

Oregon Low Emission Vehicles

California's Emission Limits

In December 2005, the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission adopted California's emissions standards for light and medium duty vehicles. The new requirements were adopted as the Oregon Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) program and took effect beginning with 2009 model year vehicles. The primary purpose of the new requirements is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are a major cause of global warming. These rules will also decrease emissions that produce ground-level smog and toxic compounds such as benzene.

Opt-in Requirements

The federal Clean Air Act allows only two choices for new vehicle emission standards: the federal standards or the alternate California standards (which must be at least as protective of human health as the national requirements). This limitation protects manufacturers from having to face a patchwork of regulations around the nation.

Other States

Thirteen other states and the District of Columbia have adopted the alternate emission standards. These include Arizona, California, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington. In June 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency approved California's greenhouse gas limits. That removed the final barrier for other states seeking to apply the more restrictive emission limits. When the standards are in full effect, both the West and Northeast Coasts of the U.S. will be operating under the same set of alternate of standards.

Vehicles Affected

The LEV standards only apply to new vehicles purchased in Oregon or imported to the state beginning with the 2009 model year. The rules affect new light and medium-duty cars, pickup trucks and sport-utility vehicles.

Benefits

Oregon LEV regulations will reduce new vehicle emissions below the levels allowed by the federal standards.

- Greenhouse gases will be cut 30% by 2016.
- Smog-forming emissions will be lowered 12% to 33% by 2020.
- Hazardous air pollutants (including benzene) will be reduced 22% to 38% by 2020.

Costs

DEQ expects these regulations to increase the cost of new vehicles delivered for sale to Oregon. Vehicles complying with the alternate standards are estimated to cost \$200 more than federal vehicles in 2009 and \$1,200 more in 2016. However, complying vehicles will be much more fuel-efficient than those meeting the national standards. Those fuel savings will more than offset the increased vehicle cost. Owners who finance the cost of a new vehicle over a typical 60-month period are expected to realize a net savings from the first month of ownership. That is, the average monthly fuel savings will be more than the increased monthly cost of a compliant vehicle. The net savings will be \$20 to \$25 a month with fuel at \$3.00 per gallon. After a vehicle is paid off, the savings will be substantially higher

Existing Technologies

Oregon LEV standards are designed to allow auto manufacturers to comply using existing technologies with the size and type of vehicles we know today. These technologies include variable valve lift and timing, cylinder deactivation, direct fuel injection, continuously variable transmissions, turbo-charging, electric power steering, etc.

Emissions Testing

The Oregon LEV rules do not affect the vehicle emissions testing that is required in the Portland and Medford areas. Vehicles in those areas that are four or more years old typically need to pass a DEQ emissions test to be reregistered. DEQ's emissions test for



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Air Quality Division
811 SW 6th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 229-5519
(800) 452-4011
Fax: (503) 229-5675
Contact: Dave Nordberg

www.oregon.gov/DEQ/

vehicles subject to the LEV requirements will be the same as the test for any other 1996 and newer vehicles. The test connects to a vehicle's On Board Diagnostic system to verify if a vehicle is functioning correctly. If it is operating properly, it passes the test. The test for Oregon LEV vehicles is no more strict or lenient than it is now.

Diesel Vehicles

The LEV regulations require automotive diesel engines to meet the same emission standards as gasoline engines. (Automotive diesels are currently offered in Mercedes, Volkswagen and Jeep Liberty vehicles.) New rules for Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel fuel have recently gone in effect that make it possible for diesel engines to achieve much cleaner emissions.

Diesels used in today's large pickup trucks will not be affected by the requirements.

The Rules

The official rules for this program can be found at:

http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_300/oar_340/340_257.html

Alternative Formats

Alternative formats of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ Public Affairs for more information 503-229-5696.