

Direct Final Rule: Evaporative and Refueling Emission Test Procedures, Four-Wheel Drive Dynamometer Test Provisions, and Vehicle Labeling

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is finalizing a regulation that amends certain provisions of the evaporative and refueling emission regulations, without changing the stringency of the existing program. These changes are intended to: 1) reduce manufacturers' test burden; 2) clarify existing evaporative and refueling requirements; and 3) better harmonize Federal and California evaporative and refueling test procedures. This direct final rule also amends certification and in-use testing regulations in order to allow four-wheel drive dynamometer testing and updates the basic content requirements for vehicle labeling. The rulemaking is applicable to certification and in-use test vehicles for the following categories: light-duty vehicles, light-duty trucks, medium-duty vehicles, and heavy-duty vehicles up to 14,000 pounds GVWR (gross vehicle weight rating). There is no environmental impact as a result of this rulemaking.

Key Elements of the Direct Final Rule

- Optional waiver for the two-day diurnal-plus-hot-soak test procedure reduces overlapping test results and testing burden for certification vehicles. Manufacturers are still required to comply with the two-day evaporative standard even if they choose to waive the procedure.
- Allows equally or more stringent alternatives for the running loss portion of the three-day diurnal-plus-hot-soak test procedure for certification or in-use test vehicles. Advance EPA approval is required for new methods. The criteria are spelled out in the regulations.
- Option to use an equally or more stringent alternative canister loading procedure. Advance EPA approval is required for new methods. The criteria are spelled out in the regulations.
- Revised Sealed Housing for Evaporative Determination (SHED) Calibrations for Tier 2 evaporative vehicles. The criteria are spelled out in the regulations
- Option to not disconnect evaporative hose during the Onboard Refueling Vapor Recover (ORVR) test procedure.
- Harmonization of evaporative test data for non-Tier 2 vehicles and incomplete heavy-duty vehicles when California's standards and test procedure are equal to or more stringent than EPA's.
- Allows using the four-wheel drive dynamometer for certification and in-use testing of four-wheel drive vehicles.

- Update basic content requirements for the Vehicle Emission Control Information (VECI) label. The criteria are spelled out in the regulations.

Background

EPA's regulations detail the process motor vehicle manufacturers must follow to obtain EPA evaporative emissions certification, as required in the Clean Air Act. On December 31, 2000, EPA issued a Guidance Document, CCD-02-20, which described evaporative and refueling revisions to reduce testing burden without affecting stringency. Some of the items discussed in the guidance document require regulatory action in order to be implemented; these items are included in this Direct Final Rulemaking.

Currently, four-wheel drive vehicles are tested on two-wheel drive dynamometers. With increased numbers of four-wheel drive vehicles, it is recognized that a four-wheel drive dynamometer is more appropriate to use. The amendments update certification and in-use testing regulations, allowing for testing on four-wheel drive dynamometers.

The current content required on vehicle labeling dates back 30 years, when many automotive components were manually adjusted and before catalysts were introduced. The amendments update the required label contents, replacing obsolete information with more recent, useful information.

There is no environmental impact as a result of this rulemaking. All changes are considered to be non-controversial and will not affect the level of stringency required by the current regulations. As a result, these technical amendments are being issued as a Direct Final Rulemaking and concurrent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

For More Information

You can access documents on this Direct Final Rule on EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality Web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/regs/ld-hwy/evap/>

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