

Ohio E Check — Repairing a Failed Vehicle

What to Do if Your Vehicle Fails the E Check Test

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To have your vehicle repaired, you have several options:

1. Select a repair shop from the list of E Check licensed repair facilities with certified technicians. It will be provided for your convenience. These technicians have completed training recommended by Ohio EPA and are qualified to diagnose and repair emissions-related failures; or,
2. Select a repair technician of your choice; or
3. Perform the vehicle repairs yourself.

If the vehicle continues to fail after it has been repaired, you may qualify for a waiver which will allow you to register your vehicle. This brochure explains how to apply for a waiver.

Step 1: Review the Vehicle Inspection Report

At the completion of your test, the lane inspector gave you a Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) that provided information about your vehicle's test results. Below the line beginning with "Individual Test Results" are five columns. This is where you will find a description of your vehicle's emissions failures. This information will be helpful to your repair technician.

There are three types of failures that could prevent your vehicle from passing an E Check test:

- **Tampering Failure** – This failure results when a vehicle does not have a gas cap (if it was originally equipped with one), catalytic converter, or diesel particulate filter (diesel vehicles only). If the Data Link Connector (DLC) is damaged, missing or covered up by an aftermarket vehicle modification (trailer brake, GPS Device, etc.), the vehicle will most likely fail or cannot be tested unless devices are removed.
- **On-board Diagnostics Failure** – This failure results when the on-board diagnostic computer (OBD II) reports that there are certain emissions control components or engine operating conditions that require repair or maintenance to ensure effective emissions control and fuel economy. In this case, the Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) will list the Diagnostic Trouble Codes (DTCs) that relate to the specific emissions component(s) causing the system failure. For more information on codes visit: www.obd-codes.com or www.engine-codes.com.
- **Evaporative System Failure** – This failure occurs when a gas cap does not maintain the required pressure to prevent evaporative emissions from escaping the fuel tank.

Step 2: Consult a Repair Technician

There is a list of licensed E Check repair facilities to help you identify a repair technician who has completed specialized training to repair emissions failures. This list is available at any test station and online at ohiocheck.org on the Technicians and Repair Shops tile. Licensed facilities have the required equipment to help the technician diagnose emissions-related problems. However, you are not required to select one of the licensed repair technicians to repair your vehicle. Make sure you provide your technician with a copy of the paperwork you received from the testing station—Vehicle Inspection Report and Tech Tips (green flyer for OBD vehicles). These documents contain important information to help your technician diagnose and repair your vehicle's emissions issues.

Warranty Coverage – Federal law requires that the emissions control systems on all vehicles be warranted for a minimum of two years or 24,000 miles. Warranty coverage for the on-board computer and catalytic converter (only) is extended to eight years or 80,000 miles for these same vehicles. Many automakers provide extended warranty coverage beyond that required by law. Depending on the model year, emissions system repairs may be covered by the manufacturer. Consult your vehicle's warranty documents or your auto dealer for more information.

Step 3: Have Your Vehicle Repaired

Your repair technician will diagnose the cause of the failure and perform appropriate repairs. It is important for you to obtain an itemized receipt for all repair charges, parts and/or labor incurred to repair your vehicle. Those who perform their own repairs should keep receipts for all emissions-related parts. These receipts are required and will be validated by an inspection of your vehicle to confirm repairs were completed prior to the issuance of a waiver or extension.

What to Do With Your Check Engine Light?

If possible do not disconnect the battery or have the technician clear the codes during repairs. This will turn the check engine light off and you will not know when the monitors are reading ready for a follow up test. You want to receive your repaired vehicle with the check engine light on, unless the technician had to disconnect the battery to make the repair.

If the check engine light was able to remain on after the vehicle is repaired, the vehicle will then need to be driven through its drive cycle to rerun the monitors (if the correct repairs are made) and the computer will turn the light off. When the light goes off then that is when to take the vehicle in for another OBD II test.

Step 4: Return Your Vehicle to an E Check Station for a Retest

Take your vehicle back to an E Check station along with the VIR from the initial failed test. If your vehicle passes, you can renew your vehicle registration. If your vehicle does not pass the second test, you should follow steps one through four again or consult the Continued Failures section below.

