

SPECIAL EDITION

The STAR Program

With the passage of AB 2289 in 2010, the Legislature gave BAR authority to make a number of changes to the Smog Check Program to improve its effectiveness. To this end, the STAR Program was developed and authorizes the inspection of both directed and gross-polluting vehicles. These changes will take effect January 1, 2013. At that time, only stations that have applied for and met the specific inspection-based performance criteria will be allowed to inspect and certify directed and gross-polluting vehicles. Both licensed Test-Only and Test-and-Repair stations will need to apply for certification under the new STAR Program for the right to inspect these vehicles. The current Gold Shield Program will be abolished on December 31, 2012.

The regulations, which implement and interpret AB 2289, were adopted in November 2011. Initial scores for stations were published on the BAR Website in December 2011. The rationale behind releasing these early scores is to provide stations (and their inspectors) the opportunity to improve their inspection processes to better comply with the Smog Check Program. Test-Only and Test-and-Repair stations may apply for the STAR Program as early as July 2012 to gain "provisional approval." Official STAR certification will not be granted until December 31, 2012.

While BAR has conducted more than 30 workshops discussing the STAR Program throughout the State, we encourage you to visit our BAR Web site at www.smogcheck.ca.gov under the STAR section to obtain additional information. We also hope that this Special Edition newsletter on the STAR Program will answer many of your questions. **BAR**

Contents

- STAR Performance Criteria 2
- The Philosophical Shift Behind the STAR Program ... 2
- STAR Scores for Stations and Inspectors 4
- STAR Appeals..... 4
- STAR Report Snapshot 5
- Frequently Asked Questions About the STAR Program ... 6
- Map of New Location of BAR Headquarters 7
- Setting it Straight..... 7



The Philosophical Shift behind the STAR Program

The STAR Program seeks to level the playing field for stations choosing to perform accurate Smog Check inspections. Those stations willing to hold the line on proper inspections will be rewarded with exclusive rights to inspect and certify directed and gross-polluting vehicles. A station's ability to certify directed and gross-polluting vehicles will be directly tied to the quality of inspectors it employs. Under the STAR program, stations and

inspectors who perform higher quality inspections have a great deal to gain at the expense of stations and inspectors who turn their backs on their responsibilities to perform accurate Smog Check inspections. Failure rates may increase which may generate more repairs. For this reason, BAR anticipates a substantial improvement in the effectiveness of the Smog Check Program, once the STAR program is implemented. **B:R**

STAR Performance Criteria

The STAR Program determines which Smog Check stations are eligible to inspect directed and gross-polluting vehicles, based on an evaluation of the station using the STAR performance criteria. The criteria can be divided into three specific categories:

- > Enforcement history
- > Short-term performance measures
- > Follow-up pass rate

Enforcement History

Citations, administrative actions, and legal decisions related to a station's business as an ARD are the ways in which a station's enforcement-related history can preclude a station from becoming STAR-certified, or will lead to decertification, if already certified. [**Note:** *Enforcement History is not currently listed on the STAR Performance Report Card because it will be evaluated by BAR during the review of a station's STAR application.*]

- > **Citations.** For one year following the effective date of the action, Citations issued to the station or any of its inspectors will prevent a station from becoming STAR-certified or will lead to decertification, if already certified.
- > **Administrative Actions.** For one year following the effective date of the action, Suspension or Probationary Orders issued to a station, its manager, or any of its inspectors will prevent a station from becoming STAR-certified, or will lead to decertification, if already certified.

- > **Legal Decisions.** For three years following a final decision, legal decisions, criminal or civil, or an order for probation against the station or any of its employees for activities that are substantially related to the ARD will prevent a station from being STAR-certified, or will lead to decertification if already certified.

Short-Term Performance Measures

The Station Short-Term Summary shows a station's results for the following STAR Program Performance Measures: Test Deviations; Incorrect Gear Selection; and Similar Vehicle Failure Rate (SVFR). Test Deviations are further divided into seven performance measures: (1) Fuel Cap Not Performed; (2) Evap. Not Performed; (3) Timing Not Performed; (4) OBD II Not Performed; (5) Max Readiness Monitors, which only considers the number of unset monitors, if any, for each vehicle during its initial inspection; (6) ASM Restarts; and (7) Aborted Tests. Together, these inspection-based performance measures are considered short-term because they are calculated based on data from the three most recent months. Short-Term scores are calculated at the end of each calendar quarter.

