

BUREAU OF AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR

10949 North Mather Boulevard, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEWIDE STING TARGETS SMOG CHECK 'DEFEAT DEVICES'

"Operation Doorstop" enforcement action targets illegal smog testing.

SACRAMENTO, CA – Investigators with the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) conducted a statewide enforcement operation at some 200 licensed Smog Check stations across the state that are suspected of using devices to cheat on Smog Check inspections for vehicles that need to pass an inspection before being sold.

BAR's computerized Smog Check database identified stations that allegedly used On Board Diagnostic (OBD) defeat devices to improperly pass vehicles that otherwise would have failed an inspection. Such a vehicle could then be sold to an unsuspecting consumer, who believes they're buying a vehicle that passed and who may later have to spend thousands of dollars on repairs to bring the vehicle into compliance with emissions standards.

"The use of any defeat device to perform illegal smog inspections results in financial harm to California consumers and impedes California achieving its clean air goals," said BAR Chief Patrick Dorais. "The bureau's Smog Check database is technologically capable of detecting the use of these defeat devices and licensees who choose to violate the law in this way jeopardize their license and face possible criminal prosecution."

During the enforcement sweep, called "Operation Doorstop," BAR investigators inspected licensed smog check stations, contacted station owners and licensed inspectors, and confirmed the presence or use of OBD defeat devices. BAR plans to review evidence gathered during this operation and will pursue administrative and criminal cases as appropriate.

Suspected illegal activities at a licensed Smog Check station can be reported to (800) 952-5210.

(more)

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Video links of today's enforcement activity are below:

Bay Area footage: <https://clouddrive.dca.ca.gov/dl/3dLc26vKqJ>

Southern California Footage: <https://clouddrive.dca.ca.gov/dl/9aGHwn5qcw>

Footage of OBD defeat devices: <https://clouddrive.dca.ca.gov/dl/aEZgdI2igZ>

Interview with BAR Program Managers Michael Sacco (English) and Jaime Ramos (Spanish): <https://clouddrive.dca.ca.gov/dl/LxnoBlkFEG>

Photographs: <https://clouddrive.dca.ca.gov/fl/yr9NxbxccU>

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ABOUT THE BUREAU OF AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR: The California Bureau of Automotive Repair's primary mission is to protect and serve California consumers by ensuring a fair and competitive automotive repair marketplace and administering a model motor vehicle emissions reduction program. Consumers can file automotive repair complaints by contacting the bureau at (800) 952-5210. Consumers may also file a complaint online at www.bar.ca.gov.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS: The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace. The department helps consumers learn how to protect themselves from unscrupulous and unqualified individuals. The department also protects licensees from unfair competition by unlicensed practitioners. Consumers can file complaints against licensees by contacting the department at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.dca.ca.gov.