

FACT SHEET



San Diego County
Air Pollution
Control District

Smoking Vehicle Program

What is the Smoking Vehicle Program?

The Smoking Vehicle Program is an educational program designed to reduce visible exhaust from cars, trucks and heavy-duty vehicles through the use of a complaint hotline. The program depends on public participation. Citizens are encouraged to call the Smoking Vehicle Hotline to report a vehicle they have seen traveling San Diego's roads and freeways that is emitting excessive smoke.

How does the Smoking Vehicle Program work?

Drivers who spot a vehicle emitting excessive amounts of exhaust smoke can call the toll-free Smoking Vehicle Hotline at 1-800-28-SMOKE or visit the District's web site at www.sdapcd.org and report the vehicle. The program is voluntary and those making complaints remain anonymous.

Callers to the hotline are asked to give the license plate number, make and model of the vehicle, and the time, date and location it was observed smoking.

Using the Department of Motor Vehicle's database, the District retrieves the owner's registration information and mails an advisory letter informing them their vehicle was observed emitting excessive smoke and asking them to take steps to solve the problem. The program only covers vehicles registered in the State of California, and response is voluntary.

What does the advisory letter say and what must the owner do after receiving one?

The letter advises the owner that their vehicle was reported to be smoking, asks them to have the vehicle checked for mechanical problems, and recommends they have adjustments or repairs done to eliminate excessive emissions. Information is also included in the packet to educate vehicle owners on possible causes for the smoky emissions and programs designed to assist those owning older vehicles.

The letter also alerts the owner to the fact that excessively smoking vehicles violate the State of California Motor Vehicle Code Sections 27153 and 27153.5 and could result in a fine of \$100 to \$250 (depending on the type of vehicle) for first time offenders.

Additionally, enclosed with the letter is information specifically exempting diesel vehicles from the process but educating them on the implications of various types of diesel smoke and the benefits of proper maintenance.

After owners take any necessary corrective action, they are asked to complete the Smoking Vehicle Response Form attached to the advisory letter and return it to the District.

Can the District impose fines on vehicle owners who have been reported through the Smoking Vehicle Hotline?

No. However, the California Highway Patrol can cite vehicles for excessive smoke. At their discretion, CHP officers can issue a fix-it ticket and/or a fine.

Can the Smoking Vehicle Hotline be reached anytime, day or night?

Yes. Residents can report a smoking vehicle 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling the hotline toll-free at 1-800-28-SMOKE or through the District's web site at www.sdapcd.org.