The STAR Program does not evaluate stations based on how their individual inspectors performed on these Short-Term Performance Measures. Instead, the station's short-term results are an aggregate of all inspections performed at that station for each three-month period. However, inspectors' results on these Short-Term Performance Measures are published on the BAR Web page in order to provide feedback to individual inspectors on their performance.

continued on next page



STAR Performance Criteria *(continued from previous page)*

During the application process, BAR will only consider the most recently posted calendar quarter of data for the short-term evaluation. Once a station is certified, decertification, based on a station's failure to meet the Short-Term Performance Measurements, will only be pursued after the station has failed to meet Short-Term Performance Measurements for two consecutive calendar quarters.

Follow-up Pass Rate (FPR)

The Follow-up Pass Rate is the Long-Term STAR Performance Measure that evaluates the performance of both the stations and the inspectors. It is the only performance measure that evaluates the performance of the inspector to determine a station's eligibility for the STAR Program. For this reason, FPR scores are given to both Smog Check stations and inspectors.

The FPR performance measure examines whether vehicles certified by stations and inspectors in their previous inspection cycle are passing their current initial inspection at a higher or lower rate than expected for "similar vehicles."

To better understand how FPR performance measure works, consider the following example:

- > **200**— 1995 Ford Mustangs, with 5.0 liter engines, were gross polluting at the start of their previous inspection cycle. Half of these vehicles were tested improperly and certified to get the vehicles to pass without the necessary emissions repairs. The other half were tested properly, failed the inspection, repaired properly, and then certified properly. Vehicles from which of the two populations will pass at a lower rate in their next inspection cycle?

Unless the improperly tested vehicles received some repairs subsequent to their last inspection, they will continue to be high-polluting vehicles in their current inspection cycle. Some of the vehicles that were properly tested, repaired, and certified in the previous inspection cycle may fall into disrepair by the time of their next inspection cycle. However, a majority of these repaired vehicles will continue to have comparatively lower emissions levels when inspected in the next cycle. As a result, the vehicles that were properly inspected, repaired, and certified will fail at a much lower rate in their next inspection cycle.

FPR scores range from zero to one. A score of zero (0) means that the performance at a station or by an inspector is below average in comparison to other stations or inspectors. A score of one (1) means that the performance at a station or by an inspector is above average. FPR scores are calculated twice per year: on July 1 and on January 1. FPR scores for new stations or inspectors can be produced once the vehicles they have certified are tested in their next inspection cycle. Similarly, stations and inspectors with extremely low test volumes cannot be evaluated on the FPR because there is insufficient data to form a statistically valid assessment of their performance. In these cases, the FPR will be left blank on the STAR Web page.

Behaviors that Affect FPR Scores

- > Clean piping
- > Clean plugging
- > Incorrect gear selection
- > Over-conditioning vehicles
- > Non-identification of visual inspection failures
- > Non-identification of functional inspection failures
- > Entering incorrect vehicle parameters to generate a more lenient emission standard or a lighter vehicle weight loading in order to create less treadmill resistance during an ASM test.

[*Note: Stations and inspectors with low FPR scores can improve their performance by performing accurate inspections appropriate to the vehicle being inspected according to the Smog Check Inspection Procedures Manual found on the BAR website.*]

How FPR Scores Affect the Overall Station STAR Score

FPR scores help to determine which inspectors are eligible to be hired or employed by a STAR station for the purpose of performing Smog Check inspections or repairs on directed and gross polluting vehicles. The only time a station's score is considered is when it employs or intends to employ an inspector who does not yet have an FPR score. Otherwise, only the inspector's FPR score is considered when bringing an inspector into the STAR Program or maintaining him/her. **BAR**

STAR Scores for Stations and Inspectors

Smog Check stations are certified in the STAR program; however, inspectors are not. The STAR Report Card provides performance results, not just for stations, but for inspectors, too. Inspectors' scores help station owners evaluate both prospective and current station employees using the same performance measures employed in the STAR Program. Inspector scores also assist inspectors in improving their individual performance by providing feedback on areas needing improvement.

