



**New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA)**

*(Formerly New Jersey Gasoline Retailers Association)*

66 Morris Avenue – Suite 1E

Springfield, NJ 07081

973-376-0066 | [www.njgca.org](http://www.njgca.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Sal Risalvato, Executive Director

Office: 973-376-0066

Cell: 201-745-1914

April 20, 2011

**Motorists ignore vehicle safety, general inspections**

*Anecdotal reports and real-time feedback illustrate a growing trend among motorists as drivers ignore the need to address critical safety repairs or simply fail to get their vehicles inspected at all.*

*NJGCA to join MVC, AAA in combating this problem and raise driver awareness.*

Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience, Automotive Association (NJGCA), made the following remarks concerning reports that motorists believe they no longer need their vehicles inspected or are not addressing safety-related repairs:

“Last summer, in a move aimed primarily at saving valuable tax-dollars during a tough budget cycle, Trenton revised its vehicle inspection program to eliminate safety inspections. The idea behind this move was to put the responsibility for maintaining a safe vehicle squarely on the motorist. Though vehicle emissions inspections remained part of the program, NJGCA vocally criticized the elimination of safety inspections since it would not only impact roadway safety but also create a disincentive for driver’s to get important safety-related repairs made on their vehicle,” said Risalvato.

“It is now nine-months later and I’m sorry to report that what we predicted has come to pass. Initially, both safety and emissions inspections were necessary in order to pass and get an inspection sticker. In removing safety inspections from the inspection requirements, the state has lost a motivating factor in compelling motorists to keep their vehicles in safe-condition. How do we know this? We are continually getting feedback and updates from our members who are also Private Inspection Facilities (PIFs). These small business owners are first and foremost professionals who know this industry well.

They report that certain types of safety-related problems are being ignored by their customers. We suspect that since motorists are no longer faced with the threat of a rejections sticker, they no longer put as high of a priority on having safety issues immediately addressed,” reported Risalvato.

“Even more disconcerting is the confusion that exists among the public about inspections in general. Our members are reporting that the number of customers having inspections performed has declined by significant numbers. We suspect that this is due to the incorrect belief among drivers that emissions inspections were eliminated with safety inspections. This is obviously incorrect as drivers equate one part of the program with another,” Risalvato stated.

“To combat this problem, NJGCA has been encouraging our members to keep their customers informed about changes in the law. To help them deliver this message, we have even created a number of safety-related posters and pamphlets aimed at educating motorists on the consequences for not keeping their cars in safe condition. These include being ticketed by law enforcement and possibly causing an accident due to insufficient tire tread, having lights out, or declining to have worn-out brakes replaced,” said Risalvato.

NJGCA has created a poster for members to display in their shops, and a pamphlet. Both list the NJ Statute associated with each safety item that must be maintained on a vehicle in order to avoid a summons being issued to the driver. Anyone wishing to view the pamphlet can view a PDF on the NJGCA Website

<http://www.njgca.org/Announcements/SafetyViolationsPamphletOnline.pdf>

Anyone wishing to view the poster can view a PDF on the NJGCA Website.

<http://www.njgca.org/Announcements/ShopViolationPosterOnline.pdf>

“While reasonable minds can disagree on whether eliminating safety inspections was the right decision, everyone agrees this problem must be addressed head-on. As such, NJGCA will co-host an event on vehicle maintenance next week with the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) and AAA of NJ in Mahwah. This event will highlight National Car Care Month and focus on the many reasons it is important for motorists to properly maintain their vehicles – including economical, environmental, and safety-related reasons,” Risalvato said.

“It is in everyone’s interest to make sure our roadways are safe and drivers are aware how lapses in vehicle maintenance can harm them and the public. In hosting this event, NJGCA, MVC, and AAA hope to educate motorists on these issues and remind them that ignoring important repairs can cost you more than a few dollars – it can cost you your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your fellow motorist! You simply can’t put a price on that,” Risalvato concluded.

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