



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHULA VISTA SMOG CHECK STATION'S LICENSE SUSPENDED

SAN DIEGO – The Bureau of Automotive Repair has suspended the licenses of a Chula Vista Smog Check station owner and one of his employees for cheating the state's Smog Check Program.

Bureau investigators found that Pedro Marquez, the owner of Ernie's Auto Repair and Smog in Chula Vista, and employee Luis Espinoza were "clean piping" and "clean plugging" vehicles to get them through their Smog Check tests.

"Clean piping" is when a vehicle that would not pass a Smog Check on its own, or is not present for testing, is fraudulently 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, but enters the data for the vehicle for which the Smog Check certificate is required. "Clean plugging" is when a technician plugs the On Board Diagnostics generation II (OBD II) system into a different vehicle from the one that is being tested.

"Clean piping and clean plugging are illegal and cannot be tolerated," said Acting Bureau Chief Patrick Dorais. "This fraudulent conduct undermines the many honorable smog stations and technicians performing accurate inspections on thousands of cars every day. It threatens the quality of air we all breathe and depend on as Californians, but particularly our young children and the elderly."

An Administrative Law Judge has granted the Bureau's request for Interim Suspension Orders to immediately suspend Ernie's Auto Repair Automotive Repair Dealer registration, Smog Check License, Lamp Station License and Break Station License, along with

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Espinoza's Advanced Emission Specialist Technician License. The Bureau will now proceed with its efforts to permanently revoke all of those licenses.

Ernie's Auto Repair is located at 1415 Broadway, Suite 103/104 in Chula Vista.

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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