



# Mecklenburg County's Smoking Vehicle Program

## ***What is the Smoking Vehicle Program?***

The Smoking Vehicle Program is a program run by Mecklenburg County Air Quality (MCAQ) in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 20-128.1. This program helps prevent excess pollution in our community. Citizens may report vehicles that are observed emitting excessive visible emissions within Mecklenburg County. MCAQ then notifies the owner of the reported vehicle of the citizen report. If necessary, the vehicle should be repaired or adjusted so it does not smoke.

## ***Why are smoking vehicles a problem for the community?***

Chemicals in the smoke contribute to the larger air quality problem in Mecklenburg County and the surrounding region. This smoke causes irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and lungs, especially for children, older adults and people with chronic lung disease.

## ***What causes a vehicle to smoke?***

When smoke is coming from the tailpipe of a motor vehicle, it indicates some type of mechanical problem. Catching these problems early can prevent expensive repairs down the road. A vehicle that is not properly maintained also costs more to operate due to increased fuel and oil costs.

## ***North Carolina General Statute 20-128.1. Control of visible emissions.***

- (a) "It shall be a violation of this Article:
- (1) For any gasoline-powered motor vehicle registered and operated in this State to emit visible air contaminants under any mode of operation for longer than five consecutive seconds.
  - (2) For any diesel-powered motor vehicle registered and operated in this State to emit for longer than five consecutive seconds under any mode of operation visible air contaminants which are equal to or darker than the shade or density designated as No. 1 on the Ringelmann Chart or are equal to or darker than a shade or density of twenty percent (20%) opacity.
- (b) Any person charged with a violation of this section shall be allowed 30 days within which to make the necessary repairs or modification to bring the motor vehicle into conformity with the standards of this section and to have the motor vehicle inspected and approved by the agency issuing the notice of violation. Any person who, within 30 days of receipt of a notice of violation, and prior to inspection and approval by the agency issuing the notice, receives additional notice or notices of violation, may exhibit a certificate of inspection and approval from the agency issuing the first notice in lieu of inspection and approval by the agencies issuing the subsequent notices.
- (c) The provisions of this section shall be enforceable by all persons designated in G.S. 20-49; by all law-enforcement officers of this State within their respective jurisdictions; by the personnel of local air pollution control agencies within their respective jurisdictions; and by personnel of State air pollution control agencies throughout the State.
- (d) Any person who fails to comply with the provisions of this section shall be subject to the penalties provided in G.S. 20-176. (1971, c. 1167, s. 10.)"

## ***Where do I submit the Smoking Vehicle Response Form?***

- Internet: <http://airquality.charmeck.org/SmokingVehicles>
- Mail: Mecklenburg County Air Quality, Attn: Smoking Vehicle Program  
2145 Suttle Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28208-5237
- Fax: 704-336-4391

## ***For more information***

Contact MCAQ at 704-336-5430, or visit the program website at <http://airquality.charmeck.org/SmokingVehicles>