

Why is vehicle emissions testing needed?

The Vehicle Emissions Testing Program in Canyon County and Kuna is designed to help address ozone air pollution in the Treasure Valley. Vehicles do not emit ozone, but they are a major source of the pollutants that react to form ozone. Vehicles that pass an emissions test are less likely to emit these harmful pollutants.

Why should I care about ozone pollution?

Poor air quality is bad for our health. Breathing ozone can cause chest pains, coughing, nausea, throat irritation, and congestion. It can also worsen bronchitis, heart disease, emphysema, and asthma and reduce lung capacity. Repeated exposure to ozone pollution may cause permanent damage to the lungs.

People with respiratory problems are most at risk, but even healthy people can experience difficulty breathing when exposed to ozone pollution, especially those who spend a lot of time outdoors in the summer.

Poor air quality is also bad for our economy. Under the Clean Air Act, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set protective health-based standards for ozone and other pollutants in the air we breathe. Failure to meet the ozone and other standards over a period of time can result in an area being designated “nonattainment” by EPA.

Nonattainment status may limit production capabilities of existing industries and could keep new industries from locating in a nonattainment area, resulting in fewer job opportunities. Nonattainment can also result in the loss of federal highway funding.

What else can I do to help protect air quality?

Air quality affects us all, so it is in everyone’s best interest to take an active role in protecting it. Small actions by many add up to a big difference.

- **Drive less.** Ride the bus, carpool, walk, bike, combine errands, or use other forms of alternative transportation.
- **Turn off your vehicle** when you are sitting idle, such as when waiting in a drive-through.
- **Maintain your car** and keep your tires properly inflated.
- **Don’t top off the gas tank.** Topping off allows harmful chemicals to escape into the air.
- **Avoid using gasoline-powered hand tools** and lawnmowers, especially on hot days.
- **Reduce burning.** Burning releases many types of pollutants into the air.
- **Convert from wood** to gas or electric heat, or get a clean-burning fireplace insert or woodstove.
- **Comply with air quality advisories** and burn bans.

Applus Technologies, Inc.
2216 Cortland Place
Nampa, Idaho 83687
(208) 461-1232



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Answers to
Frequently Asked Questions
about

Vehicle Emissions Testing

in
Canyon County
and Kuna



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Why Canyon County and Kuna?

In 2008, a law was passed requiring a vehicle inspection and maintenance program (or equivalent strategy) in any area of the state classified as a metropolitan statistical area where ozone concentrations are at or above 85% of the federal standard and motor vehicle emissions constitute one of the top two contributing sources.

Currently, the Treasure Valley is the only airshed in the state that meets these conditions. Ada and Canyon Counties share the same airshed. Most of Ada County has had a vehicle emissions testing program in operation since 1984. In June 2010, a vehicle emissions testing program was implemented in Canyon County and the city of Kuna.

How often must I have my vehicle tested?

Testing is required every other year. Motorists are notified of their testing month by mail.

How much does testing cost?

An emissions test costs \$11 per vehicle. The fee is due at the time of testing. A motorist is allowed one free retest if completed within 30 days of the initial test and at the same station.

What vehicles need to be tested?

Model year 1981 and newer gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles older than 5 years must be tested.

What vehicles do not need to be tested?

- Electric or hybrid motor vehicles
- Motor vehicles with a model year less than 5 years old
- Motor vehicles with a model year older than 1981
- Classic automobiles as defined by Idaho Code
- Motor vehicles with a maximum vehicle gross weight of less than 1,500 pounds
- Motor vehicles registered as motor homes as defined by Idaho Code
- Motorized farm equipment
- Registered motor vehicles engaged solely in the business of agriculture

Where can I get my vehicle tested in Canyon County and Kuna?

Take your vehicle to any one of more than 20 conveniently located testing locations at small businesses throughout Canyon County and Kuna. For specific testing locations, visit the program's website at www.idahoVIP.org.

How are emissions tested?

Vehicles are tested for appropriate levels of volatile hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and carbon monoxide plus carbon dioxide.

Gasoline-powered vehicles are tested by one of two methods—two-speed idle (TSI) or on-board diagnostic (OBD)—depending on the age of the vehicle.



- The TSI method, used on model year 1981-1995 gas-powered vehicles, samples a vehicle's exhaust to see if it is above or below standards.
- The OBD system, used on model year vehicles 1996 and newer, looks for broken or malfunctioning emissions control components.

Diesel-powered vehicles are inspected by a snap acceleration test that uses a smoke meter at the end of the exhaust pipe or the OBD system depending on the vehicle model year.

Gas caps are also inspected for leaks. On model year 1995 and older gas-powered vehicles, gas caps are removed and tested to ensure they seal properly. On model year 1996 and newer vehicles, the OBD system automatically performs the test.

What if my vehicle fails the test?

If your vehicle fails, you will receive an inspection report with the reasons why. To get the vehicle repaired, be sure to take it to a qualified technician who is experienced in diagnosing and repairing vehicle emission systems.

After repairs have been made, take the vehicle in for a retest. You are entitled to one free retest within 30 days of the initial inspection. If the vehicle fails again, another inspection report will be provided indicating the reasons why. Take it in again for repairs and have it retested. This and subsequent retests are at full price until the vehicle passes.

What happens if I don't have my vehicle tested?

Your vehicle registration will be revoked by the Idaho Transportation Department. Before you may legally drive the vehicle again, you must have it tested and it must pass the emissions test or be granted a waiver or extension. Once you have fulfilled the emissions testing requirement, your vehicle's registration will be automatically reinstated in one to three business days.

Can I get a waiver?

Two types of waivers may be available:

Repair waiver

If a vehicle fails, appropriate repairs are conducted, and the vehicle still does not pass, a repair waiver may be granted if a minimum of \$200 has been spent toward failure-related repairs.

Hardship waiver

If a vehicle fails, the owner may apply for a hardship waiver if he is not financially able to make the necessary repairs to bring the vehicle into compliance with emissions standards. Appropriate documentation is required.

Waiver application forms are available online or by calling (208) 461-1232. If granted, waivers are valid for one year from the vehicle's original due date.

Learn more: Call (208) 461-1232 or log on to www.idahoVIP.org.