



Inspection Check

IMPROVING YOUR BUSINESS

Inspection Check: Improving Your Business

Table of Contents

- Letter of Explanation..... 2
- Business Operations Best Practices 3
 - Motorist Service Tips..... 3
 - I/M Specific Service Tips 5
- Signage and Educational Material..... 10
- Media Training Tips and Techniques 13

Inspection Check Letter of Explanation



Dear Georgia's Clean Air Force Station Owner/Inspector:

Over the last 10 years, Georgia inspection stations have identified over one million heavy-polluting vehicles and have guided thousands of motorists to effective emission repairs, ultimately reducing tons of harmful emissions. The Inspection/Maintenance (I/M) Program and all your efforts are working. Thank you for "helping Georgia breathe a little easier."

Although we are making progress, there is more work to be done. Georgia's Clean Air Force's (GCAF) Annual Quantitative Research Study conducted in 2005 indicated that metro Atlanta motorists continue to be fairly satisfied with their overall experience at emission inspection stations (8.0 to 8.6 out of 10). However, four of the six rating areas have declined slightly over a period of time, including 1) Amount of Time to Conduct a Test, 2) Station Hours of Operation, 3) Travel Distance to a Station, and 4) Time in Line.

Due to these recent declines, GCAF is taking a proactive approach with station owners, managers, and inspectors. The goal is to raise the bar of the testing experience for motorists, while generating more business for your station. To help, we have created a best practices customer service toolkit called "Inspection Check: Improving Your Business." By providing your station with the tools needed to practice outstanding customer service and answer emission test and repair questions, you will be more likely to see an increase in repeat customers and customer referrals.

The tips contained in the following pages are easy to implement and GCAF is here to help when needed. Also included is a pledge for you to sign, indicating that your station will make a good faith effort to practice these customer service tips. Your station will be publicly recognized in several ways for its participation, including recognition in the Repair *Watch* Public Report and GCAF website, in addition to being provided promotional material to display at your station.

If you have any questions, please call GCAF Station Assistance at 800.449.2471, option #2, or email us at info@cleanairforce.com.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin H. Bongiovanni".

Kristin Bongiovanni
Executive Program Manager
GCAF

Business Operations Best Practices

Motorist Service Tips

Making improvements to motorists' overall emission testing experience can improve their perception of your employees, your station and the program. A positive experience will encourage motorists to return and tell their friends to use your services.

Following these simple guidelines will help achieve customer service excellence:

- Rally employee/inspector support for the GCAF vision statement
 - "It is our vision to be the world's leader in clean air management, recognizing that local action leads to global impact, for this and future generations."
- Make a commitment to deliver the highest quality service to each motorist, every time.
- Station owners and managers must set the example and provide outstanding customer service.
- Ensure that your employees/inspectors are satisfied with their job. This will lead to pride in work and enhanced customer service.
- Provide frontline employees, or those dealing directly with motorists, with information that is easily accessible and detailed enough to answer a wide range of questions.
- Personalize each motorist's experience with a simple greeting, such as "Welcome to [name of station], I'm Joe Smith, how can I help you today?"
- If the customer does not speak English, provide them with an applicable GCAF information sheet translated into Spanish, Korean or Vietnamese (provided on the GCAF website).
- Refer motorists to information resources, such as the GCAF Q&A brochure, *Repair Watch*, GCAF Hotline for Motorist Assistance (800.449.2471), email assistance (info@cleanairforce.com), or the GCAF website (CleanAirForce.com).
- Get to know other "Inspection Check" stations in the area so you can refer motorists elsewhere if needed (for example, your station is temporarily closed due to analyzer repairs or you do not have an inspector on duty).

Business Operations Best Practices

Motorist Service Tips (continued)

- Measure your station's performance through the use of GCAF comment cards (attached to the GCAF Q&A brochure) and/or brief customer service surveys. You could provide an incentive to customers if they complete a comment card/survey, such as a five percent discount on other services, at a later time.
- Review customer comments to learn their expectations, preferences and level of satisfaction. Address negative comments assertively with employees and change processes to improve customer service, wait times, or display of GCAF educational materials. Likewise compliment inspectors if they are doing a good job.

Business Operations Best Practices

I/M Specific Service Tips

Time for Test

Motorists may complain about how long it takes to have their vehicle inspected. Although this toolkit provides ideas on how to reduce wait times, here are a few ways to improve the motorist's experience while they are waiting:

- Explain how long the test will take, to set appropriate expectations. Clearly state how long the wait time currently is.
- Be courteous to motorists when they ask questions about their car's condition, why an inspection may be taking longer than expected, etc. If the inspector cannot provide an adequate answer, have them refer the motorist to a manager or station owner.
- Allow motorists to observe their vehicle being inspected, from a safe viewing area, which will give them added peace of mind and build their trust in your station and the inspection team.

