

Clean Vehicles Program

Focus on medium- and heavy-duty low- and zero- emission vehicle standards

Washington adopted low- and zero-emission vehicle standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles through the Advanced Clean Trucks regulation in 2021 and the Heavy-Duty Low NOx Omnibus regulation in 2022. These regulations require manufacturers to sell less-polluting combustion engine vehicles and increase sales of zero-emission vehicles. They don't prohibit anyone from purchasing or continuing to use gas- or diesel-powered vehicles in Washington.

Emissions standards are a critical policy tool for addressing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. Transportation is Washington's highest emitting sector, making up 40% of our total emissions. And over 30% of those emissions come from medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.¹

The state is committed to partnering with the trucking industry to transition to clean vehicles and has committed significant funding for charging infrastructure and truck purchases.

Why does Washington adopt California's vehicle emission standards?

Under the federal Clean Air Act, states have the option to adopt federal motor vehicle emissions standards or California's motor vehicle emission standards, but they can't create their own. In 2005, the Legislature directed the Washington Department of Ecology to adopt and maintain consistency with California's low-emission vehicle standards. In 2020, the Legislature expanded Ecology's mandate to include zero-emission vehicle standards.

California's vehicle emissions standards are more stringent than federal standards and better aligned with our state's legal limits on greenhouse gas emissions.² By law, Washington is required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030, 70% by 2040, and 95% by 2050.

Washington is one of 17 states, in addition to Washington D.C., that adopts California's vehicle emissions standards. The California Air Resources Board has up-to-date information on policies by state.³

How does Heavy-Duty Low NOx Omnibus (HDO) work?

HDO begins in model year 2026 and sets air pollution and greenhouse gas standards for nearly all internal combustion engine vehicles sold in Washington that weigh over 10,000 pounds.

Manufacturers will still be able to sell some older, more polluting engines, but those sales must be offset through zero-emission vehicle sales, cleaner internal combustion engine vehicles, or mitigation projects in disadvantaged communities.

HDO targets air pollutants that can irritate human respiratory systems and affect lung and heart functioning: particulate matter and nitrogen oxide. Under HDO, 2026 engines sold in Washington will emit 50% less particulate matter and 75% less Nitrogen Oxides (NOx). In 2027, the standard increases to a 90% NOx reduction.

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2202054.pdf>

² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.30.010>

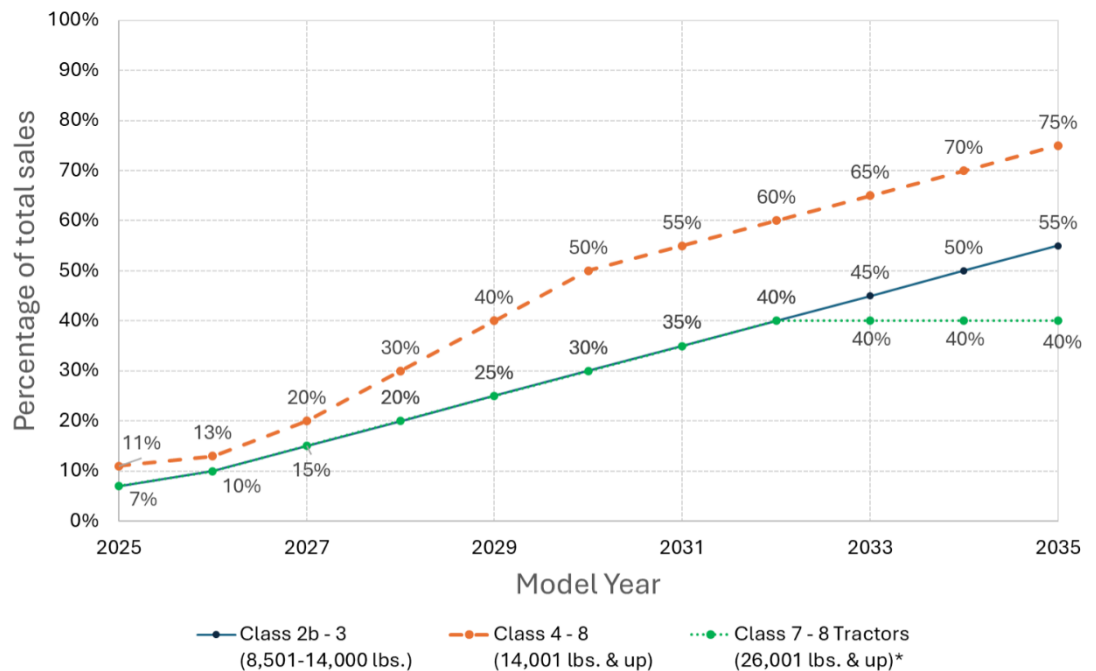
³ <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/advanced-clean-cars-program/states-have-adopted-californias-vehicle-regulations>

How does Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) work?

ACT is a flexible policy that took effect with model year 2025. It requires truck and engine manufacturers to increase sales of new zero-emission and plug-in hybrid vehicles each year in Washington or purchase credits generated by those who exceed the ZEV sales requirements. The ZEV sales requirements vary by vehicle weight class, as seen in the graph.

To make it easier to comply, Ecology allowed manufacturers start generating and banking credits in 2021, four years before ACT took effect.

Additionally, manufacturers have a full year to make up shortfalls. ACT doesn't require fleets to purchase zero-emission vehicles, nor does it require dealers to sell zero-emissions vehicles.



How will I know if the vehicle I purchased can be registered in Washington?

Vehicles that don't meet our state's emission standards can't be registered in Washington. The Department of Licensing (DOL) is responsible for administering all laws related to the licensing and regulation of vehicles and vehicle operators, dealers, and manufacturers. Any new vehicles sold by Washington dealers will have already been evaluated by manufacturers, dealers, and DOL and approved for sale and registration within the state.

When it comes to out-of-state purchases, it's the buyer's responsibility to make sure any vehicle brought into the state meets emissions standards by reviewing the Vehicle Emissions Control Information (VECI) label in the vehicle's engine compartment. The manufacturer may also provide a statement about where the vehicle can be sold on the certificate of origin.⁴

The same rules regarding registration apply to ACT and HDO, and we continue to partner closely with DOL to support their work.

Are any vehicles exempt from these standards?

Yes. Military tactical vehicles, emergency vehicles, transit buses, and used vehicles (over 7,500 miles) are exempt from these programs. For a full list and definitions, please refer to WAC 173-423-060.⁵



Questions?

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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-233-1572, email at Gabrielle.Treweek@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341

⁴ <https://dol.wa.gov/vehicles-and-boats/vehicle-registration/buying-and-selling-vehicle/clean-car-law-emission-requirements>

⁵ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-423-060>