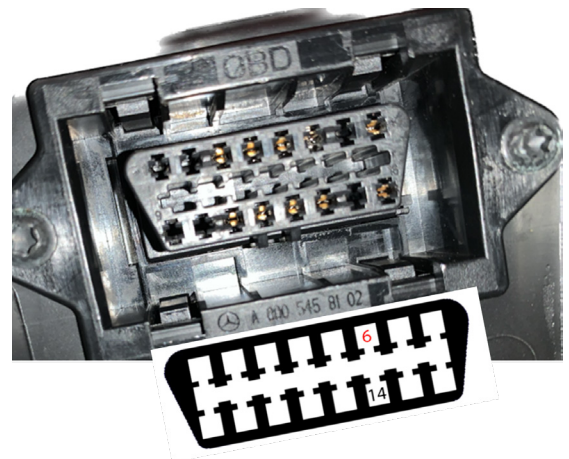
The Tewksbury MAC received a request to assist a Motorist with a 2022 Mercedes GLC with 19k Miles, that would not communicate with the Workstation OBD Scan tool.

MAC L1 Technicians contacted the Motorist to obtain some history for the vehicle as well as what if any diagnosis had been performed. The MAC then contacted the Mercedes dealership who had checked the vehicle for the NO communication concern. After speaking with both parties, the MAC agreed with the motorist that we should evaluate the OBD system at the MAC.

Upon arrival, MAC L1 technicians visually inspected the data link connector for damage, connector appeared ok, but deeper inspection indicated internal terminal damage on pin 6.

The MAC was able to establish generic communication with the MASS17 Workstation using an OBD break-out box to make connection on all pins/terminals. An OBD2 breakout box is a device that allows technicians to access and analyze the signals passing through the OBD2 port without disrupting the normal operation of the vehicle.

The Mercedes dealer was contacted, and the Motorist arranged repairs to be completed. Once DLC repairs were completed, the vehicle was then able to communicate with the OBD Scan tool and the vehicle completed the inspection.



When a vehicle will not communicate, the Program also advises performing a Terminal Pin Tension (Drag Test) with an appropriate sized pin to the DLC terminals. The "Terminal Pin Tension" or "Drag Test" typically refers to a test conducted

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on electrical connectors or terminals to measure the force required to separate or disconnect them. Proper terminal tension is key for data and voltage transmission VIA OBD.

OBD Monitor Readiness Reminder

When a vehicle undergoes an emissions test, the OBD system needs to be in a “ready” state. This means that the required self-tests have been completed, and the system has not detected any significant issues. A “not ready” status indicates that one or more of the required tests have not been completed.

When a vehicle fails or is turned away from the inspection because its OBD system is “not ready,” this simply means that at the time it was presented for inspection, the vehicle’s OBD system did not have enough valid data stored to accurately evaluate the vehicle’s emissions control systems.

Each vehicle has its own, unique required drive cycle that must be completed before the emission device monitors can be completed. A drive cycle is a specific sequence of driving conditions that enables the vehicle’s OBD system to perform a series of self-tests on emissions-related components. Completing a drive cycle is often necessary to reset the OBD monitors and achieve a “ready” status for emissions testing.

The drive cycle involves a variety of driving conditions, speeds, and engine loads to ensure that all the necessary tests are performed.

What should the Inspector do?

Stating to the motorist “Just drive the vehicle for some number of miles and bring it back in to be inspected” is not accurate and in most cases does not achieve the intended outcome of monitors complete, and the vehicle passes the emissions test. The guidance must include mixed city and highway driving over multiple days before returning the vehicle to the station for a retest.

Be sure the customer understands a drive cycle must include a mix of driving conditions, such as idling, steady speeds, acceleration, and deceleration, in many cases, overnight-off periods. Refer them to the vehicle’s service manual or contact the manufacturer for specific information on the OBD drive cycle and readiness procedures.

If the customer needs additional assistance or you are not comfortable providing guidance for their specific vehicle, refer them to our Motorist Assistance Centers via our Call Center 1-844-358-0135.

MAC Readiness Case Study

Back in January, a 2013 Ford Taurus 3.5 V6 failed the emissions test for readiness. Two monitors reported as incomplete/not ready.

