FRAMINGHAM

Three downtown locales cited in recent months for fraudulent vehicle inspections

Posted October 22, 2009 01:00 PM

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View Three downtown locales cited in recent months for fraudulent vehicle inspections in a larger map

The above map shows the proximity of the three downtown automotive service stations, less than one mile apart from each other, that were cited in recent months for allegedly giving a combined 80 motorists passing inspection stickers when their vehicles should have failed emissions tests, state officials said.

By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

Three downtown automotive service stations, less than one mile apart from each other, have been cited in recent months for allegedly giving a combined 80 motorists passing inspection stickers when their vehicles should have failed emissions tests, according to state officials.

The state environmental department announced Friday that the Framingham Petroleum and Auto Center, LLC, also known as MetroWest Petroleum, at 174 Union Ave., under inspector Luis Morales, served a 30-day suspension of its state vehicle inspection license in the spring for conducting 25 fraudulent emissions inspections during the first seven months of 2008.

The site remains under an 11-month stayed suspension until March 19, 2010, which allows the center to conduct inspections based on continued compliance.

Also during the first seven months of 2008, Aoude Gulf Co., at 655 Waverly St., under inspector Yacoub Aoude, conducted 38 fraudulent inspections, according to state officials. The inspection site served a 45-day suspension in the spring, and officials are evaluating possible future enforcement, according to environmental department spokesman Joe Ferson.

In June, Samuel Bicalho, 22, of Framingham, the operator of ZE Carlos Auto Repair, at 243 Howard St., pled not guilty to criminal charges relating to fraudulent vehicle inspections. He was released on the condition that he not perform inspections until his case is over.

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occurs. It is also unfair to the vast majority of well-run auto inspection stations, which do the right thing by detecting and repairing vehicles that fail to meet the state's emission standards."

RMV-licensed facilities charge $29 to conduct yearly safety and emission inspections required for cars and truck in Massachusetts.

In fall 2008, state officials implemented the "next generation" Vehicle Emission Test and Safety Inspection Program requiring that model year 1996 and newer motor vehicles, as well as 2008 and newer medium-duty vehicles, undergo an annual on-board diagnostic emissions test.

The program automatically compares data generated from each test on a vehicle to any information on that vehicle contained in the state's Vehicle Inspection Database. The program then checks for discrepancies in the vehicle's emissions control information and alerts MassDEP.

On-site investigations typically come as a result of finding anomalies within the program, said environmental department spokesman, Edmund Coletta.

“If the patter doesn’t match … usually it’s a pretty good indication that something’s going on,” he said.

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