



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### SEARCH WARRANT SERVED AT SMOG STATION IN CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

SACRAMENTO, CA – On Thursday, July 20, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Bureau of Automotive Repair, along with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, served a search warrant at Vernon Smog Star, a licensed Smog Check station, located at 1785 E. Vernon St, in the city of Los Angeles. The warrant comes as a continuation of the bureau's work that began last April with "Operation Doorstop," a statewide enforcement operation directed at some 200 licensed Smog Check stations across the state suspected of using devices to cheat on Smog Check inspections.

The bureau used a combination of video surveillance and proprietary data analysis techniques to confirm that vehicles were being inspected and certified without ever being present at the station. The data indicated an electronic defeat device was being used by the station. Defeat devices are used to improperly pass vehicles that otherwise would have failed an inspection or, in many instances, were not present at the station. Such a vehicle could then be sold to an unsuspecting consumer, who believes they're buying a properly certified vehicle and who may later have to spend thousands of dollars on repairs to bring the vehicle into compliance with emissions standards.

Bureau Chief Patrick Dorais has previously stated, "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. 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 search, the bureau seized Smog Check test equipment and records of inspections performed by the station. The bureau's investigation of the station is ongoing, and criminal charges are expected to be filed in the coming weeks. The

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bureau will also be seeking the revocation of the licenses of all the individuals involved in the alleged fraudulent activities at Vernon Smog Star.

**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](http://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](http://www.dca.ca.gov).

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