Here is a little background about the vehicle. The vehicle came up from Texas in early 2022 and passed Inspection with no problem. Over the next year work was done to the steering rack by a repair facility. The vehicle was very clean with only 75,000 miles on it. The motorist kept records of all repairs done to the vehicle. When it came time for the next inspection on 1/26/2023, the vehicle failed for emissions, oxygen sensor monitor and oxygen sensor heater monitors not-ready. The motorist was told (by the Inspector) “to drive the vehicle” to set the monitors.

On-Board Diagnostic (OBD) Results		OBD Readiness Monitor Results	
Tampering Check	PASS	Catalyst	READY
Connector Result	PASS	Catalyst Heater	UNSUPPORTED
RPM Result	PASS	Evaporative System	READY
Key-On BulbCheck	N/A	Secondary Air System	UNSUPPORTED
Engine-Running Bulb Check	N/A	A/C System	UNSUPPORTED
Scan Tool Check	N/A	Oxygen Sensor	NOT READY
Communication Result	PASS	Oxygen Sensor Heater	NOT READY
MIL Status Result	PASS	EGR and/or VVT System	READY
Readiness Result	<u>FAIL</u>		

After many months of trying to get the monitors to set, they returned to the repair facility to have the readiness issue diagnosed. It was determined that downstream O2 sensors needed to be replaced. The sensors were replaced, and the vehicle was returned to the motorist with instructions to perform drive cycles to set the 2 remaining monitors. This was now in August.

After another month or so the motorist called our Program Call Center, and the case was assigned to the MAC (Motorist

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Assistance Center). The vehicle visited the MAC center on November 7, 2023, at which time it was observed that one of the post catalytic converters O2 sensors seemed to be a bit out of range but was not setting a code. The MAC guidance was to seek out a repair shop and to keep the MAC involved in the repair process.

The repair facility first reviewed the past repair history for the vehicle and then had a conversation with our MAC staff. At this point the technician built a strategy for diagnosing the vehicle, putting the O2 sensors on a scan tool and graphing them to view the data stream. At one point, one of the downstream O2 sensors went out of specs, not bad enough to set a code, but most likely enough to suspend the monitor. Remember, both downstream sensors have been replaced with factory parts.

At this point, the shop used their smoke meter searching for areas where exhaust might be leaking. Any exhaust leak is also a source for outside air to be introduced into the system. Any new (unaccounted for) air introduced into the exhaust, upstream of the O2 sensors, will most likely lead to negative results e.g. false setting DTCs, not able to complete monitors.

The smoke test identified a slight leak at the rear engine pipe flange, possibly caused when the steering rack was replaced. The technician dropped the engine pipe, cleaned both flange areas and installed new gaskets.

Now it was time to confirm the repair by conducting a road test. Within three miles both monitors were completed to “ready” status and the vehicle was able to pass its retest. As we have previously mentioned, “go drive the vehicle” would not help in this instance. This vehicle had an issue that needed to be properly diagnosed and repaired.



How Vehicle Tampering Can Affect the Repair Community

The Massachusetts Vehicle Check Program routinely sees vehicles referred to the Motorist Assistance Centers (MAC) for suspected emissions control device tampering. During the inspection process, if a vehicle is identified as having its emissions devices tampered with, it will fail inspection for emissions and have an overall result of “Refer to MAC”. The Inspector must remember to inform the vehicle owner to call the Motorist Hotline at 1-844-358-0135 to schedule a MAC appointment.

In many cases, the owner will take these vehicles to the repair technician. The owner may not know why his or her vehicle failed the inspection or what needs to be done to restore its emission control system to proper working order.

The Federal Clean Air Act requires that engine performance modifications are properly designed and installed and prohibits those that increase motor vehicle emissions. Emission control tampering could involve equipment removal, bypass, disconnection, damage, or anything else that renders ineffective any emissions control device or element of design that has been installed on a vehicle or engine.

