

Truck and Bus Regulation Low-Use Vehicle Exemption

Last Updated: September 25, 2019



This summary describes compliance options for vehicles operated less than 1,000 miles per year in California. This summary has been updated to reflect the voided 2014 amendments.

What is the low-use vehicle exemption?

The low-use vehicle exemption allows low-use vehicles to operate in California without meeting the PM filter or upgrade requirements of the Truck and Bus regulation in any compliance year. Annual odometer and hour meter reporting is required.

What vehicles qualify for the low-use exemption?

This option applies to vehicles that operate less than 1,000 miles per calendar year in California. If a vehicle has non-op registration with DMV it must be reported as Low-Use with a December or January odometer reading. This also applies to PNO deferred, affidavit of non-use, salvaged vehicles and vehicles that were "last registered" to the fleet but DMV does not reflect a sale.

In addition, the engine or power take off must be operated less than 100 hours per year to qualify for the low-use exemption if the vehicle is designed to power other equipment that can only be used while stationary, like a drill rig or a concrete pump. The hour limitation does not apply for vehicles where the engine is used to power an auxiliary mechanism that strictly loads and unloads cargo from the vehicle. Examples include, but are not limited to, dump trucks, cement powder trucks, or trucks with attached lift devices or when the vehicle is mobile when it is powering an auxiliary mechanism such as a water truck.

Can I use the low-use exemption for a two-engine street sweeper?

Yes. A street sweeper with two engines may use the low-use exemption like other trucks if it meets the low-use mileage limit for the drive engine and 100 hour limit for the auxiliary engine. However, any Tier 0 auxiliary engine in a two-engine sweeper shall not operate more than 100 hours per year every year starting in 2014, and it must be reported and labeled with the letters SW on both doors. Vehicle owners must report their annual odometer reading and keep required records. For more details on requirements for street sweepers see <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onrdiesel/documents/faqsweeper.pdf>

How do I take advantage of the low-use vehicle exemption?

Each January you can designate which trucks will use the low-use exemption for the year. You must report vehicle information, odometer readings, and hour meter readings if applicable by January 31 of the compliance year or within 30 days of purchasing a vehicle. You must also report end of year odometer readings and when the vehicle is sold to demonstrate the vehicle met the mileage limits. You must also keep records of odometer readings, hour meter readings if applicable, vehicle purchases, and sales.

I travel in and out of California, how can I qualify for the low-use exemption?

Vehicles that travel in and out of California can qualify for the low-use exemption if the usage in California remains below the limits. Owners will need to report odometer readings (and hour meter readings, if applicable) just like other fleets except, at the end of the year, the owner will also need to report total miles/hours operated outside of California. The miles (and hours) operated outside California are subtracted from the total miles/hours operated when determining compliance. Fleet owners must keep documentation of the miles travelled inside and outside California, like International Registration Plan records, fuel tax records, or other documentation.

Do I need to keep mileage records if I use a mileage based option like low-use?

Yes. Documentation accepted includes Periodic Smoke Inspection Program (PSIP) test results, BIT inspection records, and third party maintenance records. You must also keep mileage records to document travel outside California borders, and emergency miles to support reported miles traveled. Emergency miles records must be one of the following: Contract showing that the company was dispatched as an emergency support vehicle by a local, state, or federal agency, or subcontractors must provide a copy of the contract with the company that is directly dispatched by the public agency along with their contract number or a copy of that contract. If you are requesting to claim the low-use exemption after a gap in compliance for the vehicle, you must provide documentation **prior** to being considered eligible to use the option.

How do miles traveled for emergency use count when using the low-use exemption?

Mileage or hours of operation accrued in support of an emergency event does not count towards the usage limits of the low-use exemption. Emergency events include wild fires, floods, and other natural disasters where the vehicle was dispatched by a local, state, or federal agency. Emergency use includes miles travelled to and from an emergency event, and delivery of services or supplies in connection with emergency event. The vehicle owner must report the miles and any hours of vehicle use at an emergency event.

Can I claim the low-use exemption if my odometer is not functioning?

No, you cannot claim a mileage base extension without a properly functioning odometer. If the odometer does not operate, you must use a hub-odometer that has a unique serial number, and has a lock-out feature that permanently prevents tampering. The serial number must be reported if a hub-odometer is used.

What happens if I go over the usage limits for a vehicle claiming the low-use exemption?

A vehicle that has exceeded the low use mileage or hour limit thresholds is no longer eligible to use any flexibly option in the regulation. Additionally, the vehicle will need to be brought into immediate compliance with the engine model year schedule by either retrofitting or replacing the vehicle depending on the model year of the engine in the vehicle.

Where can I get more information?

Fact sheets, compliance tools and regulatory documents about the Truck and Bus Regulation are available at www.arb.ca.gov/dieseltruck. If you have questions or wish to obtain this document in an alternative format or language, please call ARB's diesel hotline at (866) 6DIESEL (634-3735). TTY/TDD/ Speech to Speech users may dial 711 for the California Relay Service.