

Buying an Automobile in Massachusetts? What You Should Know about the State's Lemon Laws

Thinking of buying a car in Massachusetts? If so, you also need to know about the state's Lemon Laws that protect Massachusetts car buyers. These laws provide you with protections that may include repair, replacement or refund of your vehicle.

The Lemon Law covers only serious defects – those that impair the use, market value or safety of the vehicle. Although a car problem is annoying, you must prove specifically how the market value, use, or safety is impaired by the defect.

The “term of protection” for consumers purchasing a new vehicle is one year or 15,000 miles of use from the date of original delivery. Coverage on used vehicle purchases depends on the age and mileage on the car.

Before your car is considered a “lemon,” you must give the manufacturer, its agent, or authorized dealer three attempts to repair the same defect.

The Lemon Law allows for arbitration if both parties cannot agree that the standards for a refund have been met. The arbitration program offered by the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation is free and gets results. After acceptance of a request for arbitration, a formal decision is generally issued within 45 days. A request for arbitration must be received within 18 months of a new car purchase or within six months of a purchasing a used car.

Consumers may also bring a civil action in court and, in addition to other relief, may be entitled to recover reasonable attorneys' fees and all court costs.

For more information about the Lemon Law, please contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation Hotline toll free at (888) 283-3757 or visit the Lemon Law section of our website.

Look for the Yellow Warranty Sticker!

Auto dealers are required to place yellow Lemon Law warranty notices on cars that are offered for sale. These notices inform consumers of their rights under the state's new and used car Lemon Laws.

These notices are different for new and used cars and must be affixed to the window or the dashboard. They detail a consumer's right to a refund after a reasonable number of

repair attempts, and outline the arbitration process when a dealer and consumer disagree about whether the car qualifies for a refund.

If you don't see the notice, ask the salesman for one.