- Tampering comes in many forms and may include:
- Spark plug anti-foulers installed on oxygen sensor(s), trying to cheat catalyst monitors;
- Aftermarket performance software installed in the Powertrain Control Module (PCM);
- Vehicles that have received an incomplete manufacturer software update;
- Non-conforming engine swaps;
- Catalytic converters removals, relocations or add-ons;
- Alterations to engine components or devices that do not meet original factory specifications;
- Aftermarket turbochargers or superchargers with accompanying performance software that does not have supporting documentation allowing the installation of these devices;
- Long tube headers that eliminate or relocate catalysts and oxygen sensors;
- Diesel trucks with EGR valves disconnected or disabled by non-complaint software; and
- Diesel trucks with the exhaust after-treatment devices removed.

A catalyst that is not positioned in the correct location and an altered or tampered downstream oxygen sensor installation is considered tampering and may prevent the vehicle’s OBD software from completing its emission device testing.



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In all cases of identified emissions control tampering, the vehicle must be restored to a compliant configuration before an inspection will be allowed to proceed. There are no emission waivers or repair extensions available for vehicles with tampered emissions. Manufacturers of virtually all non-compliant emission parts provide language somewhere on their websites or original packaging to indicate that these parts are “for competition or off-road use only, not legal for street or highway use.”

INSPECTION REMINDERS

Faded or Damaged License Plate Inspection Process

Effective immediately, when a customer requests a replacement plate (online, by phone, or in a service center) because their vehicle failed an inspection due to a **damaged plate**, the replacement plate will be free.

ATLAS (RMV database) will automatically check for failed inspections and set the fee to zero if it finds a failed inspection due to the plate within the last 60 days.

Always fail a vehicle for a damaged license plate. Turning a vehicle away due to a faded or damaged plate will result in the customer incurring a replacement plate fee. It is very important to reject the vehicle for the plate(s) to allow for the no charge replacement.

OPUS HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Below are the upcoming Opus holiday closures:

Holiday/Observed Holiday	Call Center, MACs, and Technical Services Closed On
Christmas Eve (observed on)	Monday, December 25, 2023
Christmas Day (observed on)	Tuesday, December 26, 2023
New Year's Day	Monday, January 1, 2024

IMPAC MEETING

Inspection and Maintenance Program Advisory Council (IMPAC) meets quarterly to provide you an opportunity to learn about and discuss issues that are relevant and of consequence to our Inspection businesses, including program and policy changes, training programs, inspection processes and advances in technology.

The last IMPAC Meeting was held on December 12, 2023, via ZOOM where over 100 participants from the Inspection network attending the meeting. Discussion topics included 2025 yellow sticker deliveries, next workstation software highlights, guidance for the license plate inspection, vehicle jacking, along with various other discussions all pertaining to the inspection industry.

We look forward to meeting with you at our next IMPAC meeting which be held March 12, 2024, via ZOOM from 12:30 to 2 PM.

PROGRAM STATISTICS

MASSACHUSETTS VEHICLE CHECK PROGRAM AT A GLANCE July 1 through September 30, 2023			
Enforcement Statistics		Count	
Violations Issued to Inspectors		46	
Violations Issued to Stations		56	
Inspector Privileges Revoked		1	
Inspectors Required to Retrain		1	
Inspectors Suspended		33	
Stations Suspended		36	
Customer Service Center Calls		Count	
Motorist Calls Received		2,035	
Inspection Station Calls Received		16,088	
Inspector Training		Count	
Initial Non-Commercial Inspectors Trained		298	
Initial Commercial Inspectors Trained		146	
Initial 7D Inspectors Trained		25	
Initial Motorcycle Inspectors Trained		8	
Licensed Stations		Count	
Class A Stations		1,166	
Class B Stations		216	
Class C Stations		15	
Class D Stations		293	
Class E Stations		8	
Waivers and Repair Hardships		Count	
Emissions Waivers Issued		5	
Repair Hardships Issued		4	
Inspections/Tests		Count	Failure Rate
Non-Commercial Safety Inspections	1,332,492		6.80%
Commercial Safety Inspections	42,041		8.56%
7D Safety Inspections	623		4.01%
TNC Inspections	21,888		1.03%
OBD Emissions Tests	1,113,195		6.79%
Opacity Emissions Tests	17,031		8.23%