



Trimark of Excellence Mystery Shop Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the goal of the Trimark of Excellence Mystery Shop Program?

The goal of the Trimark of Excellence Mystery Shop program is to protect the integrity of the CITGO brand and reward Retailers for their day-to-day efforts to maintain it. It creates consistency across the brand and allows for tracking accomplishments as well as areas of improvement, both inside and outside the store.

Why should I care about my Trimark of Excellence score?

Research shows consumers prefer to shop at locations that present a clean image and provide excellent customer service. The better your score, the more prepared you are to maximize your volume and sales. In many instances, travelers indicate that a convenience store is their preferred location to stop for using the restroom versus other businesses.

What categories are being evaluated?

The survey evaluates the following "Trimarks" of Excellence: Fueling Experience, Shopping Excellence and Customer Excellence.

What is the focus of the Fueling Experience category?

The focus is brand image and the visual experience of a customer when they pull up to a location. It typically includes questions about the fueling island and canopy, overall property cleanliness, CITGO marketing promotions and the building exterior.

What is the focus of the Shopping Excellence category?

The focus is the interior elements of the convenience store. It typically includes questions about the cleanliness of the restrooms and the overall appearance of the interior of the store, including merchandising execution, and cleanliness and freshness of foodservice offerings.

What is the focus of the Customer Excellence category?

The focus is the level of customer service provided by the store employees. It typically includes questions about employee presentation such as uniform, level of customer service and how the overall transaction was handled.

What is the shop frequency?

The program shops all CITGO-branded locations four times a year based on calendar quarters (Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep and Oct-Dec).

Will my location get shopped monthly if it doesn't perform well?

No. The quarterly shop schedule provides time for your location to receive results and make corrections. CITGO believes that this creates the consistency we are looking for.

What will my location receive for a good shop?

CITGO will provide your gasoline supplier with the following for each retail location scoring 97% or higher on a quarterly shop: \$150 in CITGO Gift Cards, a letter of commendation and a performance certificate to display in the store.

Why aren't the CITGO Gift Cards given at the time of the shop?

CITGO recognizes that all store employees put forth effort to maintain the facilities and provide excellent customer service. This reward structure recognizes a location's entire crew versus the employees on duty at the time of the shop.

How do I know if I should be receiving CITGO Gift Cards for my location's performance on the mystery shop?

Your CITGO gasoline supplier is able to provide results to your location within a few days of the quarterly shop. You can also access your scores via myCITGOstore.com once you have registered your location on the site.

What happens if my location doesn't perform well on a quarterly mystery shop?

Your CITGO gasoline supplier may receive a monetary penalty for each location scoring less than 80% on any given shop. It is up to them to decide whether to pass these penalties down to you or not.

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Where can I find more information about the mystery shop questionnaire?

For greater details on the questionnaire, please refer to the Trimark of Excellence Checklist on myCITGOstore.com. In addition to the survey questions, you'll find information on the Image Solution Program (ISP) and Tip & Tricks section, which appear under each failed question on your quarterly reports. These features will allow your location to make recommended changes and receive points back on failed questions and/or avoid penalties on future shops, respectively.

Is it easy to score well on the mystery shop survey?

Not necessarily. There is always a high standard of performance that must be met in order to achieve acceptable scores consistently over the series of quarterly shops. The ISP and Tip & Tricks sections can help your location enhance its scores over time as corrective actions are taken.

What is the Image Solution Program (ISP)?

The ISP allows you to earn points back when you take action to fix branding issues. It works via an "Action Feedback" section on your quarterly mystery shop report. Under select failed questions, you'll receive specific actions to take to earn points back. ISPs must be submitted to Trimark@citgo.com within 45 days from the shop.

What are Tip & Tricks?

Tips & Tricks auto-populate on your quarterly mystery shop under select failed questions. They provide helpful solutions to fix existing issues in order to avoid penalties on future shops. They do not offer points back.

Are there different surveys for locations that offer fuel only versus a convenience store? What about full-serve only (e.g. New Jersey) versus self-serve locations?

Not at this time. In the event that a location is not able to be scored regarding a particular item, the question will be marked as Not Applicable (N/A) and no points will be lost. Keep in mind that customer service from a fueling attendant is no different than customer service from a cashier inside the location. CITGO will continue to monitor the program and make modifications that improve the overall experience for the consumer.

Are there ways to earn bonus points on the survey?

Yes. The survey features one bonus question that changes each quarter. It is worth two (2) points.

Can I dispute a mystery shop score?

Yes. This is called a Request for Action (RFA), and it can be done through your quarterly mystery shop report. For complete details on the RFA process, please refer to the About the Program section on the Trimark of Excellence tab on myCITGOstore.com.

How will I receive my mystery shop results?

Your mystery shop results can be assessed the following ways:

- Your CITGO gasoline supplier will receive notice when a mystery shop is completed at your location. They will also receive a customized summary report and can provide you with recommendations for improvements and training, if necessary.
- Log in to myCITGOstore.com and click on the "Mystery Shop Results" button. Your location must be registered on myCITGOstore.com to receive results this way.

How can I review trends to see if my location is improving?

You and your CITGO gasoline supplier have access to reporting through online dashboards once your location is registered on myCITGOstore.com. Your CITGO gasoline supplier can also assess this reporting through MarketNet®.

What is available on the dashboards?

You or your CITGO gasoline supplier can review your location trends over time versus peer organizations. There is also the ability to drill down into specific questions to better understand how to improve your overall score.

Are there any additional rewards available?

Yes. CITGO will provide your gasoline supplier with the following for the top 500 locations each year: \$500 in Visa® gift cards, a recognition plaque and a letter of commendation.

Is there training available for the Trimark of Excellence Mystery Shop Program?

Yes. In addition to the ISP and Tips & Tricks on the quarterly mystery shop reports, there is ongoing training hosted on myCITGOstore.com. There are also opportunities like contests and videos throughout the year to help locations focus on the "Trimarks" of Excellence.