

Department of Consumer Affairs

Bureau of Automotive Repair

Strategic Plan 2013–2017



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Message from the Chief

It is with pleasure that I present the Bureau of Automotive Repair's 2013–2017 Strategic Plan. To fulfill our mission with determination and efficiency, we must follow a usable plan that emphasizes a long-range view and realistic goals to attain meaningful improvements to our programs and the services we provide. That includes being aware of all available resources and opportunities that will enable us to adjust to the demands of an ever-changing industry and environment.

Some areas in California continue to be some of the most polluted in the nation. To assist with meeting California's air quality challenges, we must have aggressive goals and implement plans that will minimize unethical business practices and provide significant environmental benefits to our state. With that in mind, we continue to increase our efforts to inform and educate the public and our licensees on the importance of the effective operation of the programs regulated by the Bureau. Utilizing complex equipment and new technology, we have advanced California's Smog Check Program to a level that is state of the art.

While demonstrating some outstanding achievements in the past, this Strategic Plan allows us to re-examine our current challenges with the same inspiration that lead to innovative advances in our Smog Check Program. With these successes and challenges, we will continue into the future as the nation's leader in the vehicle emissions testing industry and as an advocate for the health and protection of the people of California and the nation.

As a key advocate of consumer health and protection, I present this Strategic Plan to BAR employees, consumers, licensees, and interested parties as my pledge to continue to improve and develop the services that the Bureau provides in this state. This plan is our challenge over the next four years to reach goals and objectives that will result in a level and quality of service our consumers and licensees deserve.

John Wallauch
Chief, Bureau of Automotive Repair

Strategic Plan 2013–2017

Our Mission

The Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) protects the health and interests of California consumers by administering an effective vehicle emissions reduction program and ensuring quality automotive repair services from its licensees.

Our Vision

The BAR will be acknowledged as a world leader in protecting and promoting the interests of consumers and in developing innovative and cost-effective approaches to reducing vehicular emissions through the Smog Check Program.

Our Values

As a government agency dedicated to protecting California consumers and the environment, the BAR values:

Accountability – We are accountable to the people of California and stakeholders and encourage communication from all individuals on the programs we regulate.

Integrity – We communicate with truthfulness and make ethical decisions consistent with BAR’s mandates and mission without consideration of self-interest.

Employees – We value our employees and provide them with superior service and support.

Efficiency – We strive to deliver high-quality services to all, both inside and outside of the organization, with efficient use of all available resources.

Innovation – We are progressive and initiate new ideas and concepts to improve the automotive repair industry and deliver quality services to the public.

Goals and Objectives

The Bureau of Automotive (BAR) has adopted the following strategic goals for 2013-2017. Through ongoing planning and monitoring, these goals will be re-evaluated and adjusted as necessary to meet business needs.

GOAL ONE

BAR communication efforts will inform, educate, and empower.

- 1.1 Accelerate retirement of high-polluting vehicles through targeted program solicitation.
- 1.2 Provide online Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) application services for repair assistance and vehicle retirement.
- 1.3 Develop educational materials on consumer rights and industry responsibilities.
- 1.4 Create greater awareness of the STAR, auto body inspection, and other BAR programs.
- 1.5 Overhaul our public Web site to be more user-friendly for both consumers and industry and review necessity and currency of information displayed about BAR programs.

GOAL TWO

BAR enforcement will continue to protect consumers from illegal and unethical practices.

- 2.1 Develop a certification program for total loss salvage vehicle repairs.
- 2.2 Create an electronic system for transmitting lamp and brake certificates to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).
- 2.3 Expand the use of Smog Check Program data to effectively target enforcement.
- 2.4 Partner with law enforcement and other agencies to identify vehicles with tampered emissions control systems, as commonly found in street racing.
- 2.5 Work with DMV and the Referee to identify and take action against counterfeit Vehicle Identification Numbers.
- 2.6 Identify and take action against persons involved in selling and purchasing fraudulent smog certificates.
- 2.7 Target false advertising and the selling of services that provide little or no benefit to consumers.
- 2.8 Identify repair dealers operating without a valid registration and bring them into compliance with the Automotive Repair Act.

GOAL THREE

BAR will continue to implement innovative strategies for achieving the emissions reduction goals of the Smog Check Program.

- 3.1 Introduce an advanced inspection program for model-year 2000 and newer vehicles.
- 3.2 Evaluate and update the STAR Program to improve the quality of inspections.
- 3.3 Continue to collect roadside emissions data and streamline auditing procedures for program evaluation purposes.
- 3.4 Restructure the repair assistance and vehicle retirement programs to further improve utilization of available resources.
- 3.5 Dedicate resources to the continuous auditing of vehicle emissions inspection equipment.

GOAL FOUR

BAR will continue to license individuals and register businesses in a timely and efficient manner.

- 4.1 Transition the licensing and enforcement databases into the Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA) new consolidated BreEZe system.
- 4.2 Integrate an electronic imaging process with BreEZe.
- 4.3 Incorporate an online licensing application and payment process into BreEZe.

GOAL FIVE

BAR will increase organizational productivity to enhance customer service.

