



Communications Could Not Be Established with Your Vehicle's OBD System

What Does Non-Communication Mean?

All 1996 and newer model year vehicles are equipped with an on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer. The OBD computer alerts motorists of problems with the vehicle's emission control system by illuminating the "Check Engine" light. When a vehicle is presented for testing, the inspector will hook up the OBD test lead into the vehicle's data link connector (DLC). A vehicle would be rejected from testing due to non-communication if the vehicle's onboard computer did not send a signal to the emission testing equipment. This condition will need to be corrected before the vehicle can be tested.

What Causes A Vehicle Not To Communicate?

There are several factors that can cause non-communications. Some of the most common causes are:

- **Damaged Data Link Connector (DLC)**: The data link connector (DLC) is damaged or has been tampered with and the connection to the on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer is not possible. For example, the DLC may be broken or melted, the DLC is used to power up an accessory, or something is plugged into the DLC.
- **Blown Fuse**: If the vehicle fails to communicate, check the fuses for the cigarette lighter. On most vehicle makes and models, the system on the vehicle that communicates with the test equipment gets its power from the same circuit as the cigarette lighter. If the cigarette lighter fuse is burned out, the vehicle will not communicate with the test equipment during the OBD inspection. The fuse is faulty if it is dark inside like the inside of a blown light bulb or if the electrical wires within the fuse are burnt apart and not connected.
- **Improperly Installed Aftermarket Systems**: Some installers of aftermarket systems, such as radios, security systems, navigation systems, etc. are tapping into the wiring harness of the DLC, or OBD port to power the radio or other aftermarket devices. This is considered tampering and may cause the vehicle to be unable to establish communication with the test equipment during the OBD inspection.

What Should I Do?

- Check your vehicle's cigarette lighter fuse and replace it if it is blown.
- Check the wiring on any installed aftermarket system should be checked to ensure there is no interference with the on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer or the battery.
- Contact your dealership or repair facility and have a diagnostic analysis performed with an OBD generic scan tool, connected to the data link connector (DLC) under the dash, not under the hood.
- Check all recalls, technical service bulletins (TSBs), and extended warranties related to the emission control system and the OBD computer. Contact your dealership or repair facility and have them research for the above using your vehicle identification number (VIN).
- Speak to a manager, located in the office area of this facility, to discuss the options for you, including the eligibility for 30-day extensions or 30-day temporary plates.

Is Your Car Under Warranty?

Federal law requires the on-board diagnostic (OBD) computer and catalytic converter on 1995 and newer model year vehicles be warranted by the manufacturer for eight years or 80,000 miles.

What Is The Connection Between OBD And Vehicle Emissions?

There are many circumstances under which the vehicle computer will detect a system problem before the driver notices a drivability problem. Furthermore, OBD can detect problems that may not be noticeable upon visual inspection because many component failures that impact emissions can be electrical or even chemical in nature.

How Does OBD Help The Environment?

The purpose of OBD systems is to assure proper emission system operation of each and every vehicle and light truck for its lifetime by monitoring emission related components and systems for malfunction and/or deterioration. An important aspect of OBD is its ability to notify the driver of a problem before the vehicle's emissions have increased significantly. If the vehicle is serviced in a timely fashion, it can be properly repaired before any significant emission increase occurs. OBD systems will also provide automobile manufacturers with valuable feedback from the customer's vehicle that can be used to improve vehicle and emission control designs.

Need More Time?

It is not legal to operate a vehicle with expired license plates. However, you may legally drive a vehicle from the place it is kept to an emission testing station and back, for the purpose of having an emission inspection.

A vehicle that does not pass the inspection, which has expired registration or has registration that will expire in a couple of days, may still be operated for a period of 30 days with the purchase of a temporary license plate. The vehicle cannot be operated until a temporary plate is placed upon the vehicle. The fee for a temporary license plate is \$8.00 if purchased at an emission testing station or at a Motor Vehicle office offering registration services. Only cash or checks are accepted. Or an application for a temporary license plate can be mailed along with \$3.00 to the Motor Vehicle office in Madison. Temporary plates are not available for vehicles with suspended registrations. The temporary plate application form is not available from our website. It is only available from the offices where the plate can be obtained.

Emission-Related Recall and Voluntary Service Campaigns

To find out if your vehicle is on the EPA's Annual Summary of Emission-Related Recall and Voluntary Service Campaigns Performed on Light-Duty Vehicles and Light-Duty Trucks, please visit www.wisconsinvip.org, www.epa.gov/otag/recall.htm, or call 866-OBD-TEST (866-623-8378). The Annual Summary of Emission-Related Recall and Voluntary Service Campaigns Performed on Light-Duty Vehicles and Light-Duty Trucks can also be printed from the analyzer in the Print/View documents area in the Utilities menu by a certified emissions inspector.

Questions?

General Program, Repair/Retest and Technical Assistance Information

866-OBD-TEST

WEB: www.wisconsinvip.org