

Equity Implications of Atlanta Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program

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The I/M program imposes the costs on every eligible vehicle owner but these costs might not be evenly distributed across everyone. Low-income vehicle owners are likely to bear more burden than the other. Vehicles failing the first inspection create the additional costs to the owners in terms of time and money. Using different samples and methods, this study finds that the vehicles owned by the low-income households or registered in the low-income neighborhoods are more likely to fail the first inspections. In contrast, when controlling for the vehicle characteristics, the results show that income is not associated with the odds of a vehicle failing the first inspection. In other words, the levels of the pre-inspection repair or maintenance across income groups are similar, given the same vehicles. This suggests that the low-income households might bear the larger costs, in terms of the post-inspection repair, than the high-income households.

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