



USED CAR COMPLAINTS 2022

Washington State Attorney
General's Office



Since January 2021, Washingtonians are filing nearly one complaint per day with the Attorney General’s Office asserting that used car dealers sold them “lemons.”

This is an alarming figure that drastically underrepresents the scope of the problem because many consumers are not aware that they can complain to the Attorney General.

Between January 2021 and July 2022, 557 Washingtonians filed complaints to the Attorney General’s Office against used car dealers.

The following is a sample of the 88 consumer complaints filed between May and July of 2022.

Each of the following complaints comes from a Washingtonian asserting that they purchased a used car that broke down, or malfunctioned, shortly after purchasing the vehicle. The complaints highlighted in this sample come from a service member, a student, a mom, a disabled Washingtonian who uses a wheelchair, and many others who use their own words to communicate their frustration, anger, and despair. Many of these individuals experienced the safety hazard of a breakdown on the interstate or road, the loss of a vehicle, and the financial strain resulting from having to pay for repairs. Some are still making payments on a vehicle they cannot drive.

In every one of these cases, the dealer refused to provide the consumer restitution.

The following sample involves complaints made against dealers in the following cities:

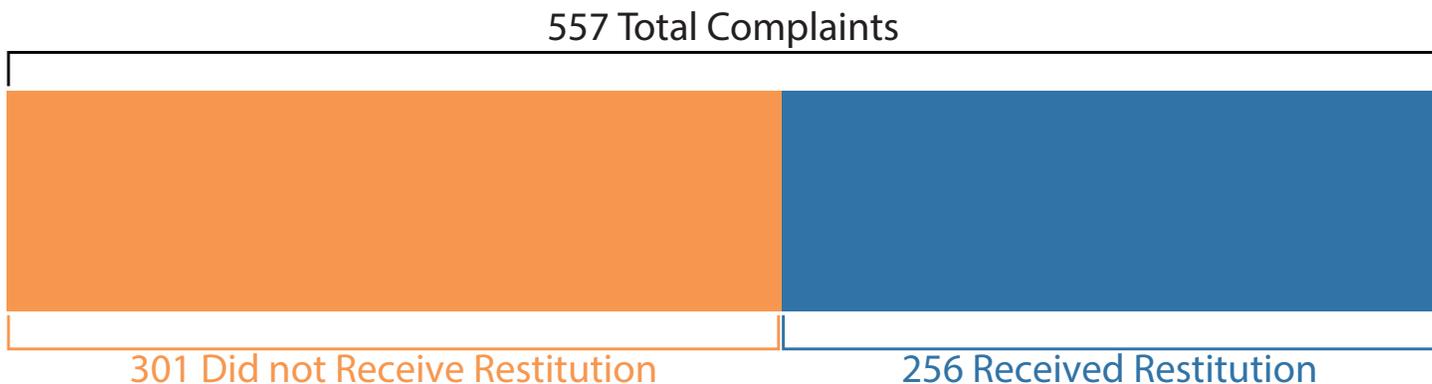


Some used car dealers are responding to these consumer complaints by making amends and providing restitution – most, however, are not.

When consumers complain to the Attorney General’s Office, before opening an investigation, the Attorney General’s Office engages in informal complaint resolution with the business. The Office contacts the business and requests a response to the consumer complaint. Often this results in consumer restitution. Unfortunately, most used car dealers are refusing to offer restitution to consumers who complain that they were sold “lemons.”

Between May 1, 2022 and July 31, 2022, 52 of 88 Washingtonians who complained to the Attorney General's Office did not receive restitution. Between January 1, 2021 and July 31, 2022, 301 of 557 did not receive restitution.

Used Car Complaints received between January 1, 2021 and July 31, 2022



The Attorney General's Office has not independently verified all of these complaints. All individual names have been redacted from this report.

July 27, 2022 consumer complaint against Northwest Premier Auto Sales in West Richland, WA [622539]

"I Purchased the vehicle on July 3rd, 2022. I did a down payment of \$1,000 and rest Got financed thru my bank. Immediately when I drove home, the vehicle started over heating and the check engine light came on. I phoned the dealership to let them know. On the next day I [dropped] off the vehicle to the dealership and left it there. On July 5th, 2022 I went to the dealership and informed the manager that I didn't feel safe to let my wife drive that truck with my kids because It could break down on the freeway at any moment and could cause a fatal accident. The manager told me that I couldn't return it back and told me that my only option was to wait for the repairs to be done. Note: He did not give a loaner vehicle or any replacement while the vehicle was at the repair facility.

"Then on July 11, 2022 I received a call to notify me that the vehicle was done, I proceeded to pick it up and immediately again I got a check engine light. Also the truck started turning off and living my wife stranded with my kids. We were trying to figure how to take the truck back without having to spend money on a tow service. On July 14th we dropped it off at a Northwest Premier Auto Sales facility that was closer to us. The manager new and told us that he would speak to them to start the services. Then on July 25th they called me to notify me that the vehicle was done. Again 10 minutes down the road the vehicle started acting up and the check engine came on. I tried speaking with the manager and the salesman and they blocked my phone so I would stop calling them. I'm desperate and in need of a safe reliable car for my wife and kids. The dealer refuses to give me my money back and have made treats that I would regret taking them to court.

"Under State law RCW62A.2-314 Requires that every used car sold by a dealer in Washington for a customer's personal use has an "implied warranty of merchantability". The vehicle is not reasonably safe and has major issues. Please help me recover my peace. I just want them to do what's right. I blessed them with my business and they have being nightmare. They have 0 ethics."

Complaint is currently open.