- 5.1 Partner with DCA and the California Department of Human Resources to improve training, development, recruitment, and retention of employees.
- 5.2 Document operational procedures to preserve institutional knowledge due to retirement and other organizational separations.
- 5.3 Recognize superior job performance resulting in exceptional contributions to BAR's mission.
- 5.4 Automate and update internal information technology systems and applications to increase staff productivity.

Accomplishments for 2008–2012

Improved California air quality by assisting motorists in the repair and retirement of vehicles.

The Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) assisted motorists in the repair and retirement of 300,000 vehicles, removing an estimated 50,000 tons of vehicle emissions from California's air.

Utilized modern vehicle technology to identify fraudulent smog testing practices.

The Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) developed procedures for the investigation and prosecution of Smog Check technicians and facilities fraudulently using data from the onboard computer system of one vehicle to certify a noncompliant vehicle ("clean-plugging").

Developed and implemented the Education First Program.

This program educates facilities undergoing initial registration as an Automotive Repair Dealer on the Automotive Repair Act and related regulations, the expectations of an Automotive Repair Dealer, BAR programs and policies, and other information necessary to enable the repair facility to maintain compliance with the Automotive Repair Act.

Developed and implemented new methods of combatting unlicensed activity.

In 2011, BAR implemented regulations to authorize administrative citations to be issued in conjunction with Orders of Abatement and monetary fines, which has proven especially effective in addressing unlicensed activity by automotive repair dealers.

Reduced time involved in processing enforcement cases and consumer complaints.

By evaluating complaint intake processes, BAR implemented measures to expedite transmittal of consumer complaints to BAR Field Offices. BAR collaborated with prosecuting agencies to identify areas for improved efficiency and implemented measures to reduce case-processing timeframes.

Enhanced probation monitoring efforts and increased cost-recovery collections.

As part of DCA's Consumer Protection Enforcement Initiative, BAR implemented a probation monitoring and reporting system for compliance with all disciplinary orders containing probation and cost-recovery provisions.

Completed occupational analysis of licensed Smog Check technicians.

In 2009, BAR hired an outside consultant to perform a job analysis for the Smog Check technician license. This study was conducted to ensure the existing occupational analysis was still applicable following several legislative and regulatory changes. Additionally, the analysis confirmed and adjusted license examination weights provided in a 2006 study.

Restructured the Licensing Program to provide several viable licensure paths for Smog Check shops and technicians.

In 2009, an independent consultant hired by BAR determined that license and training programs needed updating. In response, BAR adopted regulations to create licensing options for stations and technicians, which correlate better to the best practices of the automotive repair industry and the knowledge, skills, and abilities involved in this profession. The new licensing program provides multiple paths to licensure for both stations and technicians, as opposed to the old “one-size-fits-all” approach.

Initiated the STAR Program to improve the overall effectiveness of the Smog Check Program.

In December 2011, BAR introduced the first phase of the STAR Program, a legislatively (AB 2289 in 2010) mandated initiative to incentivize higher quality Smog Check inspections. The program requires vehicles most likely to fail their next Smog Check to have their inspections performed at stations meeting specific performance criteria. The program was fully implemented on January 1, 2013. For the first time, Smog Check stations and technicians are evaluated on a publicly accessible Web site that doubles as a management information system for station owners. To develop this program, BAR adopted regulations on the performance measures and other program features with input from the Smog Check industry received at more than 30 statewide workshops. More than 2,500 stations are currently certified under the STAR Program. Early signs suggest that the new program is creating a significant and positive paradigm shift within the industry, resulting in more accurate Smog Check inspections statewide.

Established on-the-job training for students through the Referee Inspection Program.

Working with the Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC), BAR provides services for vehicles with unique test requirements that cannot be performed at a licensed Smog Check station. Referee inspection facilities are located at community colleges, which presents a natural opportunity to provide students actual work experience while attending school. Students participating in this program now leave school with automotive knowledge and actual work experience in support of their licensure and employment.

Implemented an inspection program for diesel-powered vehicles.

In partnership with the California Air Resources Board and the Department of Motor Vehicles, BAR completed the implementation of AB 1488 (Mendoza, 2007) to add model-year 1998 and newer diesel-powered vehicles into the Smog Check Program. The inspection program encompasses 500,000 diesel vehicles.

Implemented a visible smoke test for gasoline-powered vehicles.

Following enactment of AB 1870 (Lieber, 2006), BAR incorporated a Visible Smoke Test into the Smog Check Program. This test identifies and requires repairs of vehicles that are emitting excessive plumes of smoke from their tailpipe and/or engine crankcase. The new test helps reduce airborne particulate matter, a cancer-causing carcinogen, emitted by vehicles with excessive exhaust emissions.

Reduced license application processing time.

BAR reduced the amount of time to process an application from six weeks to less than two weeks by streamlining business processes.

Implemented an automated processing system for consumer assistance.

In partnership with its central database contractor, BAR created an automated system for processing and monitoring the status of vehicle retirement and repair assistance applications, tracking disbursements, and issuing reports under the CAP.