



CLEAN AIR ACT AND EMISSIONS TESTING FEES FAQ

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ISSUE

This report answers some frequently asked questions about the Clean Air Act (CAA) and emissions testing fees.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CLEAN AIR ACT FEE AND THE EMISSIONS TESTING FEE?

In short, the fees are remitted to different entities and pay for different things.

The motor vehicle owner pays the CAA fee to the state when registering a vehicle. The law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner to collect a \$10 fee, which he may identify as the "federal Clean Air Act" fee on registration forms, with each two-year motor vehicle registration ([CGS § 14-49b](#)). Fee revenue initially went to a CAA account within the General Fund and was used to cover costs associated with implementing the CAA's provisions. (The CAA is a federal law designed to control air pollution; the 1990 amendments made the CAA more stringent, requiring states to implement more accurate motor vehicle emissions testing, among other things.) Currently, revenue is split between the General Fund and Special Transportation Fund (STF) (as noted below).

By contrast, the emissions testing fee (\$20) is paid at the time of emissions testing to private testing center operators to cover the cost of the emissions test. The law requires all motor vehicles (with some exceptions) to undergo a biennial emissions inspection to confirm that the vehicle meets federal and state exhaust emissions standards. The DMV commissioner sets the testing fee, up to the \$20 statutory maximum ([CGS § 14-164c](#)).



CLEAN AIR ACT FEE

What is the Legislative History of the Clean Air Act Fee?

The fee was established in 1993 ([PA 93-235](#)). The act required DMV to charge a \$4 CAA fee on all renewals of vehicle registrations except vehicles that are (1) electrically powered, (2) exempt from registration fees, or (3) not self-propelled (e.g., trailers). [PA 01-6, June Special Session](#) (JSS), increased the renewal fee from \$4 to \$10 for vehicles with two-year registration periods and to \$5 for vehicles with one-year registrations and applied the increased fee to new registrations.

Originally, the law required fee revenue to be deposited in a CAA account in the General Fund. [PA 01-6, JSS](#) changed the way the fee revenue is appropriated, splitting it between the STF (57.5%) and the CAA account (42.5%). The legislature eliminated the CAA account in the 2009 budget ([PA 09-03, JSS](#)).

What Does the Clean Air Act Fee Pay For?

There are currently no restrictions on the use of CAA fee revenue, except that it is split between the General Fund and the STF as noted above. Thus, money collected from the fee can be used for any General Fund or STF expenditure. The STF is used for a wide range of transportation purposes, such as paying debt service on bonds issued for highway construction and public transit projects.

Prior to 2009, fee revenue deposited in the General Fund went to the CAA account, which was used to cover state agency costs incurred in implementing the 1990 CAA amendments that were not otherwise paid for by DEEP air permit fees. The account was primarily used to fund DEEP staff who enforced air pollution laws, developed the CAA-required state implementation plan, and performed other related functions (for more information, see [2002-R-0532](#)).

EMISSIONS TESTING FEE

Is There an Emissions Charge on New Vehicles?

A vehicle four model years old or less does not need to have an emissions test ([CGS § 14-164c\(k\)](#)), but its owner may have to pay the CAA fee if he or she needs a new or renewal registration for the vehicle (as opposed to transferring an existing registration from an old vehicle to the new one)([CGS § 14-49b](#)).

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