

Georgia Lemon Law

(Motor Vehicle Warranty Rights Act, Georgia Code Sec. 10-1-780)

The Georgia Motor Vehicle Warranty Rights Act, commonly called the lemon law, protects only buyers of new cars. Buyers of used cars have to rely on warranties provided by the dealer, and if you buy one "as is," you're pretty much out of luck.

When is a car a lemon?

A new vehicle is a lemon if it suffers from a defect within the first 12,000 miles or 12 months, whichever occurs first (the lemon law rights period).

What size lemon is it?

The lemon law distinguishes between three "sizes" of defects: serious safety defects, non-serious safety defects, and other defects.

How do you get lemon aid?

You send a certified letter informing the manufacturer of the defect and the failed attempts at repair. For a serious safety defect, you may send the letter after the dealer attempts to fix it once and fails. For a non-serious safety defect, you have to wait until the dealer has attempted to fix it twice. For other defects, you have to wait until after three attempts. No matter which type of defect your car has, at least the first attempt to fix it must occur during the lemon law rights period.

The manufacturer must respond to your letter by telling you where to take the vehicle for a last-ditch attempt to fix it.

If that attempt doesn't work, you send another certified letter informing the manufacturer that you have a lemon and demanding that they replace the vehicle, or, if you prefer, that they cancel the purchase.

If the manufacturer goes along with it, an adjustment must be made for your use of the vehicle while you had it. If for some reason the manufacturer does not remedy the situation, you will have to try to get your relief by going to arbitration, and possibly two steps of it.

So if something goes wrong with your car within the sooner of the first 12,000 miles or 12 months, be sure to act promptly to preserve your rights.