



## Installing Aftermarket Equipment Will *Not* Void Your Warranty

By Bill Siuru

Contrary to popular belief, or "advice" from the dealer, under most circumstances, adding aftermarket equipment will not void a new car warranty. Except in rare instances, denying a warranty because of an aftermarket part is illegal. This is the word being put out by Specialty Equipment Market Association. SEMA working with the EPA has developed a "parts self-certification program" to protect buyers of aftermarket parts from warranty denial.

Under the Clean Air Act there are two types of warranties applying to emissions equipment. The defect warranties require the manufacturer to produce a vehicle which, at the time of the sale, is free of defects that would cause it to fail to meet the emission levels for its useful life. The performance warranty means each vehicle must maintain certain levels of emissions performance over its useful life. If the vehicle fails to meet the performance warranty requirements, the manufacturer must make no cost repairs.

Now the important part. The manufacturer is not allowed to void the warranty just because aftermarket equipment is installed. Under certain circumstances, even if the part is directly responsible for a warranty claim, the vehicle manufacturer still cannot void the warranty. And what are these circumstances? These are when the aftermarket parts have satisfied the EPA process of self-certification. In cases where

such a failed aftermarket part is responsible, the manufacturer must arrange a settlement with the aftermarket part supplier. There is still protection under the law for non-certified parts. The only circumstance under which the vehicle manufacturer can void the emissions warranty is if a non-certified aftermarket part is *directly* responsible.

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What should you do if the dealer denies a warranty claim that falls under the Clean Air Act, that is an emissions related failure? SEMA recommends you get the refusal and an explanation in writing. Then follow the steps in the owner's manual for pursuing a claim. If this fails, a complaint can be made to the EPA at (202) 233-9040 or (202) 233-9100.

Finally, adding aftermarket equipment cannot summarily void expressed, implied or limited warranties such as a 5 year/50,000 mile power train warranty. The law is quite clear: A vehicle manufacturer cannot void a warranty simply because aftermarket has been installed on the vehicle.