July 25, 2022 consumer complaint against Betancourt Auto Sales in Lynnwood, WA [622379]

“Bought a truck for 30k from them. Broke down 2 day later due to poor workmanship by their mechanic. They first claimed it had a new motor, then just a block. first breakdown was due to reused fuel injector fittings causing the truck to loose fuel pressure. They “fixed” it and it broke down again after 4 days. Took it to a certified mechanic as specified bet their warranty they sell which covers nothing... Received estimate for Nearly 5k .below is the letter from the mechanic.

After hearing that the dealership had the motor replaced while it was in their possession, we did verify that there is some sort of a “new” engine block on the truck. The block is new to the truck but it cannot be verified where the block came from. Normally when a block comes in, new or remanufactured, the block will be painted in order to protect it from rust as well as having a reman or new block tag that makes it easily identifiable. The block on the truck is bare cast iron and already starting to rust. In addition to the bare cast iron already rusting on the newer block, it appears that they replaced with a short block, and reused several parts from the old motor that should have been replaced rather than transferring, these components are not failing yet, but there are higher failure risks when components are transferred from one motor to another and not knowing if they were bench tested prior to reuse.”

Betancourt Auto Sales refused to provide consumer restitution.

July 25, 2022 consumer complaint against Impact Auto in [either Wenatchee, WA or Yacolt, WA] [622371]

“I recently bought a car from impact. First day had a check engine took it back the next morning they said it was because I didn’t know how to drive it. They said their mechanic found out it was a spark plug. He replaces all 4 and I get a check engine a week later. So I take it to cascade Subaru and they say cylinder 4 head is stripped where the spark plug threads in which impact auto just worked on. After Subaru attempts to fix it I keep coming back with the same issue???misfires. I spend roughly around 3000 dollars in repairs and now my car has a dead hole on cylinder four parked at Subaru. I owe 18000 on the car still and it’s blown after 3 months. I have receipts when impact did it and what Subaru has done in repairs. My warranty for the car won’t cover the work to be done because Subaru didn’t do it and they would like for the shop that did the repairs to do it. Now impact won’t help me out and I’m at a complete loss. They say that mechanic isn’t with us but that doesn’t have to do with my car and their really crappy work.”

Impact Auto refused to provide consumer restitution.

July 12, 2022 consumer complaint against Carson Cars in Lynnwood, WA [621656]

“Purchased 2010 Mini Cooper. Completed purchase paperwork around 8 pm, closing. Drove the car to the gas station placed \$30 in gas in it. Got on the 525 heading south. Car within the four miles began overheating. Parked the car at the Lynnwood Costco car would not start. Next morning went back got car to start and drove the four miles back to Carson Cars. Car once again began overheating. Informed [Redacted] that I did not want the car and would see if anything on the lot would work.

6/23/2022 Drove at least five different cars all determining would not work and would just brake

down immediately. My husband and I expressed that I wanted my \$600 deposit returned since none of the cars on the lot were up to running standards. I was told by [redacted] that I had to pick a car or keep the mini cooper which would be fixed in their shop. Since the deal was completed and they would not be returning my deposit. I was given no choice but to choose whatever I thought might run. They had me speak with Reliable credit about financing my car and lie about my down payment being \$1500 instead of \$600. I expressed to financing company that I did not want financing. Had me sign paper work for a 2008 VW Passat. I had no choice in signing since they would not give me my deposit and were going to place the whole car on my credit. I CV all signatures on this document.

Night of 6/24/2022 discovered that the 2008 VW Passat did not have working horn or lights plus numerous other issues. Next day 6/25/2022 the oil pressure light came on and car experienced loss of power. Car I believe has been driven less than 200 miles. I had the car removed from my insurance since car isn't even road worthy. Got a call from Concept Credit to finalize the loan. I once again told them no and that the car was not road worthy. Done contacting Carson Cars at this time. As they have been proven to be a scam lot.

Received two calls from Carson Cars. No message was left. Got a call from a tow company demanding the car and that it was out for repossession. I contacted Carson Cars inquiring about my deposit. All I got was them demanding the car and saying I did have financing. I ended the call. I received a text from [Redacted] asking me to call. I refused to call but did respond in text. Once again requesting my \$600 deposit returned in cash and the contract be dissolved. [Redacted] via text stated that the contract will end as a repression and be reported to my credit. Along with my down paymen will not be refunded. I did not knowing waive my rights of the implied warranty and was not disclosed the safety issues of both cars.”

Carson Cars refused to provide consumer restitution.

Consumer complaint July 11, 2022 against M & M Auto Sales in Olympia, WA [621485]

“I bought the car from the M & M auto lot in march 2022. I voiced my concerns with the vehicle but desperately needed a car as I have two kids and two jobs. I have all the original parts [redacted] the owner had in the vehicle coming off the lot, the wrong Uline that holds the car together was the wrong one. Also, the battery was not the one for the vehicle one that just worked enough to run. I have receipts for all the oil changes I have done with maxlife oil, also replaced all the serpentine belt replacements (3), Automatic trans fluid replaced, and Transmission fluid replacement. I told mike about how the Kia would spit out gas, and he suggest I turn the gas nob while in the vehicle at an angle to see if the gas would stay on the car (till this day does not take all the gas being put in), I was broke down in the middle of the road with my kids because the timing belt broke 7/5/2022, it has been at the mechanics and now is going to need a whole engine replacement, unfortunately, I just can't understand why [redacted] would sell a car off the lot like this to a woman with two kids. I took the car plenty of times to try and fix things on the car, not once did work to it. My biggest complaint is being how much I've also put into this car trying to figure out what was wrong, just to be left with nothing.”

M & M Auto Sales refused to provide consumer restitution.