While scores are provided for both stations and inspectors, there are differences in the way they are reported — most notably with regard to pass and fail results. Because stations can be certified, their report cards include pass/fail results. Inspectors, by contrast, cannot be certified; therefore, their report cards do not show pass/fail results for their individual performance, nor for an overall result.

Inspectors' scores for the Test Deviations are not broken-down and summarized separately from the other performance measures. The station page lists all the inspectors currently assigned to that station, whereas the inspector page lists the stations to which the inspector is currently assigned. Since the inspectors' scores will determine whether or not they can work at STAR stations, they will want to be sure that no one else is performing inspections using their login information.

On the next page is a screen shot of a station's report card. It includes the current station status, and a break-down of the Station Short-Term Summary (End of Quarter Evaluation). Notice the Test Deviations listed, the State Average, the Standard, the Station Average, the Incidents, and the Result.

BAR encourages stations and inspectors to visit the STAR Program section on BAR's website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov for additional information.

B:R

STAR Appeals

BAR provides information via the STAR Report Card to assist stations that wish to appeal specific incidents. There are five test deviations and performance measures that list specific incidents in order to help stations and inspectors challenge specific results when appropriate. The incidents are as follows:

- > Fuel Cap Not Performed
- > Evap. Not Performed
- > Timing Not Performed
- > OBD II Not Performed
- > Incorrect Gear Selection

Stations that wish to challenge incidents should send an e-mail to the BAR Industry Help Desk at: bar.industryhelpdesk@dca.ca.gov. BAR will only consider appeals where the challenging station or inspector supports the challenge through reference to an industry-recognized vehicle data source such

as ALLDATA, Motor, or Mitchell. Unsubstantiated challenges will not be evaluated.

Example of an Acceptable Challenge

"The STAR Performance Report Card indicates that I should have performed a timing test on a specific model year, make, and model. However, as indicated in the (list the industry-recognized resource for your information including page number), this vehicle does not have adjustable timing and therefore cannot be tested."

If BAR agrees with the challenge, that particular incident will be removed from the station or inspector's report card. Note, however, that the pass or fail result for a particular performance measure may not hinge upon a single deviation. In other words, the removal of a single incident may not necessarily change the station's result on the specific measure from a fail to a pass.

Challenges to specific incidences on the report card will be considered on a case-by-case basis. **B:R**

STAR Report Card snapshot

Station Number: [Return to Welcome page](#)

(Enter only numerical portion of license ID)

STATION INFORMATION

Station Number	
Station Name	
Address	
City	
BAR Field Office	RIVERSIDE

Inspector(s) Currently Listed in Analyzer(s)

Inspector Number	Inspector Name

Current Station Status: **Not STAR Certified**

The STAR Program does not officially begin until January, 2013. Until that time, the biennial inspection of the vehicles most likely to fail their next Smog Check inspection ('Directed Vehicles') will be performed by Test Only and Gold Shield stations, regardless of their STAR scores.

Current STAR Result:	Fail
Short-Term Measures	Fail
Follow-up Pass Rate	Pass

Station Short-Term Summary January 2012 to March 2012 (End of Quarter Evaluation)

- [Three Month Period Ending](#)
- [March - 2012 *](#)
- [February - 2012](#)
- [January - 2012](#)
- [December - 2011 *](#)
- [November - 2011](#)
- [October - 2011](#)
- [September - 2011 *](#)
- [August - 2011](#)
- [July - 2011](#)
- [June - 2011 *](#)

* Denotes the end of an evaluation quarter

Test Deviations	State Average By VLT ID	Standard	Station Average	Incidents	Result
Fuel Cap Not Performed	0.95 %	1.19 %	3.57 %	3	Deviation
Evap Not Performed	1.81 %	2.26 %	0.00 %		OK
Timing Not Performed	2.20 %	2.75 %	8.00 % **	2	OK
OBDII Not Performed	1.07 %	1.34 %	2.69 %	6	Deviation
Max Readiness Monitors	10.46 %	13.08 %	8.66 %		OK
ASM Restarts	7.08 %	8.85 %	6.30 %		OK
Aborted Tests	7.53 %	9.41 %	5.29 %		OK

