



Community Environmental Resource Program

Serving the St. Louis and East St. Louis Communities

Volume 1, Issue 2

April, 2001

Vehicle Emissions Testing in Illinois. Why is it Necessary?

Cars, trucks, and other motor vehicles are the single biggest cause of carbon monoxide pollution and ground-level ozone (smog). This is a problem because smog can irritate the lungs, breathing passages, and eyes. In typical metropolitan areas, cars can cause as much as 70% of hydrocarbon emissions and 90% of carbon monoxide emissions. The average car on the road spits out three to four times the pollution allowed for new cars! Illinois tests car emissions in order to improve the quality of the air we breathe and to comply with strict federal regulations.

How is the test performed? A large treadmill called a “dynamometer” is used on most 1981 and newer model cars. The drive wheels are placed on the dynamometer and a hose collecting the car’s emissions is placed on the tailpipe. Then your car is put into drive. Inspectors follow a predetermined course to simulate city and

highway driving. The distance “traveled” on the treadmill is a minimum of 1/4 mile to a maximum of 1.9 miles.



This part of the test takes a minimum of 31 seconds to a maximum of 240 seconds. More than one test is sometimes needed. Most cars in good condition pass the test in less than a minute.

In addition, gas caps are tested. Gasoline caps that work properly keep harmful fumes from getting into the air. Evaporating gasoline is responsible for 40% of hydrocarbon emissions from cars. Fumes escaping from the gas tank contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog).

My vehicle failed the test. Now what? If your car or truck failed the test, it needs to be repaired and then retested. The test indicated that there is a problem with your car’s exhaust system. If you wish, you can do your own repairs. However, it is strongly suggested that you have your car repaired by a mechanic who has completed a specific program to repair an emissions problem. Once repairs are made, you can take your car back to any test station for another test. Be sure to bring all receipts for parts and labor when you return!

For help in locating qualified mechanics, the state can provide you with a publication called the *Repair Facility Performance Report* (RFPR). To get this report and more information about the Illinois Vehicle Emissions Test Program, feel free to phone the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency toll-free at 1-800-635-2380. Or, visit them on the web at www.epa.state.il.us.

What's the Deal With Ozone Levels?

What we usually call smog is mainly made up of “ground-level ozone.” Ozone can be good or bad depending on where it is located. Ozone high above the earth protects human health and the environment from dangerous radiation. But ground-level ozone is the harmful ingredient in smog pollution. This bad form of ozone is produced by the combination of pollutants from many sources: smokestacks, cars,

paint, and solvents. When a car burns gasoline or a painter paints a



house, smog-forming pollutants rise into the sky.

The smog forming pollutants “cook” in the sky. This is especially true on hot and sunny days. Just as it takes time to bake a cake, it takes time to cook up smog -- several hours from the time it is released and carried off by the wind. This explains why smog is often more severe miles from the place where it originated.

Did You Know....

In the St. Louis area, up to 7% more people are admitted to hospitals because of respiratory-related problems on high-ozone air pollution days than on low-pollution days!



How Can You Protect Yourself Against Air Pollution?

On days when weather forecasters or the pollution control agencies report that air pollution levels are high, you should avoid exercise or strenuous activity outdoors, especially late in the day when pollution levels are highest. The elderly, people with heart or lung disease, and kids should remain indoors.

Did You Know....

Asthma is the leading serious chronic illness among children and is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism!



- More than 140,000 people in the St. Louis region have asthma -and asthma can be aggravated by ozone pollution. Children and the elderly are especially vulnerable.
- Ozone can irritate your lungs. This can cause wheezing, coughing, pain when you take a

deep breath, and breathing difficulties during exercise. It can also make you more susceptible to pneumonia and bronchitis.

- Repeated exposure to ozone pollution for several months can cause permanent lung damage.

What About Breathing Asbestos? Should I Be Concerned?

Asbestos is a mineral found in certain rocks. It has strong fibers that make it useful for lots of construction applications. Its most common uses have been in piping insulation, fire proofing material, floor tile, adhesive, and as a building material additive. Even the Space Shuttle uses some asbestos because of its tremendous heat resistance qualities.



How Dangerous is Asbestos to my Health?

The health effects from inhaling asbestos in the air are long term and don't appear overnight. A form of cancer that attacks the tissue around internal organs doesn't develop until many years after exposure. No one knows for sure if there is a safe level of asbestos exposure, so the only good policy is to avoid all asbestos hazards.



Did You Know....

You'll find at least some small amount of asbestos in almost any home built before the mid-1970s. The piping and duct work of many older heating systems are wrapped with asbestos insulation. Roof shingles and exterior siding, floor tile and linoleum sheet flooring are some of the more common products containing asbestos.



If I Find Asbestos What Should I Do?

If the asbestos material is in good condition the best thing you could probably do is to leave it alone. But if it's damaged then covering it or removing it completely should be considered. You should hire a professional state certified and licensed asbestos removal contractor. An untrained homeowner will only increase the potential for exposure to dangerous levels of asbestos fibers!



For more information and help in dealing with asbestos, you can call Air Pollution Control in the City of St. Louis at (314) 613-7300, or the Illinois Environmental

Protection agency office in East St. Louis at (618) 346-5120.

Did You Know....

Bi-State Development Agency once again is selling a limited number of summer "Clean Air Passes." For \$90 this pass will give you unlimited use of Bi-State bus service and MetroLink Service anytime between June 1st and August 31st. For more information, contact Bi-State at (314) 982-1400 or (618) 271-2345.



Earth Day

Earth Day is right around the corner?! On **Sunday, April 22**, Earth Day celebrations will take place in Forest Park! There will be several bands, booths, educational events, and lots of activities for kids. —**Free** to the public!



Who Are We? How Can You Contribute?

The Community Environmental Resource Program (CERP) was launched this past September to provide needed environmental information to the people of St. Louis and East St. Louis. CERP is funded through the Environmental Protection Agency's EMPACT program - a national initiative aimed at providing communities across America with better access to information about the environment.

The program's goal is to empower citizens with information about potential environmental hazards. We want to become the community's leading source for environmental information!

CERP cannot do this without the help of the community. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact us. **Is there an area of concern that you would like us to address?? Just let us know!**

Where Can I Get More Information About Air Pollution, Ozone Levels, and Asbestos?

City of St. Louis

Health Department (314) 612-5300

Air Pollution Control (314) 613-7300

Gateway Clean Air Program (888) 748-1247

American Lung Association (314) 645-5505

Bi-State Development Agency (314) 982-1400

East St. Louis

East Side Health District (618) 271-8722

St. Clair County Health Dept. (618) 233-7769

Illinois EPA (618) 346-5120

American Lung Association (618) 344-8891

Bi-State Development Agency (618) 271-2345

Phone: (314) 421-4220 ext. 236 / (618) 274-2750 ext. 236 Fax: (314) 231-6120 Email: cerp@ewgateway.org

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