

FAQ: TDEC Announces Vehicle Emissions Testing to End on Jan. 14, 2022

1. What just happened?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [has published approval in the Federal Register](#) of a revision to Tennessee's air quality plan, referred to as the State Implementation Plan (SIP). This revision means the [annual inspection and maintenance \("vehicle emissions testing"\) requirement](#) for vehicle registration will end in five Tennessee counties – Hamilton, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson. Davidson County will continue vehicle emissions testing.

EPA's approval will be effective Sept. 16, 2021, which is 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. Tennessee law states that the elimination of vehicle emissions testing will be effective Jan. 14, 2022, which is 120 calendar days following EPA's approval. The last day vehicle emissions testing will be required in Hamilton, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties is Jan. 13, 2022.

2. Why is vehicle emissions testing ending?

The Tennessee General Assembly passed a [law, signed by former Governor Bill Haslam on May 15, 2018](#), that eliminates vehicle emissions testing 120 calendar days after EPA approval.

3. Does vehicle emissions testing end immediately?

No. Vehicle emissions testing will no longer be required in certain counties after Jan. 13, 2022.

On or before Jan. 13, 2022, persons registering their vehicles in any Tennessee county that requires vehicle emissions testing will still be required to get a vehicle emissions test. After Jan. 13, 2022, persons registering their vehicles in Hamilton, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties will no longer be required to get a vehicle emissions test.

Vehicle emissions testing in Davidson County will not end on Jan. 14, 2022. Persons registering their vehicles in Davidson County will still be required to complete vehicle emissions testing in order to register their vehicle.

4. Why is vehicle emissions testing continuing in Davidson County?

As part of the May 15, 2018 law, counties with their own vehicle emissions testing contract were given the option to continue vehicle emissions testing requirements with approval from their local governmental body. Metro Council voted to continue vehicle emissions testing in Davidson County. For more information on Davidson County's vehicle emissions testing, [click here](#).

5. What does this mean for air quality and public health?

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EPA determined that the removal of vehicle emissions testing in Tennessee is consistent with the federal Clean Air Act and all applicable regulations. Tennessee continues to maintain the cleanest air it has seen in decades.

EPA's technical analysis concludes that after removal of vehicle emissions testing, Hamilton County and the Middle Tennessee area will continue to comply with all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Since the NAAQS are set to protect public health and welfare, and EPA's technical analysis shows that the areas will continue to comply with all NAAQS, public health and welfare will continue to be protected once vehicle emissions testing is removed from the Tennessee SIP.

6. Why will vehicle emissions testing continue until Jan. 14, 2022?

State law requires vehicle emissions testing to end 120 days after EPA approves removal of vehicle emissions testing from the SIP. The approval was published in the Federal Register on Aug. 17, 2021. It becomes effective 30 days after publication, on Sept. 16, 2021. Vehicle emissions testing will end on Jan. 14, 2022, which is 120 calendar days after the effective date of EPA's approval.

7. Why did it take this long for vehicle emissions testing to end?

Vehicle emissions testing in Tennessee was required by federal law. To remove the vehicle emissions testing requirement from Tennessee's SIP, a number of steps had to be taken to remain in compliance with federal law.

TDEC completed a detailed analysis of air quality impacts associated with vehicle emissions testing to ensure attainment of NAAQS was not jeopardized. This analysis and accompanying report were approved by the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board and sent to EPA for review and approval. EPA then reviewed Tennessee's submission and conducted its own technical analysis to confirm attainment of air quality standards was not jeopardized. The removal of the vehicle emissions testing requirement from the SIP required public hearings as well as comments and responses at both the state and federal level.

According to state law, vehicle emissions testing will end 120 calendar days after approval by EPA. EPA's approval will be effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

8. Will my county clerk register my vehicle without a vehicle emissions test?

County clerks will continue to require proof of a passing emission test until Jan. 13, 2022, barring any exemptions or waivers. Renewals in Davidson County will continue to require a passing emissions test.

9. Do I still need an exemption if I am out of state?

If your tags are due for renewal in January 2022 and the vehicle is located out of state, you are still required to [apply for an exemption](#) from vehicle emissions testing requirements if registering the vehicle before Jan. 14, 2022. After Jan. 13, 2022, an

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exemption will not be required to renew your vehicle registration. An out-of-state exemption will continue to be required for Davidson County.

10. What if I fail my vehicle emissions test?

If your vehicle fails the vehicle emissions test, you are given a 30-day waiver to get required repairs on the vehicle. If your waiver period ends before Jan. 14, 2022, you will be required to pass a vehicle emissions test before renewal of your registration is allowed. If your repair period extends to after Jan. 13, 2022, you will not have to get your vehicle emissions tested for renewal. Residents of Davidson County should review the county-specific requirements.

11. Will I be able to renew my vehicle registration online without proof of vehicle emissions testing after Jan. 13, 2022?

TDEC will coordinate with the Tennessee Department of Revenue to ensure that vehicle emissions testing requirements for online vehicle registration renewals will not be required after Jan. 13, 2022 for Hamilton, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties. Vehicle emissions testing requirements for online vehicle registration renewals will remain for Davidson County.

12. My vehicle registration renewal says I still need a vehicle emissions test. What should I do?

TDEC will be coordinating with the Tennessee Department of Revenue to ensure that all mailings for vehicle registration renewals accurately detail vehicle emissions testing requirements. However, if you are a resident of Hamilton, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson or Wilson County and you receive renewal correspondence after Jan. 13, 2022 indicating a need for vehicle emissions testing, please disregard the information regarding vehicle emissions testing.