Performance Measures	State Average	Standard	Station Result	Result
Total Test Deviations		1 Allowed	2	Fail
Incorrect Gear Selection		2.00 % Allowed	3.35 % (9)	Fail
Similar Vehicle Failure Rate	9.19 %	6.89 %	8.33 %	Pass

Overall Short-Term Result: Fail

* Denotes Insufficient Data To Calculate Score

** A station's rate that is outside the allowable limits may have passing marks, because there is not enough data to statistically validate that result.

This Web page does not show enforcement-related actions that would be cause for decertification from, or denial of certification to, the STAR Program. The STAR evaluation relative to these requirements will be made independently by BAR after a station has applied for STAR certification.

THE STAR APPLICATION RUNS ON THESE BROWSERS



Frequently Asked Questions about the STAR Program

Q: How long does a station have to be in business before it can become STAR-certified?

A: Stations may apply once they have one quarter of data to review during the application process.

Q: What types of stations will be operating in the Smog Check Program when the STAR Program begins?

A: When the STAR Program begins on January 1, 2013, Smog Check stations planning to test vehicles can be licensed as either a Test-Only station or a Test-and-Repair station. Gold Shield stations will cease to exist. Both Test-Only and Test-and-Repair stations may apply for STAR certification. As a result, there will be four station types:

- > Test-Only (can only test and certify vehicles, but cannot test and certify directed or gross-polluting vehicles)
- > Test-and-Repair (can test, repair, and certify vehicles, but cannot test and certify directed or gross-polluting vehicles)
- > STAR Test-Only (can only test and certify vehicles, including directed vehicles and gross-polluting vehicles)
- > STAR Test-and-Repair (can test, repair, and certify vehicles, including directed vehicles and gross-polluting vehicles; also must provide repair assistance services under BAR's Consumer Assistance Program)

Q: Can a Test-Only station apply for certification as a STAR Test-and-Repair station?

A: Yes. Unlike the Gold Shield Program, there are no repair-based performance measures in the STAR Program that would prevent Test-Only stations from applying.

Q: I own a Smog Check station in a Change-of-Ownership Area. Can I still become a STAR-certified station even though the majority of vehicles my station inspects are not in a biennial inspection area?

A: Yes. However, the ability to certify directed and gross-polluting vehicles may not have as much value to a station located outside of an Enhanced Area or even a Basic Area. Scores for both stations and inspectors from Change-of-Ownership Areas will be posted on the STAR Web page along with scores for stations and inspectors from the Enhanced and Basic Areas of the state. These scores will be based on data from their respective areas.

For more FAQs related to the STAR Program, go online to www.smogcheck.ca.gov/STARProgram. **B:R**

