

# Why most vehicles will fail the carbon monoxide test



By Richard Kiyimba

**W**hile people are on their tip-toes about vehicle inspection standards, many drivers are not even aware of what the exercise entails, having been scrapped about 20 years ago. New drivers do not have a clue what it is all about.

In the past, this annual inspection was carried out by the Police inspectorate of vehicles. It was a basic inspection of the vehicle to ascertain the general car state.

Despite the inspection, many cars in dangerous mechanical conditions plied the roads until the exercise was scrapped. From that time, vehicles have been operating without any checking done and as a result, the standard of vehicles on Ugandan roads kept declining.

Many drivers have changed vehicle particulars without notifying Uganda Revenue Authority (URA).

The ongoing inspection is going to be a wake up call for many drivers and car owners. Some will soon discover that they have been driving stolen vehicles or vehicles whose particulars do not tally with records at the vehicle registry.

The Government will have to do a lot of adjustments when it comes to certifying cars since most have serious issues ranging from illegal registration to poor performance.

One of the most complicated tests is going to be the carbon test.

Carbon monoxide gas is



There is an ongoing mandatory motor vehicle inspection exercise for conformity to road worthiness at Kawanda in Matugga



## HEALTH

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In Europe and the US, carbon monoxide is top on their agenda to limit

environmental pollution. All vehicles must comply with the emission legislation. In Europe, vehicles that pollute above the set limit are barred from public roads.

In Uganda, the story is different as most vehicles imported in the country are second-hand and emit a lot of carbon monoxide.

Every engine, however good, produces carbon monoxide, but the exhaust system is fitted with a catalytic converter which will mix the carbon monoxide with oxygen and end up with carbon dioxide gas. With time and age, the catalytic converter loses its power. In addition, the engine loses its ability to fully burn fuel, so the chances of emitting carbon monoxide become high.

In the carbon monoxide test, the report has to indicate whether the vehicle exhaust carbon content is within the

recommended limit. If the carbon emission is above the limit, the vehicle must be repaired to meet the standard.

Carbon monoxide can be caused by incomplete combustion, poorly tuned engine, a leaking exhaust pipe and a faulty catalytic converter. The Ugandan market has no new catalytic converters. Those available are cut from used vehicles and brought here for sale.

It is going to be challenging for those whose cars fail the test to find the required part.

Secondly, the Government should enforce regulations on imports and come up with a limit on cars in terms of year of manufacture and emission levels. If the Government is still allowing importation of used cars and charges an environmental levy, what is the carbon test for.

The revenue from the environmental levy should be used to plant trees and fight polythene use, oil spillage and manage factory waste.

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