

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

BY

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HONORABLE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD MORNING. I AM CAPTAIN RUSSELL C. RICKERT, REPRESENTING THE BUREAU OF PATROL OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE. I WISH TO GIVE YOU AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM.

THE COMMONWEALTH'S MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM IS ADMINISTERED THROUGH A COOPERATIVE EFFORT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE POLICE IN THIS PROGRAM IS PRIMARILY TO SUPERVISE THE VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM IN ALL 67 COUNTIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE ACTUAL FIELD DUTIES IN THE PROGRAM ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE STATE POLICE MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM AND DESIGNATED AS INSPECTION STATION SUPERVISORS, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS GARAGE INSPECTORS.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY SIXTY-SEVEN (67) TROOPERS SERVING IN THIS CAPACITY ON A FULL-TIME BASIS. THERE ARE AN ADDITIONAL FIFTY-FIVE (55) TROOPERS WHO ARE ASSIGNED AS ALTERNATES. THE LATTER ONLY SERVE IN THIS CAPACITY WHEN THE PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED SUPERVISOR IS ON LEAVE OR MUST BE ABSENT FROM HIS PRIMARY DUTIES

FOR OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS; IN ADDITION, THE ALTERNATE MUST PERFORM GARAGE INSPECTOR DUTIES AT LEAST FOUR (4) DAYS PER MONTH.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MOST PROMINENT VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTOR:

- A. OFFICIAL INSPECTION STATIONS ARE VISITED AT LEAST ONCE EACH YEAR. THESE VISITS ARE UNANNOUNCED, AT WHICH TIME THE STATION IS CHECKED FOR SUFFICIENT AND PROPER TOOLS, QUALIFIED MECHANICS, ACCURATE RECORD KEEPING AND AN EXACT INVENTORY OF, AND SUFFICIENT SECURITY FOR THE INSPECTION STICKERS.
- B. WHEN AN APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHING AN OFFICIAL INSPECTION STATION IS SUBMITTED, SUPERVISORS CONDUCT A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE APPLICANT MEETS THE APPROPRIATE REQUIREMENTS.
- C. STATION OWNERS AND MECHANICS ARE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE IN MAKING APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION AS AN INSPECTION STATION OWNER OR INSPECTION MECHANIC. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SUPERVISORS CONSULTATIONS ON REQUIREMENTS, PROCEDURES, ETC. THE APPLICANTS ARE ALSO TESTED FOR THEIR ABILITY TO INSPECT A VEHICLE IN CONFORMANCE WITH REGULATIONS.
- D. IN ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL STATION VISITS, SUPERVISORS CONDUCT UNANNOUNCED UNSCHEDULED PERIODIC VISITS TO INSURE CONFORMANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATUTES

AND REGULATIONS.

- E. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS REGARDING FAULTY INSPECTIONS ARE INVESTIGATED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTOR. THESE INVESTIGATIONS ARE PERFORMED TO ASCERTAIN IF VEHICLE CODE LAWS OR INSPECTION REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, WHICH CAN RESULT IN SUBSEQUENT PROSECUTION.
- F. SCHOOL BUSES ARE INSPECTED ANNUALLY PRIOR TO THE START OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR. THIS INSPECTION IS IN ADDITION TO THE PRESENT SEMI-ANNUAL INSPECTIONS AND IS PERFORMED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTOR. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 18,000 SCHOOL BUSES IN PENNSYLVANIA. SCHOOL BUSES ARE ALSO SPOT CHECKED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR BY THE GARAGE INSPECTORS.
- G. WHEN A VEHICLE IS RECONSTRUCTED (KIT CARS) IT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO A GARAGE INSPECTOR FOR VERIFICATION THAT THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS ARE MET AS PER REGULATION.

WHILE THESE ARE THE PRIMARY DUTIES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM, THERE ARE OTHER INDIRECTLY RELATED DUTIES THAT ARE PERFORMED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTORS. THESE INCLUDE DUTIES SUCH AS DEALER INVESTIGATIONS, VISITS TO JUNKYARDS AND VISITS TO OFFICIAL SPEEDOMETER TESTING STATIONS.

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH TO THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THIS STATEMENT OF THE STATE POLICE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM.