## Common Causes of Gasoline Engine Vehicle Smoke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visible Signs</th>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Possible Causes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or Gray Smoke</td>
<td>Incomplete fuel combustion</td>
<td>Clogged air filter</td>
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<td>Blue Smoke</td>
<td>Engine oil being burned</td>
<td>Carburetor, choke, fuel injection, or emission system malfunction</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Smoke</td>
<td>Coolant and/or water vaporized in</td>
<td>Ignition timing off, Blocked manifold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>combustion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Possible Causes of Engine Vehicle Smoke

- Clogged air filter
- Carburetor, choke, fuel injection, or emission system malfunction
- Ignition timing off
- Blocked manifold
- Oil leaking into combustion chamber
- Worn piston rings, valves, or cylinders
- Leaking exhaust manifold
- Head gasket failure
- Head gasket leaking
- Cracked block or cylinder head

## Common Causes of Diesel Engine Vehicle Smoke

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<td>Incomplete fuel combustion</td>
<td>Clogged air filter</td>
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<td>Blue Smoke</td>
<td>Engine oil being burned or atomized</td>
<td>Wrong grade of fuel, Incorrect timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Smoke</td>
<td>Fuel is not burning</td>
<td>Faulty injection system</td>
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</table>

## Possible Causes of Engine Vehicle Smoke

- Clogged air filter
- Wrong grade of fuel
- Incorrect timing
- Engine overheating
- Faulty injection system
- Head gasket failure
- Oil leaking into combustion chamber
- Worn piston rings, valves, or cylinders
- Leaking exhaust manifold
- Cracked block or cylinder head

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**The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is committed to ensuring that all residents of the San Joaquin Valley have clear air to breathe.**

[www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)
Emissions from motor vehicles are a major source of air pollution, threatening our health, economy, and quality of life.

It is estimated that a poorly maintained vehicle emits up to 25 times more pollutants than allowed by emissions standards.

An indication of this is excessive tailpipe smoke.

Smoking vehicles are a nuisance and against the law. All vehicles that emit excessive smoke, including those with diesel engines, are in violation of Sections 27153 and 27153.1 of the California Motor Vehicle Code. As such, they can be cited by local law enforcement.

If you suspect your vehicle emits excessive smoke, you can make specific adjustments or repairs to correct the situation.

Here are some ways you can help clear the air:

Excessive vehicle idling releases carbon monoxide and other pollutants into the air. Carbon monoxide is a toxic gas that poses special health risks to sensitive individuals—especially those with heart ailments.

Diesel engines will emit some smoke when they first start out or are under load, but they should not smoke constantly nor when operating at cruising speed on a level road. When a vehicle smokes excessively, it needs to be examined by a mechanic and repaired.

Dirty carburetors, clogged air filters, and worn parts and plugs waste gas and lower engine performance and contribute increased emissions of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides—two major contributors to air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley.

State law requires an inspection of all vehicles' emission control equipment every two years. Smog Checks and making necessary repairs comply with the law and reduce air pollution. Remember—emission systems of exempt vehicles are required by law, and the removal of any smog equipment is illegal.

For additional information, contact the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District regional office nearest you:

**Northern Region**
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**Central Region**
(Madera, Fresno and Kings Counties)
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726-0244
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(Tulare and Kern Counties)
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