



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Los Angeles Smog Check Station Shut Down for Illegally Certifying Vehicles

Charged with 11 felony counts of “clean plugging”

LOS ANGELES – A Los Smog Check station and one of its technicians, accused of illegal “clean piping”, have had their licenses suspended pending a revocation hearing as a result of an investigation by the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair (DCA/BAR).

An Administrative Law judge has granted BAR’s request for Interim Suspension Orders (ISO) to immediately suspend the Automotive Repair Dealer license of Esther Park, owner of the Los Angeles Smog Center, 5552 W. Manchester Avenue, Unit B, Los Angeles, and the Smog Technician License of Martin Chen Junior.

In October 2010, BAR surveillance of Los Angeles Smog Center revealed that Chen certified Smog Check inspections on eleven (11) vehicles that were never at his station. Chen used a method called “clean piping” to certify the vehicles.

“Clean piping” is when a vehicle, that would not pass a Smog Check inspection on its own, is fraudulently inspected and certified as passing. In most instances, 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 Check is required.

“The bottom line is clean plugging is against the law,” said DCA Acting Director Brian Stiger. “It is both a crime and a violation of the Health and Safety Code. Dirty air is a problem for everyone, and clean plugging lets polluting vehicles continue to harm California’s air quality.”

“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. “High polluting vehicles need to be either repaired or retired in order to protect the air we breathe. When stations or technicians cheat, everyone suffers.”

BAR sought the ISOs to shut down Los Angeles Smog Center and prevent Chen 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.

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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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