Enhancing Waiting Areas

If your station frequently has motorists waiting, consider enhancing the waiting room area.

- If possible, make improvements to the waiting room by adding:
 - Comfortable seating, such as padded chairs or a small bench
 - Vending machines for snacks and drinks or free beverages such as coffee or a water fountain
 - Updated reading materials such as magazines, newspapers or brochures about the other services your business provides
 - A television or computer connected to the Internet (set to limited, appropriate websites only), so waiting motorists can check e-mail, surf the Net, etc.
 - Attractive holders for GCAF Q&A brochures and the Repair *Watch* Public Report

Time In Line

- When asked by a motorist what the wait time in line might be, answer as accurately as possible and offer additional times when your testing facility may have less traffic.
- Post a sign (digital or manual) with an approximate wait time, based on the number of cars in line. Update the information as wait times change.

Business Operations Best Practices

I/M Specific Service Tips (continued)

Decreasing Motorist Wait Times

- Inspectors should arrive in adequate time to warm-up and calibrate the analyzer prior to the station's posted open time.
- Inspectors should make sure the phone line to the GAS analyzer is plugged in.
- Stations can calibrate their analyzer at the end of the day rather than the following morning.
- Stations should have the following materials on hand:
 - Adequate replacement supplies for consumable equipment such as probe tips, filters, calibration gas, zero air, etc.
 - Adequate printer supplies such as paper, ribbon, etc.
 - GCAF educational material and make sure that it is up to date, for example, Q&A brochures and the Repair *Watch* Public Report.
- Inspectors should ensure there is an adequate supply of analyzer certificates in their inventory.
 - Utilize Ecommerce via the Internet to order analyzer certificates and manage station accounting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call GCAF Station Assistance to get started.
 - Faxed credit card orders for analyzer certificates are processed Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 - Remember to order analyzer certificates well in advance, especially in preparation for weekends and holidays.
- Make sure equipment is functioning properly and is serviced on schedule and when needed.
- Inspectors should inspect the vehicle correctly the first time to prevent having to retest the vehicle. Ensure correct vehicle information, correct test type, etc.
- Ensure that stations are staffed appropriately during peak hours.
- In order to best avoid equipment failures and station closures, perform maintenance checks on your testing equipment regularly. For example, check:
 - Filters
 - Probe lines
 - Probe tips
- If the testing equipment does fail, have equipment manuals and repair technician phone numbers readily available to minimize equipment/station down time.

Business Operations Best Practices

I/M Specific Service Tips (continued)

Decreasing Motorist Wait Times (continued)

- Have as many employees as possible become certified emission inspectors to ensure your station will run efficiently, even when short-staffed.
- Keep GAS messages on file and reference frequently for critical I/M Program information, reminders, and testing tips.

Not Passing the Test

If a motorist's vehicle does not pass the test, try following these tips:

- Show the motorist the failing areas on the Vehicle Emission Inspection Report (VIR). At that point if you are a test only station, do not give specific repair recommendations. If you are a repair facility and are listed in the Repair *Watch* Public Report, use this as a positive reference.
- Provide referrals to reputable repair facilities; utilize the Repair *Watch* Public Report.
- If you are a repair facility: when asked by a motorist, offer an open and honest assessment of the possible cost of repairs, if you can determine the cost. Explain that a diagnosis and estimate are not included in the emission test fee. However, the free retest (at the same station within 30 days) is included.
- Remember that a number of conditions may affect a vehicle's test results (for example, a vehicle fails at one station but passes at another). Inspectors should never comment on tests performed at other stations, rather refer motorists to 800.449.2471 for assistance.

GCAF Resources/Station Assistance

- GCAF Hotline: 800.449.2471, option #1 for Motorist Assistance, option #2 for Station Assistance
- GCAF's website address: CleanAirForce.com
- GAS messages: Check for current messages. You may review up to 100 messages on your analyzer through the retrieval function.
- Order Q&A brochures by calling GCAF Station Assistance and selecting option #2.
- Replacement copies of the Repair *Watch* Public Report can be obtained on the GCAF website or by calling GCAF Station Assistance and submitting a ticket.

