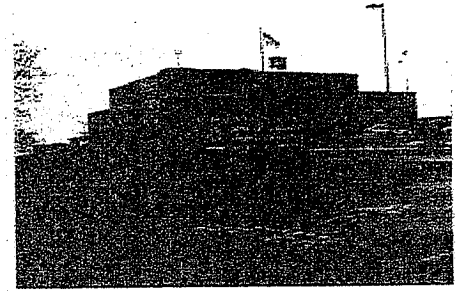


Vehicle inspection in the United States

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In the **United States**, **vehicle safety inspection** and **emissions inspection** are governed by each state individually. 17 states have a periodic (annual or biennial) safety inspection program, while Maryland and Alabama require a safety inspection prior to registration or transfer of ownership only. Nebraska requires safety inspection only upon newly arrived vehicles which were previously registered in another state. New Jersey discontinued its passenger vehicle safety inspection program on August 1, 2010.^[1]



Vehicle emissions inspection station.

Under the Clean Air Act (1990), states are required to implement vehicle emissions inspection programs, known as **I/M programs** (for Inspection and Maintenance), in metropolitan areas whose air quality does not meet federal standards. The specifics of those programs vary from state to state. Some states, including Kentucky and Minnesota, have discontinued their testing programs in recent years with approval from the federal government.

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Jurisdictions requiring periodic vehicle safety inspections

- Delaware—annually or biennially, new cars are exempt from inspection for the first five years provided the car remains with the same owner.
- District of Columbia—biennially,^[2] the requirement for safety inspection for privately owned cars ended October 1, 2009.^[3]
- Hawaii—annually, with the following exceptions: Brand new vehicles receive an inspection valid for two years. Emergency vehicles, school vehicles, rental cars, and vehicles used in public transportation must be inspected every six months. Sticker placed on rear bumper to right on license plate.

- Louisiana—annually. However, as of September, 2012, people in most jurisdictions have the option of getting a sticker good for two years, rather than one, by paying double the usual fee.^[4] Note that, in Louisiana, Inspection Stickers are commonly referred to as "Brake Tags"; they are placed on the inside of the windshield, in the lower-left corner of the windshield (on the driver's side). Colors change every year.
- Maine—annually; color of sticker changes annually; Sticker placed in top center of windshield behind rear view mirror.^[5]
- Massachusetts—annually.^[6] Stickers are placed in the lower right corner of the windshield.
- Mississippi—annually.^[7]
- Missouri—biennially, based on the vehicle's model year. Odd-numbered model year renews in odd-numbered year, even-numbered model year renews in even-numbered year.^[8] New vehicles not previously titled are exempt from inspection during the vehicle's model year and the year following. Vehicles displaying historical plates are completely exempt from inspection.^[9]
- New Hampshire—annually, except the first inspection of a new vehicle or upon an ownership transfer is adjusted to expire in the month of the registrant's birthday and is therefore valid for 4 to 15 months.^[10] Sticker placed in top center of windshield behind rear view mirror.
- New Jersey—annually for commercial vehicles (including taxis, limosines, jitneys, and buses), effective January 1, 2010. Passenger vehicles are exempt from safety inspections, effective August 1, 2010.^[11]
- New York—annually. Newly registered vehicles with a current inspection sticker from another state are exempt until the out-of-state sticker expires or for one year after registration in New York, whichever is sooner. Stickers are placed on lower left corner of windshield.
- North Carolina—annually.
- Pennsylvania^[12]—annually for most vehicles; every six months for all vehicles over 17,000 pounds (7,700 kg) GVW, which includes tractor-trailers, most non-articulated trucks, school vehicles (including school buses and school vans), motor coaches, mass transit buses, ambulances, fire department trucks, etc., and even though they fall below that gross vehicle weight, taxicabs and most vehicles that carry passengers for hire. Limousines are inspected annually, although they carry passengers for hire. Annual inspection (AI# serial numbers, which become BI# when AI# is exhausted at 10 million stickers), emission (IM#), and semi-annual (SI#) inspection stickers are color-coded - each type of sticker has its own distinct color which is changed at random every year (for example, colors for stickers expiring from October 2012-September 2013 are as follows: annual inspection-orange, annual emissions-brown, semiannual inspection-red; colors for stickers expiring from October 2013-September 2014 are as follows: annual inspection-blue, annual emissions-red, semiannual inspection-yellow). Stickers are placed on the lower left corner of the windshield. The new issue stickers appear in October in time for the January expiration stickers to be available on their first day of issue, which is November 1 of the previous year, for example, stickers bearing an expiration date of January 2015 will be available starting on November 1, 2013 (new stickers are available 3 calendar months before the current sticker's expiration). The annual color change makes it easier for police to be aware of expired stickers. Vehicles bearing antique vehicle license plates are exempt from inspection, but vehicles bearing classic or collectible license plates are subject to inspection. Trailers in excess of 3,000 pounds (1,400 kg) GVW are also inspected annually as are motorcycles.



