

FACTSHEET

High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Stickers

California law allows single-occupant use of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or carpool lanes by qualifying clean, alternative-fuel vehicles. The program was born out of the need to find ways to improve air quality and ease freeway congestion. In order for a vehicle with just one occupant to use an HOV lane, it must display a California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) issued Clean Air Vehicle Sticker.

Yellow HOV stickers: On July 1, 2011, yellow HOV stickers expired. Yellow stickers granted HOV access to hybrid or alternatively-fueled vehicles that met the state's advanced technology partial zero emission (AT PZEV) standard for criteria pollutant emissions and had a 45 miles per gallon or greater fuel economy highway rating. With the expiration of these stickers, hybrid vehicles are no longer allowed to operate in a carpool lane unless the minimum passenger requirement is met, and a driver may be cited for not meeting the minimum passenger requirement.

White HOV stickers: White HOV stickers allow single-occupant, super clean vehicles that meet the federal definition of an Inherently Low Emission Vehicle to drive in carpool lanes. These vehicles are certified pure zero emission vehicles (100 percent battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell), which have no tailpipe emissions over their lifetime, and certain dedicated compressed natural gas vehicles. Examples of vehicles eligible for white stickers are the Tesla Roadster, Toyota RAV 4 EV, Honda Clarity, and Honda Civic CNG. To date, DMV has issued over 10,000 white stickers, and state law places no limit on the number that it can issue. White stickers are valid until January 1, 2015.

Green HOV stickers: Pending federal approval, DMV will begin issuing the next generation of clean air stickers, which will be green, on January 1, 2012. The first 40,000 applicants who purchase or lease cars meeting California's Enhanced AT PZEV requirements can receive a green sticker on a first come, first served basis. Currently, Toyota is attempting to have the Prius plug-in hybrid certified by the end of December 2011, with product available by February 2012, and General Motors is attempting to have the Chevrolet Volt certified by the end of March 2012. While DMV will accept applications for the green sticker only once the program begins, qualifying vehicles purchased before the program begins will be eligible to receive the stickers. As with the white stickers, green stickers will be valid until January 1, 2015.

A list of qualifying vehicles for these HOV stickers is available from the California Air Resources Board website: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/carpool/carpool.htm#FAQ>.

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