Business Operations Best Practices

I/M Specific Service Tips (continued)

GCAF Resources/Station Assistance (continued)

- Duplicate *Motorists' Rights* posters can be purchased at the GCAF Kennesaw location or by appointment at the GCAF Camp Creek location. Duplicate posters cost \$10 (cash only).
- GCAF logo use and production specifications can be obtained by submitting a request to info@CleanAirForce.com, or by calling GCAF Station Assistance.
- A list of GCAF certified sign vendors can be obtained on the GCAF website, by submitting a request to signs@CleanAirForce.com, or by calling GCAF Station Assistance.
- Inspector applications can be obtained on the GCAF website, by submitting a request to inspectortraining@CleanAirForce.com, or by calling GCAF Station Assistance.
- New Station Packets can be obtained on the GCAF website, by submitting a request to info@CleanAirForce.com, or by calling GCAF Station Assistance.
- Certificate analyzer requisition forms can be obtained on the GCAF website, by submitting a request to ecerts@CleanAirForce.com, or by calling GCAF Station Assistance.
- Ecommerce sign-up information can be obtained on the GCAF website, by submitting a request to ecerts@CleanAirForce.com, or by calling GCAF Station Assistance.

Customer Service Wallet Card Tips

Motorist Service Tips

- "It is our vision to be the world's leader in clean air management, recognizing that local action leads to global impact, for this and future generations."
- Deliver the highest quality service to each motorist, every time.
- Personalize each motorist's visit with a simple greeting, such as "Welcome to [name of station], I'm Joe Smith, how can I help you today?"
- For general information or for failed vehicle assistance, refer motorists to the following GCAF resources: **Q&A brochure**, **Repair *Watch* Public Report**, **800.449.2471** or **CleanAirForce.com**.

Station Resources

- Call GCAF Station Assistance (**800.449.2471**) for:
 - Station and inspector licensing
 - Inspector training
 - Assistance with testing procedures
 - Question & Answer (Q&A) brochures and Repair *Watch*
 - Fraudulent testing complaints
- General inquiries: info@cleanairforce.com
- Go to CleanAirForce.com to review/print the following documents:
 - Blank Emission Repair Forms
 - Used Vehicle Sale Complaint Form
 - Repair *Watch* Public Report
 - Waiver, Extension and Exemption information and forms
 - Emission testing information in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese
- Media inquiries, station signage and GCAF logo: **404.494.3766**
- Ecommerce (online certificate orders): <https://ecom.vansis.wcom.com>

Signage and Educational Material

State-Certified Signage

- Displaying a state-certified GCAF sign is required and an effective marketing tool to draw in motorists to your station. The GCAF sign is recognizable to most motorists, shows your participation in Georgia's I/M Program, and provides added credibility.
- Ensure that your state-certified sign is in good condition. If your sign is faded, damaged or rusted, we encourage you to invest in a new sign. Damaged signs may discourage motorists from visiting your station as it might portray the image of a dirty and poorly managed station.
- Always display your sign in a prominent location that motorists can easily view from the road. Do not display your sign in a location that may obstruct motorists' view or be a dangerous obstacle.
- Always obey your local sign ordinances.
- Always clearly display accurate testing fees and hours of operation. Displaying incorrect information may cause confusion. Incorrect information could prevent a motorist from visiting your station for future testing or recommending your station to others.
- For questions on signs, contact Bonnie Stevenson at 404.494.3766 or signs@cleanairforce.com.

Signage and Educational Material

Educational Material

- GCAF offers a variety of informative and educational materials to assist emission inspectors with the testing process.
- Always display the most recent educational materials in your station. Damaged and outdated materials will give motorists the wrong information.
- Be mindful of “attractive” ways to display educational material so that it is eye-catching (i.e., brochure holders, framed materials, etc.).
- Always make GCAF information easily accessible to motorists. Place Q&A brochures and the Repair *Watch* Public Report in a prominent location. Avoid placing behind other items making them difficult to see, as this might cause frustration.
- Making GCAF materials easy to find can help save you time. Motorists are more likely to read the information and answer their own questions while they are waiting.
- If a motorist does not pass the inspection, direct him or her to the Repair *Watch* Public Report and the GCAF Q&A brochure.
- If no one at your station can answer a motorist’s question, please refer him or her to the GCAF website or 800.449.2471 for assistance.

