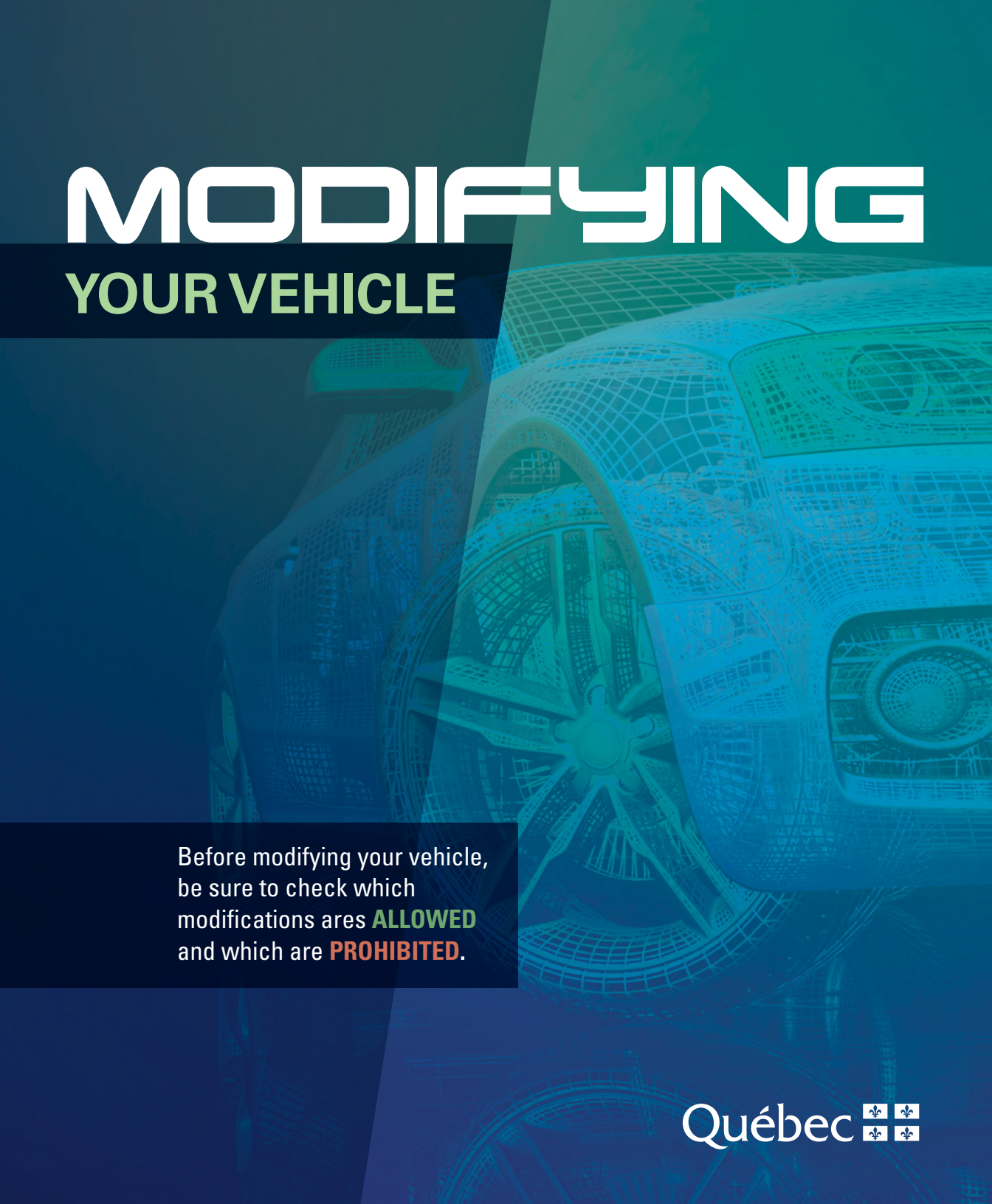
MODIFYING
YOUR VEHICLE



Before modifying your vehicle, be sure to check which modifications ares **ALLOWED** and which are **PROHIBITED**.

