

Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Programs



Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) programs are a critical part of any emissions reduction strategy because light-duty vehicles are a major source of air pollution. According to the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), 54% of air pollution in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley comes from the estimated 1.3 million light-duty vehicles registered in the region. I/M programs use advanced technology to identify vehicles that are polluting the air. Vehicles with harmful levels of exhaust must be repaired and pass a follow-up emissions test before they can be registered and licensed to operated in an I/M program area.

I/M programs inspect over 84 million vehicles each year in North America. All residents in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley benefit from improved air quality and better health because of the region's I/M program known as AirCare.

VEHICLE EMISSIONS AND AIR POLLUTION

People drive more kilometres and more vehicles today than ever before – offsetting the potential gains of new technology intended to make vehicle emissions cleaner. In Canada, motorists drive an average of 45 kms per day and 18,000 kms per year.

Light-duty vehicles are the single largest source of air pollution in the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley. These vehicles emit carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and particulate matter in to our air every day.

HC and NOx combine in the presence of heat and sunlight to create ozone, a major ingredient of smog. Light-duty vehicles are also: 1) the single largest source of CO, an invisible poisonous gas; 2) a major source of cancer-causing air toxics.

I/M Benefits

According to the GVRD's Air Quality Management Plan, vehicle inspection and maintenance programs are the most effective way of reducing emissions from motor vehicles.

I/M programs are the most efficient and cost-effective emissions control measure available to help metropolitan areas clean their air.

I/M programs help improve the air, safeguard public health, and protect the environment by reducing harmful vehicle emissions.

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AIR POLLUTION HEALTH EFFECTS

Air pollution produced by vehicles irritates the eyes, nose, and throat; air pollution causes wheezing, coughing, and breathing difficulties, worsens existing heart and lung problems like asthma, and increases the risk of heart attacks. Children, the elderly, people with existing respiratory problems, and individuals who work or exercise outdoors are the most sensitive to the harmful effects of air pollution.

According to a 2000 study by the Canadian Institute for Child Health, asthma attacks are the leading cause of childhood hospital visits; air pollution is a trigger for these attacks.

Improving air quality through vehicle emissions testing benefits everyone by protecting human health.

BENEFITS OF IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

When a polluting vehicle is repaired, its dirty emissions are reduced by up to 70%.

I/M programs encourage people to maintain their vehicles, which results in many consumer benefits including better gas mileage, enhanced vehicle performance and longer engine life. Studies show that people actually fix their polluting vehicles because they want to pass their emissions test. If there were no program, there would be no incentive for people to repair or maintain their vehicles.

Without an I/M program, motorists ignore their check engine light, a warning that they could be damaging their vehicle's engine, wasting fuel, or polluting the air.