

LEV II - Amendments to California's Low-Emission Vehicle regulations

At its November 1998 meeting, the Air Resources Board (ARB) amended California's Low-Emission Vehicle (LEV) regulations. The new amendments, known as LEV II, will advance the state's clean air goals through improved emission reduction standards for automobiles.

The ARB first adopted LEV standards in 1990. These first LEV standards run from 1994 through 2003. LEV II regulations, running from 2004 through 2010, represent continuing progress in emission reductions. As the state's passenger vehicle fleet continues to grow and more sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks are used as passenger cars rather than work vehicles, the new, more stringent LEV II standards are necessary for California to meet federally-mandated clean air goals outlined in the 1994 State Implementation Plan (SIP).

The SIP is the state's "road map" to attain federal clean air standards by 2010 and includes among its measures strategies to further reduce air pollution from automobiles and other mobile sources. When LEV II is fully implemented in 2010, it is estimated that smog-forming emissions in the Los Angeles area will be reduced by 57 tons per day, while the statewide reduction will be 155 tons per day.

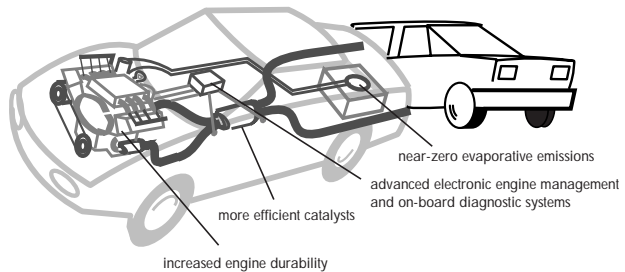
The LEV II amendments

The LEV II amendments affect passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty vehicles.

The main elements are:

- Extension of passenger car emission standards to heavier sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks (with gross vehicle weight up to 8,500 pounds) which formerly had been regulated under less-stringent emission standards;
- Extension and tightening of the fleet average emission standards during 2004-2010 (a fleet includes all new vehicles from an automaker);
- Creation of a new super-ultra low emission vehicle (SULEV) category for light-duty vehicles (SULEV's will only emit a single pound of hydrocarbons during 100,000 miles of driving-about the same as spilling a pint of gasoline);
- Significantly lower oxides of nitrogen emission standards for the low and ultra-low emission vehicle categories, a reduction of 75% from the current LEV standards;
- Increased emission control durability standards from 100,000 miles to 120,000 miles for passenger cars and light trucks;
- Further reduction of evaporative emissions;
- Creation of partial zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) credits for vehicles that achieve near zero emissions. The credits would include full ZEV credit for a stored hydrogen fuel cell vehicle, 0.7 credit for methanol reformer fuel cell vehicles, 0.4 credit for a compressed natural gas SULEV and 0.2 for a gasoline fueled SULEV;

LEV II brings the advanced emission controls of passenger cars to light trucks and sport utility vehicles



- Changes in how the smog index is calculated;
- Amendments to the zero-emission and hybrid electric vehicle test procedures; and
- Removal of a less stringent emission standard that would have resulted in increased sales of new diesel cars, pickups, and SUVs.

Expanded in-use compliance testing

The certification and in-use compliance requirements for motor vehicles will be streamlined under a program known as the Compliance Assurance Program 2000 (CAP 2000). This will reduce manufacturer and government certification testing and paperwork before vehicles are sold and increase in-use compliance testing. The result will be greater assurance that vehicles are actually complying with emission standards once they have left the showroom and are being driven by the public.

New, cleaner standards for sport utility vehicles, pickups and minivans

The expansion of passenger car emission standards to vehicles up to 8,500 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) means that about 90 percent of sport utility vehicles and most large pickup trucks will be included in the passenger car class with more stringent emission standards. Even for the new “medium duty” class (8,501-14,000 pounds GVW) of larger sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks and vans, emission standards will be nearly as stringent as passenger car standards, though some adjustment will be made for these vehicles’ heavier weight.

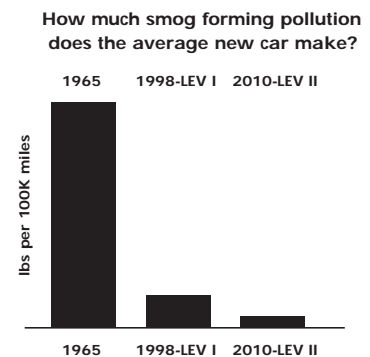
Fast facts

- Autos and light trucks account for about 40 percent of California’s air pollution. Sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks and minivans account for nearly 50 percent of all new vehicles sold today.
- The medium-duty vehicles in this group put out 50 to 150 percent more smog-forming pollution than the typical passenger car.

For more information

Please contact the ARB’s Public Information Office at (916) 322-2990, or toll-free (800) 242-4450 (USA only), or (800) END-SMOG (California only) to leave a voice message requesting information be mailed to you.

You may obtain this document in an alternative format by contacting the ARB’s ADA Coordinator at (916) 322-4505 (voice), (916) 324-9531 (TDD, Sacramento area only), or (800) 700-8326 (TDD, outside the Sacramento area).



A new 1965 car produced about a ton of smog-forming hydrocarbons during 100,000 miles of driving. California's low-emission standards have cut that to around 50 pounds for the average 1998 car. LEV II would further reduce emissions from the average new 2010 car to approximately 10 pounds.