‘Mass deception’: Diesel emissions breaches in half a million Vauxhall vehicles – one million drivers could be compensated up to £20,000 each

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Vauxhall have been accused of ‘mass deception’ by lawyers working on a legal case against the automaker, alleging that emissions from their diesel vehicles ‘could amount to an extra five million vehicles’ worth of harmful pollutants in our air’.

Law firm PGMBM has begun a case against Vauxhall over a diesel emissions scandal that could affect over half a million vehicles bought, financed or leased in England and Wales between 2009 and 2019. The firm estimates that vehicles will have usually had at least two owners, meaning that the scandal may affect over one million drivers.

It is alleged that Vauxhall misled both customers and authorities as to the level of toxic emissions produced by certain models of their diesel vehicles.

A report by the European Federation for Transport and Environment ranked Vauxhall (Opel) engines as among the worst in Europe for excess nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions. Based on the testing of the company’s Euro 6 diesel engines, it was found that in real driving conditions the engines produced 10 times more harmful NO_x than legal limits allow.

According to PGMBM, this means that half a million Vauxhall vehicles on British roads may be producing five million vehicles’ worth of harmful pollutants. These pollutants damage the environment and have been linked to public health issues.

Through the alleged use of so-called ‘defeat devices’, Vauxhall effectively masked their vehicles' diesel pollution output. This allowed them to pass emissions tests that they otherwise would not have.

PGMBM has urged drivers in England and Wales to come forward and join the campaign if they purchased, financed or leased a potentially affected diesel vehicle manufactured by Vauxhall between 2009 and 2019. Potentially affected vehicles include the Vauxhall Astra, Cascada, Corsa, Insignia, Mokka, Movano and Zafira.

Drivers who bought, financed or leased these vehicles could now be entitled to compensation as part of the class action case – estimated to be up to £20,000 each, according to PGMBM.

PGMBM’s Managing Partner, Tom Goodhead, said: “We believe that there are grounds to suspect Vauxhall have orchestrated a mass deception of the public, mis-selling vehicles that not only fail to meet the specifications, but risk damage to the environment and our collective health.

“Some vehicles are producing up to 10 times the amount of pollutants permitted. That affects drivers, their passengers, passers-by and anyone who breathes the air around us. This isn’t some trivial percentage over the line, it could amount to an extra five million vehicles’ worth of harmful pollutants in our air.

“The power to force Vauxhall to acknowledge their wrongdoing, and change their practices, rests in the hands of those who join the case against them. It is absolutely imperative that we hold Vauxhall to account, forcing them to operate with a greater social and environmental conscience.

“Legally, affected consumers could be entitled to claim back the full cost of their vehicle. Based on our estimates, each claimant could expect up to £20,000.”

The case can be joined on *no-win, no-fee* basis at vauxhallclaimlawyers.com. By joining the action, claimants have the greatest chance of receiving compensation and achieving justice. PGMBM intends to apply for a Group Litigation Order (GLO), which allows individual claims to be progressed together and be treated as one by the courts.

Revelations about Vauxhall’s true diesel emissions contrast with their own Environmental and Energy Policy, which states: “Opel/Vauxhall is committed to protecting human health, natural resources and the environment. This dedication includes compliance with the law, but goes beyond and encompasses the integration of sound environmental and energy-conscious practices into all business decisions.”

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A defeat device detects when the engine is being tested and limits the amount of NO_x emissions produced in order to comply with regulatory standards. The levels of emissions produced under test conditions differs considerably to what is emitted during normal road use by vehicle drivers. Higher production of NO_x pollutants can result in higher fuel and maintenance costs, as well as impaired vehicle performance.

Toxic diesel emissions are also extremely harmful to people. The Royal College of Physicians claim that illegal levels of air pollution result in over 40,000 early deaths per year. NO_x is a significant factor in air pollution and respiratory conditions, particularly affecting both young and vulnerable people.

Vauxhall is a founding member of the Motability Scheme, which allows people to put their higher rate mobility allowance towards the lease of a car, wheelchair-accessible vehicle, scooter or powered wheelchair. However, exposing vulnerable people to higher NO_x emissions may be compromising their health, seriously affecting respiratory conditions and causing inflammation of the airways.

The issue of diesel emissions is increasingly visible across the automotive industry following successful 'Dieselgate' litigation against Volkswagen, with similar cases currently in progress against Mercedes-Benz, Fiat Chrysler and the Renault Nissan Mitsubishi Alliance (also brought by PGMBM). These cases highlight systemic, large-scale emissions cheating by manufacturers.

PGMBM estimate that over half a million Vauxhall vehicles in England and Wales could be affected by the scandal. Based on a projection of up to £20,000 compensation per affected vehicle, that could mean a potential £10billion liability for Vauxhall.

To make a claim on a no-Win, no-Fee basis, or for more information regarding the Vauxhall NO_x Emissions Group Litigation, visit vauxhallclaimlawyers.com.

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