

Safety Inspections

Safety inspections are required to register or renew the registration on many motor vehicles. There are some exceptions, which are discussed in the next section.

Chapter 10 discussed that you need to be in shape to drive. Just the same, your vehicle needs to be in shape to be driven.

Your vehicle safety inspection is good for two registration years unless you sell the vehicle. “Even” model year vehicles (like 2018) must be inspected when their registration expires during “even” calendar years. “Odd” model year vehicles (like 2017) must be inspected when their registration expires during “odd” calendar years. Each official inspection station may charge an inspection fee not to exceed \$12 (or up to \$10 for a motorcycle inspection).

If your vehicle passes the safety inspection, the inspection station will give you a certificate of inspection to show as proof. The certificate is good for 60 days. If you purchased a vehicle from a Missouri dealer, the certificate provided by the Missouri dealer is good for 90 days if the inspection was completed within 60 days prior to the purchase date.

Your vehicle registration renewal notice will assist you in determining whether an inspection is required for your next renewal.

Exceptions to the Requirement

The following types of vehicles are exempt from the safety inspection requirement:

- Motor vehicles for the first ten years following the model year of manufacture and having less than 150,000 miles on the odometer are exempt from the safety inspection requirement. This includes vehicles with an out-of-state title. Example: A 2017 model year vehicle where the mileage continues to be less than 150,000 miles, the vehicle would be exempt from the safety inspection through and including calendar year 2027.
- All trailers.
- Motor vehicles engaged in intrastate commerce and registered with the Missouri Department of Transportation.
- Motor vehicles that display historic license plates.
- Motor vehicles sold for junk, salvage, or rebuilding.
- Motor vehicles sold from dealer to dealer.
- Low speed vehicles as defined in **Section 304.029, RSMo.**
- Motor vehicles registered for 26,000 pounds or above, and registered for a period of less than 12 months. Note: Renewal notice will list a safety inspection requirement; however, if the office issues or renews the registration on or after April 1st, an inspection is not required.

If your vehicle does not fit into the exceptions listed above, it will be required to pass a safety inspection. Any licensed inspection station may inspect your vehicle for safety. Authorized stations will display the sign shown on Page 54. Read your motor vehicle renewal notice for guidance regarding your vehicle's safety inspection requirement.

Equipment Needed

Brakes — Brakes must be in good working order.

Headlights — Your vehicle must have at least two functioning white headlights.

Taillights — Your vehicle must have at least two functioning red taillights and reflectors that other drivers can see from 500 feet.

Signaling Devices — Your vehicle must have functioning turn signals and brake lights as originally installed by the manufacturer.

Steering Mechanism — Your vehicle's steering mechanism must not have too much play or binding.

Tires and Wheels — You must not have bald or mismatched tires on your vehicle.

Safety Glass — If your vehicle was made after January 1, 1936, it must have safety glass in all windows.

Windshield — The viewing area of your windshield may not be badly broken.

Vision Reducing Material — Your vehicle must not have anything on the windshield that will reduce your visibility, except labels and stickers required by law or ordinance, and informational signs on the upper portion of the windshield normally tinted by manufacturers.

Windshield Wipers — Your vehicle's windshield wipers must work.

Seat Belts — If your passenger car was made after June 30, 1964, it must have two sets of seat belts in the front seat.

Horn — Your vehicle must have a functioning horn that other drivers and pedestrians can hear.

Exhaust System — Your vehicle must have an attached exhaust pipe, muffler, and tailpipe.

Mirrors — If your vehicle was made after 1967, it must have an inside and an outside rearview mirror.

Air Pollution Control Devices — If your vehicle was made after 1967 and does not have a diesel motor, it must have air pollution control devices. These pollution control devices must be as originally installed by the manufacturer.

Fuel System — The fuel system, including all lines, hoses, connections, and tank(s), must be firmly attached and must not leak.

Mud Flaps — Trucks without rear fenders, registered for over 24,000 pounds, must have mud flaps.

