



# Regulatory Announcement

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## Compliance Assurance Program (CAP 2000) Final Rule

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is adopting regulations that reinvent the federal program for certifying that new cars and light-duty trucks meet national air pollution standards. The new Compliance Assurance Program, known as CAP 2000 (since manufacturers may opt-in for model year 2000), covers passenger cars, minivans, sport utility vehicles and pick-up trucks. CAP 2000 will save vehicle manufacturers about \$55 million a year in regulatory compliance costs and provide more flexibility in meeting compliance requirements. Ultimately, by improving EPA's ability to detect compliance problems and by encouraging production of cleaner vehicles, this final rule will also lead to improved air quality.*

### Background

EPA's vehicle certification program requires manufacturers to demonstrate that new cars and light-duty trucks meet the required emission standards prior to offering new models in the commercial marketplace. EPA then issues a certificate of conformity permitting the sale of those vehicles. Given the generally stable state of emission control technology on today's cars and trucks, coupled with in-use compliance programs, it was believed that certification requirements could be streamlined substantially, with greater emphasis placed on in-use performance.

EPA developed CAP 2000 during a three-year discussion process with manufacturers, the California Air Resources Board and other interested parties. In 1996, these parties signed a Statement of Principles committing to work together to improve future in-use emissions control performance of cars and light-duty trucks while reducing overall compliance burdens. This program reflects their efforts.

## **Overview of CAP 2000**

CAP 2000 streamlines the existing vehicle certification program, enabling manufacturers to save significant time and money. In addition, it requires manufacturers to test customer-owned in-use vehicles for model year 2001 and beyond. This enhances the ability to catch and fix problem vehicles early on, and encourages manufacturers to design future vehicles that are cleaner and more durable. The CAP 2000 program also assures that the emissions of in-use vehicles remain at levels below the current emissions standards.

While manufacturers will have to do less testing of prototypes, they are required to later demonstrate compliance by testing more than 2000 in-use vehicles per year. Tests will be required on vehicles when they are approximately one and four years old. If non-complying vehicles are identified, the manufacturer must test more vehicles for the purpose of determining if an emissions recall is necessary. EPA will likewise use the in-use data to make independent evaluations about the need to pursue emissions recalls. The in-use test

data, which has never before been collected by EPA in this large scale, will be used by EPA to enforce the standards and by manufacturers to improve their designs. The data will also be available to the public and to researchers.

The final rule contains a broad-based restructuring and streamlining of the pre-production light-duty emission certification program, including many administrative burden reductions. Savings will result from reduced reporting and pre-production durability and emission testing requirements, and timing flexibilities.

Consistent with the Clinton Administration's pledge to write regulations in "plain English," EPA's new certification regulations are much easier to read and better organized. They will also be much shorter, as the number of pages of regulations are cut in half. Electronic submissions are highly encouraged, resulting in even more savings.

## **Environmental Benefits and Costs**

CAP 2000 will improve air quality in two ways. First, the increased emphasis on in-use testing should lead manufacturers to design and produce vehicles with cleaner, more durable air emission control equipment. Second, shifting the focus from pre-production to actual in-use vehicles allows EPA to direct more resources to investigating whether vehicles are actually in compliance.

## Flexibilities to Industry

The CAP 2000 program will significantly change the way EPA and automotive manufacturers do business together. This program allows vehicle manufacturers more flexibility in the timing for obtaining a certificate of conformity and in the way vehicles are tested for certification compliance. For example:

- Technical decisions previously made by EPA are now delegated to manufacturers. Manufacturers will be given more control over their certification schedules (which are closely linked to production schedules) with less EPA oversight.
- Manufacturers' testing burden is significantly reduced: the number of durability test vehicles is projected to be reduced by 75 percent and the number of emission data test vehicles by about 50 percent.
- Manufacturers will demonstrate in-use emission performance by testing more than two thousand in-use vehicles per year. EPA will use the data to identify possible in-use compliance problems and to confirm that the streamlined certification process is effective at predicting the emissions performance of in-use vehicles. EPA will also be able to more effectively target non-complying vehicles for potential recall actions. The savings derived by manufacturers from streamlining the certification program will more than offset the manufacturer cost of testing vehicles in-use, resulting in significant savings for most manufacturers.

## For More Information

Additional documents on this final rule are available from the EPA Air and Radiation Docket by calling 202-260-7548; please refer to Docket No. A-96-50. In addition, the rule and related documents are available electronically via the EPA Internet server at:

[www.epa.gov/oms/ld-hwy.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oms/ld-hwy.htm)

For further information about CAP 2000, please contact Linda Hormes at:

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Additional documents about light-duty vehicle certification are available electronically at the Internet site given above.