PennDOT-issued sign at an auto garage stating that it does vehicle inspections for cars.

- Rhode Island—biennially.
- Texas—annually.
- Utah—biennially for the first eight years, annually thereafter.^[13]
- Vermont—annually; inspections are due at the end of even-numbered months only. Inspections performed in an odd-numbered month will receive a sticker for the next even-numbered month (e.g., a car inspected in November 2011 will receive a sticker good until December 31, 2012). Inspection stickers are placed behind the rearview mirror and are color-coded by year.
- Virginia^[14]—annually;^[15] Newly registered vehicles with a valid inspection from another state are exempt from inspection until the out-of-state inspection expires. Stickers are yellow and are placed in the lower center part of the windshield.
- West Virginia^[16]—annually; color of sticker changes annually; sticker placed in lower left corner of windshield.

Jurisdictions requiring a safety inspection only prior to sale or transfer of ownership

- Alabama^[17]
- Maryland^[18]

Jurisdictions requiring a safety inspection only when bringing a vehicle from another jurisdiction

- Nebraska^[19]

Jurisdictions requiring periodic vehicle emissions inspections

- Arizona—biennially, in Phoenix and Tucson metro areas only, depending on age and type of vehicle.^[20]
- California—biennially for all vehicles from out-of-state, regardless of age; and all vehicles made after 1975 which are more than six years old (in most ZIP codes and in most major metropolitan areas including Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco).^[21]
- Colorado—biennially. Required in Denver, Boulder, and the Front Range. Includes Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld Counties.^[22]
- Connecticut—biennially.^[23]
- District of Columbia—biennially.^[24]
- Delaware—annually or biennially. Older cars registered as antiques are exempt from emissions testing.
- Georgia—annually, required in the metropolitan Atlanta area only.^[25] Vehicles from the most recent two model years are exempt from inspection.
- Idaho—required in Ada County (Boise) only.^[26]
- Illinois—biennially after the vehicle is four years old. Required only in the Chicago metropolitan area and eastern suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri.^[27]
- Indiana—biennially, required in Lake County and Porter County (Chicago metropolitan area)/Northwest Indiana only.
- Louisiana—annually, only in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area parishes of Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston, and West Baton Rouge.