Québec

Modified Vehicles

Certain modifications, in particular those that affect a vehicle's handling or its compliance with standards, must be approved by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) before a modified vehicle can be authorized for road use. Such modifications include:

- installing a lift kit;
- installing a lowering kit;
- modifying steering or braking system components.

The approval process involves the following steps:

- The vehicle owner must ask a road vehicle inspection agent authorized by the SAAQ to carry out a modified vehicle inspection.
- The inspection agent prepares the modified vehicle record and sends it to the SAAQ.
- Once the modified vehicle record has been deemed compliant, the SAAQ authorizes the inspection agent to carry out the road vehicle mechanical inspection.
- The inspection agent carries out the inspection and issues a mechanical inspection certificate.
- If the mechanical inspection certificate states that the vehicle is compliant, the SAAQ issues a certificate of inspection to the owner, confirming that the modifications made have been approved. The certificate of inspection contains a detailed description of the approved modifications, along with photos.

ALLOWED OR PROHIBITED

The SAAQ is mandated to make sure that all vehicles used on the road are safe and comply with the *Highway Safety Code* and its attendant regulations.

Police officers can at any time intercept a modified vehicle, serve a statement of offence or require that the vehicle undergo an inspection by a road vehicle inspection agent authorized by the SAAQ. The vehicle owner will have to undo any non-compliant modifications, or adjust them so that they are compliant. The SAAQ can request an engineer's report to ensure that the modifications do not compromise the vehicle's safety. The vehicle can only be used on the road again once it is deemed compliant.

EXAMPLES OF MODIFICATIONS

Raised Vehicles

Admissible

- Installing bigger tires:
  - The tires must not raise the vehicle by more than 3.8 cm (1.5 in); in other words, the outside tire diameter must not be increased by more than 7.6 cm (3 in).
  - The maximum tire diameter allowed is 89 cm (35 in).
  - The tires must not at any time come into contact with the chassis or the body of the vehicle (the full travel range of the suspension and steering systems must be taken into account).
- Installing a body lift kit (spacers between the vehicle's body and its frame) or a suspension lift kit:
  - The vehicle must not be raised by more than 6.4 cm (2.5 in).

Raised or lowered vehicles must be presented to the SAAQ for approval.

Owners of raised vehicles must demonstrate that they comply with the manufacturer's wheel alignment specifications. When the modified vehicle record is created, the vehicle's owner must provide the inspection agent with an alignment report that complies with the manufacturer's standards. The report must indicate the parameters that were measured on the vehicle and the manufacturer's specifications.

Some vehicles may require that additional parts be installed to correct the geometry so as to meet the vehicle manufacturer's specifications.

Note that compliance with specifications and measurement requirements does not in itself guarantee that the modifications will be accepted.

Prohibited

- Heating, bending, cutting or repairing by welding the various components of the steering or suspension system.
- Cutting or carrying out any welding work on, or making any changes to, the chassis.
- Installing a lift kit that affects the electronic stability control system or any other advanced driver assistance system.
- Installing wheels or tires that protrude from the body:
  - The tires' tread must be covered by fenders or mudguards. Installing fender flares is allowed.
  - Mudguards must not be more than 35 cm off the ground.
- Widening the vehicle's wheel track by more than 10 cm or modifying its track by adding wheel spacers.
- Installing tires with a load index that is lower than that recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.
- Using components designed for off-road use.
- Replacing the original suspension system with an air suspension system (adding an air suspension kit to the original suspension system is allowed).
- Modifying the vehicle's structure.
- Failing to comply with the vehicle manufacturer's wheel alignment specifications.



Lowered Vehicles

Admissible

- Installing rims with a larger diameter:
  - the outside diameter of the tires must be the same as that of the original tires.
- Installing a set of springs that are shorter than the original springs.
- Replacing the shock absorbers by high-performance shock absorbers.
- Installing a coilover kit.
  - The SAAQ's approval is valid for the height at which the vehicle is presented. Any changes to the height voids the certificate of inspection.

