



January 2012

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
BUREAU OF AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**What is the Consumer Assistance Program?**

The Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) is administered by the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) and is designed to help improve California's air quality. Through CAP, a consumer may retire a qualified vehicle and receive \$1,000 or \$1,500 if the consumer meets low income eligibility guidelines. In addition, CAP provides qualified consumers who own a vehicle that fails its biennial (every other year) Smog Check inspection up to \$500 in financial assistance toward emissions-related repairs.

**How can I qualify to receive financial assistance to repair my vehicle?**

If your vehicle fails its biennial (every other year) Smog Check inspection and you meet income eligibility requirements, you may receive up to \$500 towards emissions-related repairs. A co-payment of \$20 is required and will be applied toward diagnosis and emissions-related repairs. The CAP application lists all eligibility requirements.

**Can anyone retire a vehicle through CAP?**

You may retire your vehicle at any time and for any reason if you and your vehicle meet eligibility requirements. If approved you may retire your vehicle for \$1,000 or \$1,500 if you meet the income eligibility requirements.

**How do I apply for CAP?**

You must first complete and submit an application to retire or repair your vehicle. To obtain a CAP application, which includes program eligibility requirements, visit BAR's Web site at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or contact the Department of Consumer Affairs' Consumer Information Center at **800.952.5210**.

**When will I be notified?**

In general, applications are processed within 30 to 60 days from the date of receipt.

**If approved, what can I expect?**

If approved, you will receive an official Letter of Eligibility and a "Frequently Asked Questions" that provides specific instructions on how to retire or repair your vehicle.

### Can I retire or repair my vehicle at any dismantler or repair shop?

No, you must retire or repair your vehicle at a dismantler or Gold Shield station under contract with BAR. Do not retire or have any repairs performed on your vehicle prior to being approved for participation and receiving your official Letter of Eligibility from CAP. You must first apply for approval, and receive your official Letter of Eligibility from CAP before you can retire or have any repairs performed on your vehicle. Once you are notified that your application has been approved, and you receive your Letter of Eligibility, you can use CAP services.

### Where can I find a dismantler?

Dismantler sites are located throughout California. A list of authorized dismantlers approved to retire your vehicle through CAP is available online at the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) link located in the "Quick Hits" section at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or by calling the Consumer Information Center at **800.952.5210**.

### Where can I find a Gold Shield station?

Gold Shield stations are located throughout California. A list of authorized Gold Shield stations approved to repair your vehicle through CAP is available online at the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) link located in the "Quick Hits" section at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or by calling the Consumer Information Center at **800.952.5210**.

### What is a Gold Shield station?

Gold Shield stations are licensed Smog Check stations. Unlike a Smog Check Test-and-Repair station, they can repair vehicles that have been approved to receive financial assistance toward emissions-related repairs through CAP. In addition, unlike a Test-Only station, they can also inspect and repair directed vehicles.

### Are the prices charged by Gold Shield stations regulated by BAR?

Gold Shield stations are independently owned and operated. The prices they charge consumers are not regulated by BAR. Consequently, consumers should shop around and compare prices before selecting a Gold Shield station to perform repairs on their vehicles.

### Who do I contact for additional information?

To obtain additional information visit BAR's Web site at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or contact the Department of Consumer Affairs' Consumer Information Center (CIC) Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:50 p.m. at **800.952.5210**.

**Please Note:** State offices are closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and all state holidays.