

# Lemon Law Myths and Misconceptions

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Buying an automobile, truck, or sport utility vehicle is often a daunting, stressful and expensive process. People pay more money for their cars than for just about anything other than their homes. And once the vehicle has been purchased, one hopes that it will run just fine for the foreseeable future.

But sometimes things go wrong. For those situations, every state has passed a lemon law, a statute that exists to backup the manufacturer's written warranty that comes with the vehicle. But most people don't know anything about lemon laws and rarely give them a thought until something goes wrong. And once people start to given lemon laws some thought, they often realize that what they thought they knew about them is wrong.

Here are a few things about lemon laws that are often misunderstood:

Used cars are covered under state lemon laws. Generally, this is not true. Most states' lemon laws cover the original owner of a new car only. If you are the second owner of a car, even if it is still under warranty, you may find that your state's lemon law doesn't protect you. There are a few states that cover the car during the duration of the warranty regardless of the number of owners and a few that even have special lemon law for used cars. If in doubt, check with your state's Attorney General's office.

If you buy a new car, you may return it for a refund within three days of purchase. Again, generally not true. It may be true if you buy a toaster, but for large purchases such as a car, once you buy it, you own it. For that reason, make sure that you test drive any new vehicle that you are thinking about buying. And not just one like it – drive the exact car you intend to buy. If you are buying a used car, have an independent mechanic check it out before you buy to make sure that it is in good order.

The dealer must inform you if the vehicle has been in an accident. Most states do not require this. Furthermore, it's not always possible for a dealer to even know if a vehicle has previously been in an accident. Dealers are, however, generally required to disclose information about any known damage to the vehicle. Don't expect the dealer to be forthcoming with information that he or she may not necessarily want you to know. Be proactive and ask a lot of questions. And again, if it's a used car, be sure to have an independent mechanic look it over before you buy.

Lemon laws are there to protect consumers from defects in workmanship and to make sure that the dealer and/or manufacturer will repair any problems that arise during the warranty period. But a lemon law is no substitute for diligence or research on the part of the buyer. Know what you are getting into before you buy a car, truck or SUV. Copyright 2006 by Retro Marketing. Charles Essmeier is the owner of Retro Marketing, a firm devoted to informational Websites, including LemonLawHelp.net, a site devoted to information regarding auto lemon laws.