Raised or lowered vehicles must be presented to the SAAQ for approval.

Owners of lowered vehicles must demonstrate that they comply with the manufacturer's wheel alignment specifications. When the modified vehicle record is created, the vehicle's owner must provide the inspection agent with an alignment report that complies with the manufacturer's standards. The report must indicate the parameters that were measured on the vehicle and the manufacturer's specifications.

Some vehicles may require that additional parts be installed to correct the geometry so as to meet the vehicle manufacturer's specifications.

Note that compliance with specifications and measurement requirements does not in itself guarantee that the modifications will be accepted.

Prohibited

- Using springs that have been cut, heated or bundled.
- Replacing the suspension system with one that is too stiff or that has an inadequate travel range.
- Lowering the vehicle to the point where the tires touch any part of the vehicle, or to the point where any part of the body or chassis touches the roadway under normal driving conditions.
- Failing to comply with the vehicle manufacturer's wheel alignment specifications.
- Installing tires on rims that are wider than the width recommended by the tire manufacturer (tire stretching).
- Installing tires that are not designed for road use (racing tires) or tires that protrude from the vehicle's fenders
- Installing tires with a load index that is lower than that recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.
- Using wheel spacers to change the vehicle's wheel track.
- Replacing the original suspension system with an air suspension system.
- Modifying the vehicle's structure.

Headlights, Lights and Reflectors

Allowed

- Replacing headlights, lights and reflectors with parts that have the appropriate Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) markings, based on their function and where they are installed on the vehicle.

EQUIPMENT	MANDATORY SAE MARKINGS
Headlights	SAE HR, SAE HL or SAE HG
Daytime running lights	SAE DRL
Front parking lights	SAE P
Taillights	SAE T or T2
Side parking lights	SAE P2
Brake lights	SAE S ou S2
Turn-signal lights	Based on the distance between the edge of a headlight and the centre of a turn signal light: • more than 100 mm: SAE I, I3, I4, I5, I6 • 75 mm to 100 mm: SAE I3, I4, I5 • 60 mm to 75 mm: SAE I4 and I5 • less than 60 mm: SAE I5
Backup light	SAE R
Licence plate light	SAE L
Centre high-mounted stop light	SAE U3
Reflectors	SAE A

Prohibited

- Disabling daytime running lights.
- Replacing headlights, lights and reflectors, or the optical unit with parts that do not have the appropriate SAE markings, based on their function and where they are installed on the vehicle.
- Changing the colour of headlights, lights and reflectors:
  - using colours that are different from those provided for under the *Highway Safety Code*, regardless of the technique used to change the colour (bulbs, optical unit, film).
- Reducing the brightness of the headlights, lights and reflectors, regardless of the technique used (film, opaque material).
- Adding headlights or lights that could reduce the visibility of the original mandatory lighting equipment.
- Replacing conventional bulbs with HID or LED bulbs, where the original optical unit was not designed to be used with those types of bulbs.

Installing high-powered headlights can improve visibility, but may blind other drivers. Any lights other than fog lights that are added to the vehicle's original headlights must not be used on the road. For example, an LED bar mounted on a vehicle's roof for off-road use must be switched off and preferably covered to avoid inadvertent use.

Interior

Allowed

- Adding a four- or five-point harness:
  - The new harness must not use the same anchor points as the original seat belt.
  - Note that it is mandatory to use only the original seat belts when driving on the roadway.
- Replacing an original seat that is not equipped with an airbag with a seat that was specifically designed for the vehicle.
  - the replacement seat must not affect the seat belt.

Prohibited

- Removing or deactivating an airbag, including a seat airbag.
- Adding or modifying seats, or changing how they are anchored.
- Connecting a four- or five-point harness to the anchor points of the original seat belt.
- Removing or modifying the original seat belts and their anchors.
- Modifying or replacing a steering wheel equipped with an airbag.