BAR Field Office Numbers

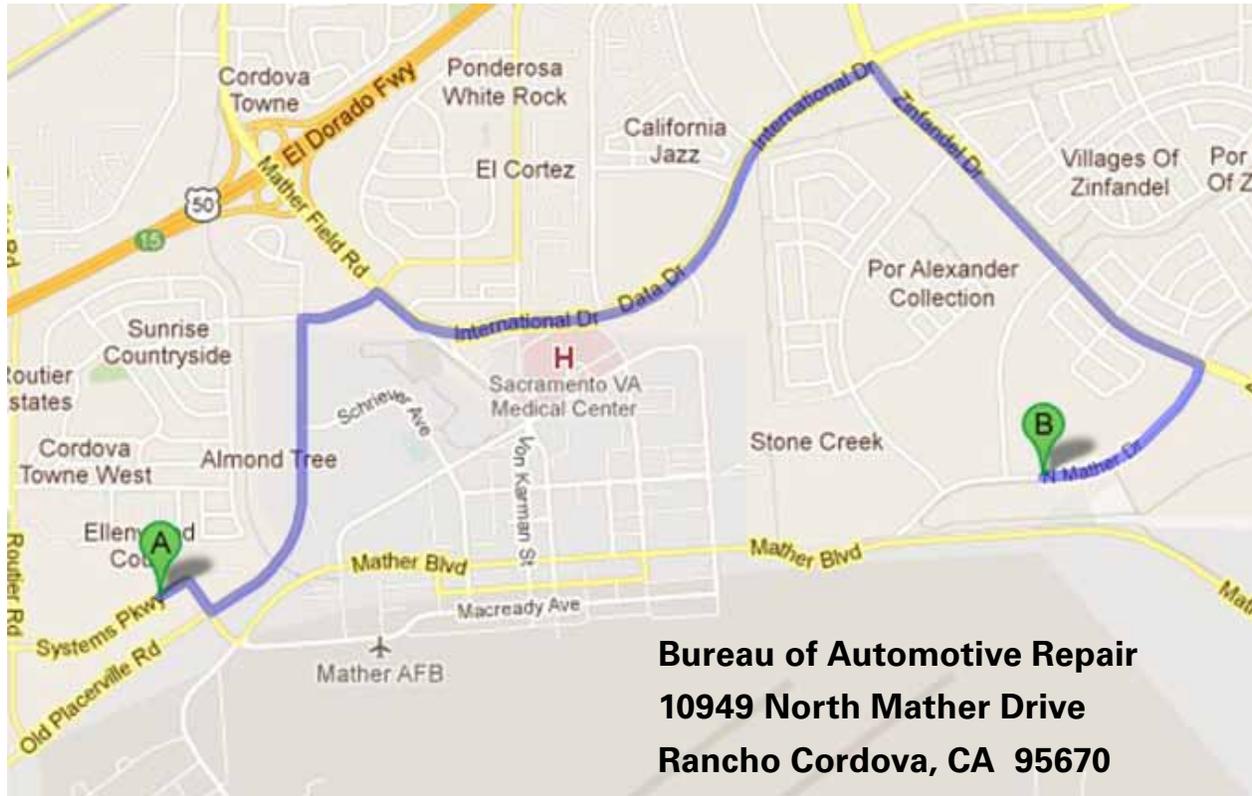
Bakersfield	661.335.7400
Culver City	310.410.0024
Fresno	559.445.5015
Hercules	510.964.3030
Irvine	949.988.5252
Riverside	951.782.4250
Sacramento	916.255.4200
San Diego	858.716.1025
San Jose	408.277.1860
South El Monte	626.575.6934
South San Francisco	650.827.2074
Valencia	661.702.6600

Other Helpful Numbers

BAR Licensing	916.255.3145
BAR Service Desk	866.860.8509
Consumer Assistance Program	866.272.9642
DCA Consumer Information Center	800.952.5210
Parts Locator Service	800.622.7733
Referee Scheduling Center	800.622.7733
SGS/Testcom	866.966.7664

Map of New Location of BAR Headquarters

Scheduled for June 2012



Setting it Straight

BAR acknowledges errors made in the winter 2012 newsletter.

Corrections are as follows:

- > **Page 2**, top of the second column: RPM means Revolutions Per Minute
- > **Page 3**, article on Station Equipment Requirements: A BAR-97 Emissions Inspection System or a "five gas" analyzer to validate the repairs made to the vehicles is not required for Repair-Only stations
- > **Page 5**, third paragraph: insert "health" between significant and threat
- > **Page 5**, Technician Snapshot Box: Brake Adjuster Class B Total should be .09% Pass
- > **Page 8**, Smog Check Station Performance Box: 11.4% should be 100%
- > **Page 15**, second paragraph: Smog Check Test-Only stations do qualify to participate in the Green Station Recognition Program. **B:R**



Bureau of Automotive Repair

10240 Systems Parkway
Sacramento, CA 95827

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BAR Executive Staff

John Wallauch, *Chief*

Doug Balatti, *Assistant Chief*

Patrick Dorais, *Deputy Chief*
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and Operations

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SPECIAL EDITION

BAR produced this Special Edition
newsletter as a service to our licensees.
The Special Edition is entirely devoted to
the STAR Program.

If you have additional questions, please
go to www.bar.ca.gov and look under
the STAR Program section.