Signage and Educational Material

GCAF offers the following educational materials to assist you with the testing process:

Material	How to Find
Annual Q&A Brochure	Call GCAF Station Assistance at 800.449.2471, option #2, to order. Also posted on the GCAF website, CleanAirForce.com , for reference.
Repair <i>Watch</i> Public Report	Every three months, a booklet is mailed to your station. To acquire an additional booklet(s), you may download a copy from the GCAF website, CleanAirForce.com , under <i>Forms & Program Info</i> , or contact GCAF Station Assistance at 800.449.2471, option #2.
Registration Renewal Inserts in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Korean	Download via the GCAF website, CleanAirForce.com , under <i>Forms & Program Info</i> .
<i>Motorists' Rights</i> Posters	Provided by GCAF auditor upon opening of your station. Additional copies may be purchased for \$10 cash by visiting the GCAF Kennesaw office or by appointment at the GCAF Camp Creek office.
Vehicle Emission Testing and Your Health	Print a copy from the GCAF website, http://www.cleanairforce.com/docs/GCAFHealthBenefitsPoster.pdf .
Registration Scenarios Regarding Vehicle Emission Inspections	Download via the GCAF website, http://www.cleanairforce.com/docs/RegistrationScenarios.pdf .
What Should I Do? My Vehicle Did Not Pass OBD Inspection	Download via the GCAF website, http://www.cleanairforce.com/docs/WhatShouldIDo.pdf .
Who Gets Tested When?	Download via the GCAF website, http://www.cleanairforce.com/docs/Who Gets Tested When 2008.pdf .

Additional resources via the GCAF website, [CleanAirForce.com](http://www.CleanAirForce.com), include waiver, extension and exemption information and applications for motorists. GCAF also posts any pertinent media articles, including articles in Spanish.

Media Tips and Techniques

If your inspection station is approached by the media: **first, contact Bonnie Stevenson at GCAF (404.494.3766) or Cherrise Boone at EPD (404.362.4863) to notify us that the media is at your station. We will assist you.**

If a serious accident or safety incident occurs at your station, please contact GCAF immediately. We may be able to help develop talking points and manage media inquiries.

It is natural to feel nervous before an interview with media, but remembering a few simple steps can help you relax and ensure that you convey your messages effectively.

DON'T

1. Use technical language – acronyms, car-speak (manifold, valves, etc.)
2. Say “off the record” – nothing is ever off the record for reporters (it is a myth).
3. Say “no comment” – you will appear to be evasive and avoiding the truth.
4. Respond to hypothetical questions – no one can predict the future.
5. Lie or bluff your way through an answer. If you don't know, it's okay to say so, but offer to get the answer for the reporter.
6. Lose your temper or argue with an interviewer.
7. Feel compelled to fill the silences – the reporter will ask another question when they feel the time is right.

DO

1. Contact either Bonnie Stevenson at GCAF (404.494.3766) or Cherrise Boone at EPD (404.362.4863) for assistance.
2. State your conclusions first and keep answers short. Begin with the most important information, then give supporting evidence.
3. If you don't know the answer, say so, and offer to get it.
4. Be sure of your facts and figures – for example, know how long the inspection should take, how long wait times may run, etc.
5. Take time to think about your answers.

Media Training Tips and Techniques (continued)

DO (continued)

6. Remember your audience – motorists interested in knowing details about the inspection process.
7. Remember your key points.
8. Smile – it goes a long way in helping you to appear friendly.

Media Training Tips and Techniques (continued)

Interview Types

When you know what type of interview will be conducted, you can prepare by following these techniques:

Print Interviews

- Before agreeing to the interview, ask what topics will be discussed and how the interview will be used.
- Get your major points across early. Repeat them if necessary.
- Refer the audience to GCAF Motorist Assistance or the GCAF website for general I/M Program information. Clearly repeat the phone number and/or website address, 800.449.2471 or CleanAirForce.com.
- Use specific examples to back up general statements – for example, “wait times typically run five to 10 minutes, but at our station, our wait time is always less than 10 minutes.”
- Review background material on the subject before the interview – so you know your facts.

Radio Interviews

- Speak in a regular tone. Don't shout, whisper or use a singsong voice.
- Make sure you have a good, clear phone line, if you are calling into a radio station for an interview.
- Get the reporter's name and number so you can call back with corrections or additional information.
- Remember, a reporter is always a reporter. Avoid casual remarks that may cause you trouble.
- Make sure to get your key points across early, and repeat them if necessary.

Television Interviews

- MOST IMPORTANT: Maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Speak clearly, confidently and distinctly.

Media Training Tips and Techniques (continued)

- Keep your answers concise (about seven to 10 seconds in length).
- Make sure you incorporate your key points into the interview.