



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Los Angeles Smog Check Station Shut Down**

*Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges “clean piping”*

LOS ANGELES – The California Department of Consumer Affairs Bureau of Automotive Repair (Bureau) has shut down South Central Test Only, and suspended the licenses of the station owner and a technician after state investigators discovered multiple instances of cheating the state’s Smog Check Program.

Administrative Law Judge Humberto Flores granted BAR’s request to immediately suspend the Automotive Repair Dealer registration and Smog Check Test Only Station license of Brenda Felix, owner of South Central Test Only, 5001 Compton Ave., Los Angeles. The Judge also suspended the Advanced Emission Specialist Technician License of Abed Ahmad Alkhatib.

The Bureau found “clean piping” occurring at the station. “Clean piping” is when a vehicle that would not pass a Smog Check inspection on its own, or is not present for testing, is fraudulently certified as passing. To accomplish this, a technician or other individual uses a clean exhaust sample from another vehicle that will pass a Smog Check while entering data for the vehicle for which the Smog Certificate is required.

“Auto pollution is a threat to public health,” said DCA Acting Director Brian Stiger. “The Bureau will continue to prosecute smog check station operators and technicians who defraud and endanger the public by keeping polluting cars on the road.”

“The goal of California’s Smog Check Program is to reduce air pollution by bringing vehicles into compliance with emissions standards,” said Bureau Chief Sherry Mehl. “When a shop illegally certifies vehicles that do not meet emissions standards, it only makes matters worse.”

## LOS ANGELES SMOG CHECK STATION SHUT DOWN

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The Bureau sought the suspension orders to immediately shut down South Central Test Only and prevent Alkhatib from being able to work as licensed Smog Check technician while the Bureau proceeds with its enforcement case. The Bureau is seeking to permanently revoke all suspended licenses.

An administrative hearing will be held at a later date to address the violations found during the investigation. The case has also been submitted to the Los Angeles County District Attorney for criminal prosecution.

The Bureau of Automotive Repair, within the California Department of Consumer Services, has 12 field offices in California that protect consumers from unlawful automotive services. The Bureau licenses more than 34,000 auto repair dealers in California and investigates complaints from the public. Last year, the Bureau handled nearly 15,000 consumer complaints and returned millions of dollars to consumers through direct refunds, rework of the vehicle, or billing adjustment.

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