Bumpers — Bumpers on passenger vehicles may not exceed 22 inches above the ground when measured at the highest point. Commercial vehicle bumper heights are determined by gross vehicle weight rating.

Other Equipment Required by Law

In addition to the equipment needed to pass the safety inspection, Missouri law requires the following equipment:

License (Registration) Plates — Missouri law requires that license plates be securely fastened to a vehicle, and that all parts of the plates are visible and clean for view or inspection by any law enforcement entity. If you have frames around your license plates, the MSHP reminds you that the frames must not cover any part of the plates.

If you receive two plates, you must place one on the front and one on the back of your vehicle.

If you have a trailer or a motorcycle, you will only receive one plate, which must be on the back of your vehicle.

If you have a truck licensed in excess of 12,000 pounds, you will only receive one plate, which must be placed on the front of the truck. If you want a second plate, it must be specifically requested. You must place the original plate on the front of your truck and if a second plate is issued, it must be placed on the rear of the truck.

License Plate Light — Your vehicle must have a white light shining on the rear license plate so the plate can be seen from 50 feet.

Projections — You need special equipment if something in your vehicle overhangs the rear by more than five feet. During the day, the end of the projection must have a red flag or cloth that is at least 16" square. The end of the projection must have a red light from ½ hour after sunset until ½ hour before sunrise.

Towlines — When you are towing another vehicle, your towline must keep the vehicles within 15 feet of each other. From ½ hour after sunset until ½ hour before sunrise, both vehicles must have lights on.

Slow Moving Vehicle Sign — From sunset to ½ hour before sunrise, any vehicle moving 25 mph or slower must have a "slow moving vehicle" sign (refer to Chapter 3). The sign must be on the rear of the vehicle, near the middle, and four feet or more above the road. The sign must be clean and reflective.

Studded Snow Tires — Your vehicle may have studded snow tires only from November 1 to April 1.

Window Tinting — Tinting or sun-screening material is permitted on the side and rear windows (front door windows at no more than 65% light blockage).

Emissions Inspections

Motorists residing in St. Louis City and the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, and Jefferson are also required to have emissions inspections, if applicable. There are some exceptions, which are listed on the next page.

For information on emissions inspections not covered in this Guide, please call 1-866-623-8378, or visit the Department of Natural Resources website at <http://dnr.mo.gov/> and look for the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program (GVIP).

The emissions inspection is a two-year inspection. Just like the safety inspection, “even” model year vehicles with registrations expiring in “even” years must be inspected during “even” calendar years. “odd” model year vehicles with registrations expiring in “odd” years must be inspected during “odd” calendar years.

All vehicles must be emissions inspected at the time of sale regardless of the model year (refer to the list of exceptions below). New motor vehicles and the first retail sale of titled motor vehicles during the model year of the vehicle and the following year, are exempt from the inspection requirement provided the odometer reading is less than 6,000 miles at the time of sale.

Exceptions to the Requirement

The following motor vehicles are exempt from the emissions inspection requirement:

- New motor vehicles, not previously titled, during the model year of the vehicle and the following year, provided there is no change in ownership.
- 1995 and older gasoline-powered vehicles.
- 1996 and older diesel-powered vehicles.
- Motor vehicles with a manufacturer’s gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) over 8,500 pounds.
- New motor vehicles not previously titled and registered for the four-year period following their model year of manufacture, with fewer than 40,000 miles at the first required biennial inspection.
- Motor vehicles that are driven fewer than 12,000 miles between biennial safety inspections
- Vehicles powered by fuels other than gasoline, ethanol or diesel.
- Motor vehicles that display “historic plates”, school bus, shuttle bus, motorcycle, motortricycle, or street rod plates.
- Gasoline-powered low speed vehicles in Franklin County only.
- Motor vehicles registered in one of the affected areas (St. Louis City and the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, and Jefferson) but based and operated outside the area for 24 consecutive months.