



What Does Non-Communication Mean and How Does it Affect My Emission Inspection?

What Does Non-Communication Mean?

All 1996 and newer model year vehicles are equipped with an on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer. The OBD computer alerts motorists of problems with the vehicle's emission control system by illuminating the "Check Engine" light. When a vehicle is presented for testing, the inspector will hook up the OBD test lead into the vehicle's data link connector (DLC). At this point, the OBD test lead will try to read the OBD computer. If the OBD test lead cannot read the vehicle's OBD computer, the vehicle will fail for non-communication.

What Causes a Vehicle Not to Communicate?

There are several factors that can cause a vehicle not to communicate:

- The data link connector (DLC) is damaged or has been tampered with and the connection to the on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer is not possible. For example, the DLC may be broken or melted, the DLC is used to power up an accessory, or something is plugged into the DLC.
- The DLC is obstructed or inaccessible and connection to the OBD computer is not possible. For example, the inspector locates the DLC or is positive of the location but cannot access the DLC because an ashtray is glued in place, the DLC cover has been glued in place, or an accessory, such as a CD player, is installed that blocks the DLC.
- The vehicle's OBD computer requires a software update.
- A pending problem with the emission control system that has yet to turn on the "Check Engine" light.
- An improperly installed aftermarket system. Examples include, but are not limited to, a CD player, security system, navigation system and/or satellite radio.

What Should I Do?

- The inspector should attempt to test the vehicle several times.
- The wiring on any installed aftermarket system (examples include, but are not limited to, a CD player, security system, navigation system and/or satellite radio) should be checked to ensure there is no interference with the on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer or the battery.
- Check all recalls, technical service bulletins (TSBs), and extended warranties related to the emission control system and the OBD computer. Contact your dealership or repair facility and have them research for the above using your vehicle identification number (VIN).
- Have a diagnostic analysis performed with an OBD generic scan tool, connecting to the data link connector (DLC) under the dash, not under the hood.

If the inspector has attempted to test the vehicle several times and/or a diagnostic analysis indicates the vehicle is able to communicate with an OBD generic scan tool, call the GCAF Call Center at 800.449.2471, option #1. A representative will document your situation and a GCAF representative will return your call promptly.

Note: Federal law requires the on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer and catalytic converter on 1995 and newer model year vehicles be warranted by the manufacturer for eight years or 80,000 miles.