

Motorists' Frequently Asked Questions About the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program

Q. What vehicles must now have California Emissions?

A. Any new model year 2008 or newer passenger car, light-duty truck or SUV that weighs 8,500 pounds or less. For the PCV program, a "new" vehicle has less than 7,500 miles on the odometer.

Q. Does this program affect used cars?

A. No, it affects only new model year 2008 and later vehicles. For the PCV program, a "new" vehicle has less than 7,500 miles on the odometer.

Q. What other states, besides California, require new vehicles to meet California emissions standards?

A. Besides California, the states of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington and Oregon require California certified vehicles. New Jersey will require them beginning in Model Year 2009, and Maryland will require them beginning in model year 2011.

Q. Does this program require a Pennsylvania motorist to go out a buy a new car?

A. No. Only model year 2008 or newer vehicles weighing 8,500 lbs or less that have less than 7,500 miles on the odometer must be CARB certified. Older vehicles already titled and registered in Pennsylvania are not required to have CARB certification.

Q. How can I tell if a new vehicle meets the requirements?

A. Two ways. A document that the manufacturer provides the dealer (MSO - Manufacturer's Statement of Origin, or MCO - Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin) will state whether a vehicle complies. Typically this certificate has clear language that the vehicle is approved or certified for use in California or all 50 states. Each vehicle is also required to have conspicuous labels in the engine compartment that state the emissions controls are certified for use in California or all 50 states. "Federal" certification or certification to "federal" standards is not California or 50-state certification.

Q. Will I be able to get a diesel vehicle under the PCV program?

A. Yes. The PCV program does not prohibit diesel engines in cars, light-duty trucks and SUV's. Diesel vehicles weighing 8500 pounds or less must have CARB certification. The most popular diesel trucks generally weigh more than 8500 pounds and, therefore, do not require CARB certification. Automakers have indicated that more light-duty diesel vehicles that meet both California and federal standards will be available in model years 2008 and 2009.

Q. Do I have to do anything different when I buy a new car?

A. No. Every vehicle subject to the PCV program that you see offered for sale on a Pennsylvania new auto dealer's lot should meet California emissions standards. Automakers and their dealers can offer Pennsylvania residents compliant vehicles only.

Q. Will I be responsible for proving the vehicle I want meets the requirements?

A. In most cases Pennsylvania title issuing agents (such as automobile dealers, notaries public, American Automobile Association (AAA) offices, tag agencies, etc.) will be trained to look for you at the vehicles MSO or MCO that is provided by the auto manufacturer. You will see the MSO or MCO when you fill out your forms for titling. If your vehicle does not have an MSO or MCO, (such as with pre-owned vehicles) you will be asked to fill out an additional self-certification form as part of the title application. In that case the engine label is the best way to see if your new vehicle complies.

Q. How can I tell certification by looking at the engine label?

A. The Vehicle Emissions Control Information (VECI) sticker mounted in the vehicle's engine compartment has language indicating the vehicle's emissions systems comply with California emissions requirements or requirements for all 50 states. If the language indicates the vehicle is federally certified or certified to federal standards, the vehicle is not CARB certified.

Q. If I buy a new vehicle at a dealership outside of Pennsylvania, will I be able to title and register it in Pennsylvania?

A. Only if it is certified by CARB for use in California or for all 50 states. Dealerships in neighboring states may stock CARB certified vehicles even if that state does not have similar requirements. PennDot will not title a model year 2008 or newer vehicle that does not comply, unless it's purchase meets one of the [limited exemptions](#).

Q. How do I exempt my new vehicle if it meets one of the [limited exemptions](#)?

A. The title issuing agent can help you complete the

Q. Are all new Hybrid-Electric Vehicles California emissions compliant?

A. No. There are hybrid-electric vehicles that may not be CARB-certified. If buying from an out-of-state dealer, check with the dealer about getting a CARB-certified version. That way, you are assured of getting the cleanest vehicle and will have no trouble titling the vehicle in Pennsylvania. Hybrid-electric vehicles offered for sale in Pennsylvania must be CARB certified for use in California or all 50 states.

Q. Do these vehicles cost more?

A. In the past, the prices of CARB-certified vehicles have been the same as those that are only "federally" certified.

Q. I just got a letter from PennDOT saying my title application was rejected because my vehicle is not-California certified. What should I do?

A. Contact the Bureau of Air Quality at 717-787-9495 or by e-mail at RA-epcontactus@state.pa.us. Your vehicle could be compliant but some self-certification paperwork was not completed.

Q. Are CARB certified vehicles exempt from Pennsylvania Emissions Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) requirements?

A. No. CARB certified vehicle are subject to the same inspection requirements as non-CARB certified vehicles when those vehicles are registered in one of the 25 Pennsylvania counties that require annual emissions inspection. A brand-new, current model year vehicle is eligible for an I/M exemption for the first year. Your new vehicle dealer can give you more information on the emissions inspection exemption when you purchase your new vehicle.

Q. I purchased a new vehicle from an out-of-state dealer. The dealer submitted the Pennsylvania titling forms. I received, some time later, a letter from PennDOT stating my application is being rejected and returned to me because the vehicle I bought is not CARB-certified. What do I do?

A. The out-of-state dealer, if they processed the PennDOT titling forms for you, is a Pennsylvania title-issuing agent and should have been aware of Pennsylvania titling procedures. Not all out-of-state vehicle dealers can process title applications.

Contact the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicle program staff at the Bureau of Air Quality at 717-787-9495 or by e-mail at RA-epcontactus@state.pa.us. Your vehicle could be compliant but some self-certification paperwork was not completed.

Delay in contacting the program staff could hinder your ability to return or replace a vehicle with a compliant model.