

Société de l'assurance
automobile

Québec



MODIFYING

your car?

MODIFY YOUR DRIVING!













A passenger vehicle may be modified to either improve its performance or change its appearance. The *Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec* (SAAQ) has to make sure that all vehicles using the road are safe, and comply with standards set by the Highway Safety Code and attendant regulations.

Police officers have the power to Intercept a modified vehicle at any time, issue a ticket for a fine or demand that the vehicle undergo an inspection at a facility acting as agent for the SAAQ. Should the agent discover illegal modifications, the vehicle owner is required to rectify the situation.

If there is any doubt, the agent can have the SAAQ ask for an engineer's report to ensure that the modifications do not compromise the stability of the vehicle nor its overall safety. The vehicle can be put back on the road once the SAAQ is satisfied it meets standards.

Modified vehicle

Examples of PROHIBITED MODIFICATIONS

-  Remove or deactivate an airbag.
-  Tint the driver and passenger side windows so that less than 70% of light gets through from outside. The vehicle manufacturer has tinted the windows; any tinting done subsequently must when combined with the original still allow 70% of light to pass through.
-  Apply a reflective material on a window so as to turn it into a mirror.
-  Modify the windshield wipers to reduce the surface area they originally covered.
-  Alter or remove a seat belt or its anchor from the original installation.
-  Change the colour of lights or reflectors by substitution with a colour other than that allowed under the Highway Safety Code.
-  Reduce the brightness of lights or reflectors by the addition of darkening or opaque material.
-  Install tires not designed for road use, such as racecar tires or oversized ones that jut out from the vehicle's fender.
-  Reduce braking capability by installing disks that have been handcraft-drilled, for instance, or using non-standard components.
-  Using springs that have been shortened, bundled or heated to deformity. It is also prohibited to have a suspension that is too rigid, an insufficient wheelbase, tires that touch a vehicle component or having any part of the vehicle body touch the road surface in a normal driving situation.

Examples of PERMITTED MODIFICATIONS

- Changing wheel size; the outside diameter of the tires must be comparable to the original diameter.
- Adding a stylized skirt.
- Installing a solidly fixed aerofoil, so long as it is not wider than the vehicle or obstructs the lights.
- Changing the seats, so long as they are fixed onto the rails or original anchors.
- Changing the muffler or any other component of the exhaust system. The exhaust must be system solidly fixed, not leak and be designed for on-road use. It must meet the standards to which carmakers are subject.
- Increasing the engine's power output.
- Changing the bumper shell. The part of the bumper designed to absorb energy in the event of impact, may not be removed nor modified.
- Placing a strip no more than 15 cm wide that shades the top of the windshield. Below the strip, however, no material that shades or darkens the windshield glass is allowed.

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Information and advice

- The parts that are used to modify a vehicle must meet standards for road use, and should come from recognized manufacturers, who certify compliance.
- Buying parts from a recognized supplier or having them installed by specialists is recommended.
- A modified passenger vehicle is intended for use on the road, not on a race-track. It should be remembered rigid suspension when coupled with very wide tires can be impressive on a racetrack, but reduce vehicle stability under some road conditions (rain, low temperatures, bumpy surface, etc.).
- A police officer who has doubts about the safety of a vehicle can order that it undergo a mechanical inspection, even though the SAAQ had already deemed the vehicle in compliance with safety standards, as it might have been modified again in the interim.
- Modified vehicle users are required to drive safely, showing a sense of responsibility and courtesy toward others, whether they be road users or the general public (by not: squealing tires, pumping the volume of the sound system, having a noisy or defective muffler, etc).

This document contains general information about modifications to vehicles and in no way is intended to replace provisions of the Highway Safety Code.

For further information, telephone:

www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca

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