Exterior

Allowed

- Replacing the bumper shell:
  - The bumper's structure must not be modified and the elements of the bumper system that absorb energy in the event of impact must not be removed, deformed or modified.
- Adding a wing or spoiler, or stylized side skirts, as long as they do not come into contact with the tires or the roadway.

Prohibited

- Tinting the front side windows and the windshield, other than a strip 15 cm wide on the upper part of the windshield.
- Modifying the way in which doors open and the latch mechanism, such as by installing suicide doors or scissor doors.
- Changing the system that controls the vehicle's doors and hood (opening, closing, locking and unlocking).
- Installing parts that have sharp edges or spikes.
- Reducing the effectiveness of the braking system.
- Disabling the antilock braking system (ABS) or the electronic stability control (ESC) system.
- Installing a noisier exhaust system or removing a component from the original system.

TIPS AND ADVICE

- Use parts that are specifically designed for the vehicle and issued by recognized manufacturers that certify their compliance with road use requirements.
- Keep in mind that a modified vehicle is intended for use on the road, not on a race track. For example, while a stiff suspension and very wide tires may provide high performance on a racetrack, under certain road conditions (rain, bumpy surfaces, etc.), they can reduce vehicle stability.
- Adopt courteous, safe and responsible behaviour on the road, regardless of how powerful your vehicle may be.
- Keep in mind that a police officer who has doubts about the safety of your vehicle can order that it undergo a mechanical inspection, even if the SAAQ has already deemed your vehicle to be in compliance with safety standards. The officer may suspect that the vehicle has undergone additional modifications in the interim that have not been approved.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

When in doubt, or if you would like more information, refer to the various guides available on the SAAQ website, including the guide entitled *Les véhicules modifiés ou de fabrication artisanale* (in French only). That publication provides legal information to people who wish to make a hand-crafted, modified or rebuilt vehicle. It sets out all the steps that must be followed to ensure that a modified or hand-crafted vehicle can be authorized for road use. It also lists the modifications that must be approved by the SAAQ.

saaq.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/documents/publications/vehicules-modifies-fabrication-artisanale.pdf

TO REACH US

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By mail:

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et de la sécurité des véhicules
Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec
Case postale 19600, succursale Terminus
Québec (Québec) G1K 8J6

PRINCIPAL OFFENCES

Modifications

Offence	Fine*
Removing or deactivating an airbag	$300 to $600
Tinting the front side windows such that light transmission is reduced to less than 70%	$100 to $200
Applying or spraying a reflective material on windows	$200 to $300
Removing or modifying an original seat belt	$200 to $300
Changing the colour of headlights, lights or reflectors	$100 to $200
Reducing the brightness of headlights, lights or reflectors	$100 to $200
Using springs that have been cut, bundled or heated	$200 to $300
Changing the muffler or exhaust system to make it noisier than the original	$200 to $300
Placing a tinted strip that is more than 15 cm wide across the top of the windshield	$100 to $200

Speed

Offence	Fine**
Driving 20 km/h over the speed limit	$55
Driving 30 km/h over the speed limit	$105
Driving 45 km/h over the speed limit	$185/$390*
Driving 60 km/h over the speed limit	$630*
Driving at a speed that is too high for weather or environmental conditions	$60 to $100

* In addition to the fine, court fees apply, subject to change, in accordance with the *Tariff of court costs in penal matters*, as well as the contribution for victims of criminal offences provided for under the *Code of Penal Procedure*. The Tariff of court costs in penal matters and the *Code of Penal Procedure* are under the responsibility of the Ministère de la Justice du Québec.

** Excessive Speeding

Fines are doubled when a driver is convicted of an excessive speeding offence. Fines are tripled when a driver is convicted of an excessive speeding offence after having been convicted of such an offence three or more times in the previous 10 years (the offences must have been committed following the introduction of stiffer penalties for excessive speeding).

Speeding in a Road Work Zone

Fines are doubled for a speeding offence committed in a road work zone or in a school zone during the school year. In the case of an excessive speeding offence, the penalties for that type of offence apply.

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Société de l'assurance automobile Québec

Avec vous,
au cœur de votre sécurité