

Victoria Police Blitz on illegally modified vehicles

Victorian Police highway patrol unit has contacted VACC to raise awareness among the automotive repair industry relating to an increase of illegally modified vehicles on Victorian roads. Repairers may potentially be caught up in a police investigation for breaches of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009.

What's Happened

Police intercepted a vehicle fitted with a nonstandard high-performance engine and turbocharger without an engineer's certificate/ VASS certificate. The owner was issued with a defect notice and fined for driving a high-powered vehicle while still on their P's.

Subsequently, the owner proceeded to have the engine swapped with the original engine in order to obtain a roadworthy certificate and have the defect cleared. The engine swap was completed by a repairer who then sent the vehicle to a licensed vehicle tester (LVT) for inspection.

Once the vehicle had passed the roadworthy inspection and a certificate issued, the vehicle was returned to the repairer. On that same day, the engine was again removed and replaced with the performance engine. The owner visited a VicRoads Service Centre with a copy of the roadworthy certificate and had the defect notice cleared. Police intervention prevented this vehicle from being allowed back on the road within 2 days of the roadworthy certificate being issued.

The matter is now under police investigation to determine any wrongdoing on the part of the repairer and the LVT. Fortunately, in this case the LVT was able to provide evidence including photographs and engine details of the vehicle when it was presented for inspection. The licensed vehicle tester was found to have acted in accordance with VicRoads testing standards and road safety regulations. Failing to adhere to these rules may have resulted in the LVT losing their license and possibly their livelihood or potentially facing the scrutiny of the coroner had the vehicle been involved in a fatal collision.

Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009

Chapter 2 regulation 21 (3)

(3) person who modifies, or adds components to, a vehicle must ensure that –

- a. If the vehicle complied with the standards for registration immediately before the modification or addition, the vehicle continues to comply with those standards
- b. For a heavy vehicle –
 - i. The modification or addition is certified by a person appointed as an authorised officer under regulation 7 as complying with the National Code of Practice for Heavy Vehicle Modification published by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government as Vehicle Standards Bulletin No. 6; or
 - ii. The modification or alteration is otherwise acceptable to the Corporation (VicRoads); and
- c. For a light vehicle-
 - i. The modification or addition is certified by an authorised officer as complying with the National Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Construction and Modification published by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government as Vehicle Standards Bulletin No.14; or
 - ii. The modification or alteration is otherwise acceptable to the Corporation (VicRoads)

Chapter 6 regulation 233

It is an offence to substitute equipment on a tested vehicle.

If a current certificate or roadworthiness exists for a vehicle, a person must not detract from its roadworthiness by adding, altering, removing or substituting equipment or fittings on the vehicle.

Penalty: 5 penalty units

I am aware of multiple instances where a vehicle has been altered after a roadworthy certificate has been issued resulting in a show cause sent to the License Vehicle Tester. Members are reminded to check for any signs of previous modifications when inspecting vehicles and that photos are your best form of defense should you be investigated.

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