



Your Resource

for Georgia's Vehicle Emissions Inspection & Maintenance (I/M) Program

What Does the "Check Engine" Light Mean?

And How Does it Affect My Emissions Inspection?

All 1996 and newer model year vehicles are equipped with a "Check Engine" light. The vehicle's on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer continuously or periodically checks the emissions control system and its components. If a malfunction has been found with one or more of the components, the "Check Engine" light will illuminate.

How Does the "Check Engine" Light Affect My Emissions Inspection?

- If the "Check Engine" light is illuminated on a 1996 or newer model year vehicle, the vehicle will fail the emissions inspection. An emissions-related problem has been detected by the vehicle's on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer and it must be repaired before the vehicle will pass the emissions inspection. If the "Check Engine" light is illuminated, the OBD computer will indicate the general area of failure. A diagnostic analysis should be obtained by a qualified repair facility prior to making any repairs.
- The "Check Engine" light may illuminate indicating something as minor as a loose fuel cap or a major emissions control component failure. If a diagnostic trouble code (DTC) indicates a fault with the vehicle's evaporative system, try tightening the fuel cap until it clicks, then drive the vehicle for a few days to see if the OBD system turns the light off.
- If the "Check Engine" light is flashing, the vehicle should be serviced immediately to avoid costly damage to the vehicle's main emissions control component, the catalytic converter. Motorists should refer to their owner's manual if the light is flashing.
- If the vehicle has been repaired and the "Check Engine" light remains on or comes back on, then the repairs that were performed were unsuccessful and additional repairs will be needed.

For a list of qualified emissions repair shops in your area based on the percentage of successful repairs, view the Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF) *Repair Watch* Public Report located at all emissions inspection stations or at www.CleanAirForce.com.

Does a Transmission Malfunction Affect the Performance of My Emissions Control System?

A vehicle's on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer will illuminate the "Check Engine" light if a problem has been detected with the vehicle's transmission. A transmission code that turns the "Check Engine" light on is directly related to the vehicle's emissions control system. A transmission malfunction can prevent a vehicle from running efficiently, thereby increasing emissions above the federal certification limits while driving.

The vehicle must be repaired before the vehicle will pass the emissions inspection. A diagnostic analysis should be obtained by a qualified repair facility prior to making any repairs. Motorists are encouraged to review the *Repair Watch* Public Report at any inspection station or online at www.CleanAirForce.com for a list of recommended repair facilities in their area.

WARNING! Beware of Offers to Turn the "Check Engine" Light Off

Motorists should beware of offers to turn the "Check Engine" light off in an attempt to pass the on-board diagnostic (OBD) test without making repairs. If the light has been turned off without making necessary emissions-related repairs, it will come back on and the vehicle will fail the test or the Georgia Vehicle Emissions Inspection Report (VIR) will read "Fail" for being "Not Ready."

Offers to illegally pass a vehicle should be reported to Georgia's Clean Air Force.

If your vehicle fails its annual emissions inspection, please have all related taxes and fees ready. Then visit your local county tag office for information about a possible non-renewable 30-day extension on your registration, per OCGA 40-2-20.

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