

# **Q & A: *Frequently-asked questions***

## ***about the electronic inspection program***

### ***1. Why did we change the way we perform safety and emissions inspections?***

In the past, vehicle owners would receive a windshield sticker to note the vehicle had passed its inspection. Now, you no longer receive a windshield sticker. Your vehicle inspection date is due no more than 90 days before your plate expires.

### ***2. What does this system achieve for vehicle owners, for the environment, for the state?***

Because owners cannot renew their vehicle's registration until after it has passed its safety and/or emissions inspection, the state expects inspection compliance to increase to 97 percent. Increased compliance means vehicles will be kept in better running order and vehicle emissions will be properly controlled.

### ***3. What are safety and emissions inspection fees?***

Safety inspection fees are \$13.60. Emissions inspection fees, which include safety inspections, cost \$30.00.

### ***4. How is the program electronic?***

The program is electronic because a record of the vehicle's inspection is entered into the DMV's vehicle registration database. DMV license tag agencies and law enforcement personnel use this database to look up information about your vehicle, such as its license tag number and registration information. The database is updated anytime an inspection occurs.

### ***5. How does the electronic inspection program work?***

When you go to get your inspection, the mechanic will inspect and test your vehicle, you will pay for the inspection and receive a receipt and inspection report. A record of your vehicle's inspection is entered electronically into the DMV vehicle registration database. Your next inspection will be due the same month your vehicle registration renewal is due and must be obtained no more than 90 days before your plate expires.

**6. How will I know when my next inspection is due?**

Vehicle owners will receive an annual vehicle registration renewal notice to renew their license plate and/or license tag sticker. The renewal notice will also indicate when your vehicle is due for inspection.

**7. What happens if I do not get my vehicle inspected by the due date indicated?**

Your vehicle registration will be automatically blocked until the vehicle is inspected. This means that you must get your vehicle inspected before you renew your registration.

**8. Which should I get first, my inspection or my vehicle registration?**

Your vehicle must pass inspection before its registration can be renewed. You must have your vehicle inspected no more than 90 days before your plate expires.

**9. How will the police know that my vehicle has passed inspection?**

A record of the inspection will appear on the DMV computer database that police now use to check registration information about vehicles.

**10. How will I get a license plate for a new vehicle I just purchased?**

A new vehicle must be inspected before it is sold at retail in this state. Upon purchase, you will be provided a receipt certifying inspection compliance. The inspection conducted prior to your purchase is valid until the license plate is due for renewal.

**11. How will I get a license plate for a used vehicle I just purchased from a dealer?**

A used vehicle must be inspected before it is offered for sale at retail in this state. Upon purchase, you will be provided a receipt certifying compliance. The inspection conducted prior to your purchase is valid until the license plate is due for renewal.

**12. I purchased a used vehicle from an individual, not a dealer. How do I get my license plate?**

A used vehicle acquired from a private sale in this state must be inspected before it is registered unless it has received a passing inspection within the previous 12 months.

**13. I have an unregistered vehicle that I now wish to drive. What do I need to do?**

An unregistered vehicle must be inspected before the vehicle can be registered.

**14. If the registration cannot be issued until it is inspected, and I can't drive the vehicle to the inspection station, how do I legally get the car in compliance?**

DMV may issue a 10-day permit to a person that authorizes him/her to drive an insured vehicle for the purpose of inspection and registration. You should contact your local license plate agency or License and Theft Bureau office for the permit. Office addresses and phone numbers are available at [www.ncdot.org/dmv](http://www.ncdot.org/dmv) under "Office Locations."

**15. My vehicle is due for inspection, but I will be out of the state. What do I do?**

A person who is out of state may obtain an emissions inspection in the jurisdiction where the vehicle is located in lieu of an inspection in North Carolina as long as it meets the requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (40 C.F.R 51).

**16. I'm moving from a non-emissions county to an emissions county. Do I have to have my vehicle inspected again?**

No. You will not have to get your vehicle inspected until the current registration expires.

**17. I'm moving to North Carolina from another state. Will my vehicle need to be inspected before I obtain my North Carolina license plate?**

You will be allowed to register the vehicle without an inspection. When your next annual registration renewal is due, you must have the vehicle inspected to renew your registration.

**18. Are some older vehicles exempt from an emissions inspection?**

Yes. If a vehicle is a model 1995 or older, it is exempt from having an emissions inspection. However, it will still need to have a safety inspection.

**19. My vehicle is 35 years old or older. Do I need to have it inspected?**

No. Vehicles that are 35 years old or older are exempt from North Carolina safety and emissions inspections.

***20. Does a heavy-duty vehicle require an emissions inspection?***

A vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) greater than 8,500 pounds requires only a safety inspection.

***21. I have permanent plates on my vehicle. When is my inspection due?***

Permanent-plated vehicles must be inspected between January and December of every year, but their inspections are not synchronized with registration renewal. The date the inspection is conducted will not affect the vehicle's registration, as long as the inspection occurs on a yearly basis.

**FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE  
NORTH CAROLINA INSPECTION PROGRAM,  
CALL 877-421-0020**