

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 12, 2011

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SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO SMOG CHECK STATION'S LICENSE SUSPENDED

*Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges "clean piping" and "clean plugging" by
Smog Zone Test Only Center Owner*

SAN FRANCISCO – A South San Francisco Smog Check station accused of illegal “clean piping” and “clean plugging,” and the station’s owner, have their licenses suspended pending a revocation hearing as a result of an investigation by the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR).

An Administrative Law judge has granted BAR’s request for Interim Suspension Orders (ISO) to immediately suspend the Automotive Repair Dealer registration and Smog Check Test Only Station license of Smog Zone Test Only Center, 1086 Grand Avenue, South San Francisco, and the Advanced Emission Specialist Technician License of owner Cahit Bingol.

In September and October 2010, BAR began investigating Bingol for instances of “clean piping” and “clean plugging.”

“Clean piping” is when a vehicle, that would not pass a Smog Check inspection on its own is fraudulently inspected and certified as passing. To accomplish this, a technician or other individual uses a clean exhaust sample from another vehicle that will pass a Smog Check while entering data for the vehicle for which the smog certificate is required.

“Clean plugging” consists of using another vehicle’s properly functioning On Board Diagnostic (OBD II) system to generate passing OBDII test results in order to illegally issue a smog certificate to a vehicle that will not pass an OBDII test on its own or is not present for testing.

“The bottom line is clean piping and clean plugging are against the law,” said DCA Director Brian Stiger. Dirty air is a problem for everyone and BAR will act quickly to take bad players out of business.”

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“The goal of California’s Smog Check Program is to reduce air pollution by bringing vehicles into compliance with emissions standards,” said BAR Chief Sherry Mehl. “These acts constitute serious environmental crimes, in addition to numerous violations of the Health and Safety Code.”

BAR sought the ISOs to shut down Smog Zone and prevent Bingol from being able to work as a licensed Smog Check technician while BAR proceeds with its enforcement case. BAR is seeking to permanently revoke both licenses.

An administrative hearing will be held at a later date to address the violations found during the investigation.

The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers who wish to file a complaint against an auto repair facility can contact the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.autorepair.ca.gov.

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