

What happens if a fuel sample fails the test?

Most fuel samples that are tested meet the quality regulations. Those few that don't, generally fall outside the specifications by only an inconsequential amount.

When this happens, the oil company that supplied the fuel has to investigate why this happened (to prevent it from happening again) and take appropriate action depending on the circumstances, such as removing the fuel from sale. These findings and resulting actions are then communicated to MAPSS for appraisal.

How can I make a complaint about my fuel?

If you think there's a problem with your fuel, contact the service station or oil company that sold it to you. They will investigate your complaint, possibly test the fuel involved and let you know the result.

Fuel samples may be tested for any of the properties specified in the regulations, depending on your complaint.

You can also lay a complaint with MAPSS, who will follow it up with the oil company concerned.



Where can I get more information?

If you'd like to know more about fuel quality, you can visit the Ministry of Consumer Affairs website at:

www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/measurement

There you will find a copy of New Zealand's fuel quality regulations and recent fuel testing reports.

Paper copies of the regulations can also be purchased from your local supplier of government publications.

Otherwise, you can contact the Measurement and Product Safety Service at:

Measurement and Product Safety Service
Ministry of Consumer Affairs
PO Box 1473
Wellington

Tel: 0508 MAPSS Info (0508 627 774)

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HOW GOOD IS YOUR FUEL?

When you fill up your vehicle at the local service station, you may not give a lot of thought to the fuel you're using. Petrol and diesel are complex products, so how can you be sure that the fuel you get is of an acceptable quality?

This leaflet explains how New Zealand's fuel quality is controlled, and what to do if you have a complaint about your fuel.

Fuel quality regulations

When New Zealand's oil industry was deregulated in 1988, regulations governing important properties of petrol and diesel were introduced to protect consumers and the environment.

These regulations describe the most important performance properties of your fuel, such as the octane number. They also specify limits for components that could harm you, your vehicle or the environment. These components include aromatics, lead and sulphur.

Fuel quality monitoring scheme

Under the national fuel quality monitoring scheme, the Measurement and Product Safety Service (MAPSS) [part of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs] organises testing of petrol and diesel samples to ensure oil companies are complying with the regulations. Approximately 120 samples are tested each month.

Testing under the scheme concentrates on the fuel's most critical properties, such as octane number, cetane index, benzene level, total aromatics and sulphur content.

Using a statistical sampling plan, the scheme takes account of the fuel's previous 'pass' or 'fail' rate, the market share of each oil company and the volume of sales for each region.

Motorists fund the fuel quality monitoring scheme through the petroleum fuels monitoring levy. A small percentage of the levy, only 0.025 cents per litre, is used to fund the scheme.

Consumer law

Under the Consumer Guarantees Act, goods that are normally bought for personal use must be of an acceptable quality, fit for purpose, free of minor defects and be safe. These guarantees naturally apply to fuel.

The Fair Trading Act states that companies can't misrepresent the qualities of a product they sell to you. So, for example, it's illegal to sell petrol labelled as Premium Unleaded when it is really Unleaded 91. This legislation is enforced by the Commerce Commission.

