



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1625 North Market Boulevard, Suite N-323, Sacramento, CA 95834

P (916) 574-8170 F (916) 574-8612 | www.dca.ca.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Glenn Mason
(916) 574-8168

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RIVERSIDE COUNTY SMOG CHECK STATIONS' LICENSES SUSPENDED

State Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges "clean piping" and "clean plugging" by A and Z Smog Test Only and Amigo Smog

MIRA LOMA – The California Department of Consumer Affairs Bureau of Automotive Repair (Bureau) has shut down two Mira Loma Smog Check Test Only stations, and suspended the licenses of two owners and two Smog Check technicians after investigators discovered they were illegally sneaking cars past the state's Smog Check test.

"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. "High polluting vehicles need to be either repaired or retired in order to protect the air we breathe. When stations or technicians cheat, everyone suffers."

The Bureau's investigation of A & Z Smog and Amigo Smog revealed the two stations worked together in committing multiple illegal acts of "clean piping" and "clean plugging."

"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.

“Clean plugging” consists of using another vehicle’s properly functioning On Board Diagnostic (OBD II) system to generate passing diagnostic readings to illegally issue smog certificates to vehicles that are not in smog compliance and/or not present for testing.

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

The Interim Suspension Orders will keep the two stations shut down and prevent the individuals from being able to work as licensed Smog Check technicians while the Bureau proceeds with its enforcement case to permanently revoke licenses for all individuals involved.

An administrative hearing will be held at a later date to address the violations found during the investigation. The Bureau of Automotive Repair will also submit the results of its investigation to the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office for criminal prosecution.

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The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers who wish to file a complaint against an auto repair facility can contact the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.autorepair.ca.gov.