E Check Vehicle Repairs Improve Air Quality

E Check helps protect public health by identifying malfunctioning motor vehicles that are polluting the air. If your vehicle failed the E Check test, it is emitting high levels of pollution. It is important for all vehicles in E Check areas to run cleanly in order to reduce levels of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides—major components in ground-level ozone and air pollution. In addition to cleaning the air, repairing your vehicle will make it run more efficiently and improve fuel economy. It is important for you to complete necessary repairs and have the vehicle tested before you renew the vehicle's registration.

Continued Failures

If your vehicle continues to fail the test, you have several options to consider as outlined below.

Apply for a Waiver

When a vehicle has failed at least one emissions test and the owner has made efforts to have that vehicle repaired, a waiver may be issued at any of the 23 Full-Service E Check stations. Visit the Ohio E Check website www.ohiocheck.info for a list of locations.

Please Note: Beginning January 1, 2026, the repair waiver cost increased from \$300 to \$450. Please go to www.ohiocheck.org for additional information.

A Repair Cap Waiver is issued to a motorist when they have spent a minimum of \$450 or more (see above) towards emissions-related repairs, related to the failure, on a vehicle and the vehicle still does not pass. **The motorist must bring all original emissions-related repair receipts, as well as the vehicle for inspection, to the station in order for a waiver to be issued. Receipts will only be accepted for repairs performed after the initial E Check and/or within sixty days prior to the initial E Check.** While repairs can be conducted by any shop or vehicle owner, labor receipts will only be accepted towards a waiver if work was done at a repair facility possessing a vendor's license for automotive repair. Tampering-related or Warranty repairs do not apply to the waiver limit requirements.

Note: Waivers are not transferable to a new owner.

What Are the Typical Reasons for a Vehicle's OBD to Fail E Check?

Your vehicle will fail the OBD E Check for the following reasons:

- The Malfunction Indicator Lamp (MIL) or the check engine light is illuminated while the vehicle's engine is running.
- The MIL does not illuminate with the key on and engine off. This can indicate either a failed OBD system or a burned-out light bulb.
- The OBD diagnostic connector is damaged, missing or inaccessible.

A Note About Tampering

If your vehicle is missing a catalytic converter and was manufactured with one, your car has been tampered with and will fail the test. It is a federal and state offense to remove a catalytic converter from an automobile.

If your vehicle does not have a gas cap and requires one, it will not pass the E Check test. Be certain that your vehicle has a gas cap (if required), a catalytic converter, and all other emission control components it was manufactured with prior to bringing your vehicle to an E Check station.

Hardship Extension

Low-income motorists may be eligible for a six-month hardship extension to bring a vehicle into compliance with the E Check program standards. Owners of vehicles failing due solely to a gas cap problem do not qualify for an extension and the gas cap must be repaired or replaced.

To qualify for a hardship extension, you must bring the following items to one of the 23 Full-Service E Check stations or an Ohio EPA office:

- A completed Hardship Extension Application showing that the household income is below 150% of the federal poverty level. Hardship Extension Applications are available at every E Check station, Ohio EPA offices and at www.ohiocheck.org on the Exemptions and Extensions tile.
- The Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) from the E Check station showing that the vehicle failed the test.
- A copy of the vehicle's current registration, Ohio title OR Application for Renewal Registration by Mail notice.
- A written estimate from a repair facility totaling \$125 or more for emissions-related vehicle repairs. Estimates may include, but not be entirely comprised of, diagnostic costs.

A vehicle may only have one outstanding extension at a time.

Hardship extensions can also be processed by mailing the application and additional required documents to one of the Ohio EPA offices (see application for address).

Tips for Owners of Failed Vehicles

- Look for an E Check licensed repair facility to perform your repairs. Their certified repair technicians have received special training in emissions repairs.
- Find out what type of guarantee the repair facility offers.
- Provide the repair facility with a copy of the VIR and other paperwork (Tech Tips) issued when the vehicle failed.
- Keep the VIR and all original repair receipts.
- If you have any questions, call the Ohio E Check hotline at 1-800-CAR-TEST (1-800-227-8378).
- You also may visit the E Check website: www.ohiocheck.org