- Maryland—biennially, required in 13 (out of 23) counties and the independent city of Baltimore.^[28] The most recent two model years of vehicles are exempt from emissions testing.^[29]
- Massachusetts—annually, as of 2008. Prior to 2008, an emissions inspection was required biennially based on the vehicle's model year (odd-numbered model years were inspected in odd-numbered years, even-numbered model years were inspected in even-numbered years). Also in 2008, the tailpipe test for 1995 model year and older vehicles was discontinued, vehicles without OBD-II systems receive a visual check of exhaust components.^[6]
- Missouri—biennially, based on the vehicle's model year, required only in St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Franklin County, and Jefferson County.^[9]
- Nevada—required only in Clark County (Las Vegas) and Washoe County (Reno).
- New Hampshire—annually, except the first inspection of a new vehicle or upon an ownership transfer is adjusted to expire in the month of the registrant's birthday and is therefore valid for 4 to 15 months. Emissions inspection is required only for model year 1996 and newer vehicles.^[30]
- New Jersey—biennially. Effective January 1, 2010, commercial vehicles (including taxis, limousines, jitneys, and buses) are subject to an annual inspection. Effective August 1, 2010, new non-commercial vehicles are exempt for the first five years. Used non-commercial vehicles are also exempt for the first five model years, as indicated on the New Car Dealer inspection decal. Used non-commercial vehicles originally purchased outside of New Jersey will receive a decal valid for five years from the model year of the vehicle. Effective August 1, 2010, vehicles exempt from inspection include motorcycles, non-commercial diesel vehicles between 8,500 pounds (3,900 kg) and 10,000 pounds (4,500 kg) GVWR or older than model year 1997 and under 10,000 pounds (4,500 kg) GVWR, diesel trucks between 10,000 pounds (4,500 kg) and 18,000 pounds (8,200 kg) GVWR (subject to self-inspection), farm vehicles, collector vehicles, historic vehicles, trailers, and mopeds.^[11]
- New Mexico - biennially, required only for vehicles registered in Bernalillo County
- New York—annually. Newly registered vehicles with a current inspection sticker from another state are exempt until the out-of-state sticker expires or for one year after registration in New York, whichever is sooner. Model year 1996 and newer vehicles are subject to an OBD-II emissions inspection, while older cars receive a visual check of exhaust components. Until December 31, 2010, vehicles registered in the five boroughs of New York City, as well as on Long Island, in Westchester County or in Rockland County required a tailpipe smog-test if they are not OBD II equipped (they now receive a visual only check of emissions control devices). All OBD II vehicles in those areas (1996 model year or newer) require only the OBD II test. Any vehicle 26 model years old or more does not require an emissions check of any sort.
- North Carolina—annually, required in 48 (out of 100) counties and for model year 1996 or newer vehicles, except brand new cars. Diesel-powered vehicles and cars 35 years old or older are exempt from emissions inspection. Effective November 1, 2008, no inspection decal is issued upon passing. All state inspection records both emissions and safety are now kept via electronic database, and are required for being awarded new license plates, and/or registration.^[31]
- Ohio—currently required only in the Cleveland metropolitan area (Cuyahoga County, Geauga County, Lake County, Lorain County, Medina County, Portage County, and Summit County). Vehicles up to four years old are exempt. Testing is based on an odd-even year system. If a car was purchased in 2000, it is not required to be tested until 2010, if a car was purchased in 2003, then it will need to be tested in 2009. Ohio does not charge a fee for emission testing, due to Ohio's tobacco settlement.
- Oregon—required only in the Portland and Medford metro areas^[32]
- Pennsylvania^[12]—annually for most vehicles under 9,000 pounds (4,100 kg) GVW. Required in 25 (out of 67) counties. Diesel-powered vehicles are exempt from emissions inspection.^[33]
- Rhode Island—biennially.

- Tennessee—annually, in conjunction with registration renewal. Required only in Davidson County, Hamilton County, Rutherford County, Sumner County, Williamson County, Wilson County,^[34] and the city of Memphis.^[35]
- Texas—annually, required only in the largest urban areas: Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and El Paso. Vehicles less than 2 model years old and greater than 24 model years old - including those registered as an antique or classic, are exempted from emission testing.
- Utah—in its four most populated counties of Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah, biennially if less than six years old; annually, if older, but not older than 1967; otherwise, none is required.^[13]
- Vermont—annually, done at time of State Inspection 1996 and new with OBDII, some cars are exempt
- Virginia—biennially, in conjunction with registration renewal, required only in urban and suburban jurisdictions in Northern Virginia.^[36] Newly registered vehicles with a valid inspection from another state are exempt from inspection until the out-of-state inspection expires.
- Washington—required only in urban areas of Clark County, King County, Pierce County, Snohomish County, and Spokane County.
- Wisconsin—biennially, required only in Kenosha County, Milwaukee County, Ozaukee County, Racine County, Sheboygan County, Washington County, and Waukesha County.

Jurisdictions requiring periodic VIN inspections

- Colorado - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle
- Connecticut - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle
- Florida - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle
- Kansas - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle
- New Mexico - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle
- Oklahoma - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle
- Washington—required only when registering an out-of-state vehicle for the first time in the state,^[37] or for rebuilt vehicles.^[38]
- Wyoming - Required when registering an out-of-state vehicle

States without safety, emissions, or VIN inspections

- Alaska^[39]
- Arkansas
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Montana
- North Dakota
- South Carolina
- South Dakota

See also

- Vehicle inspection
- Under vehicle inspection
- Automobile safety

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External links

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