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## **Texas Slams the Brakes on a Major Odometer Fraud Operation *TxDMV Urges Consumers to Protect Themselves against Odometer Rollbacks***

AUSTIN – A man suspected of rolling back the odometers on hundreds of vehicles to defraud innocent Texas consumers was arrested following a three-year investigation by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV), the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Fort Worth Police Department, the Grand Prairie Police Department, the Tarrant County Regional Auto Crimes Task Force and the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office.

DPS took the suspect into custody in Grand Prairie on July 6, 2017, on a charge of tampering with an odometer; additional charges are pending. Odometer fraud is the disconnection, re-setting or "rolling back" of a vehicle's odometer with the intent to defraud.

"The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles does not tolerate anyone ripping off Texas auto buyers," said TxDMV Executive Director Whitney Brewster. "Mileage is a key factor that consumers use when deciding whether to buy a used vehicle. Tampering with an odometer to deceive a buyer is a serious crime that puts innocent Texans' safety and finances at risk."

If the odometer has been rolled back, you may end up paying hundreds or thousands of dollars more for the vehicle than what it is worth. And what you presume is a low-mileage and reasonably safe vehicle may have serious safety issues because of the hidden extra mileage.

TxDMV will contact victims whose vehicles may have had their odometers rolled back as part of this alleged crime ring, so their title records can be updated.

"Don't let this happen to you," said Brewster. "The best way to protect yourself from being a victim of odometer fraud is to do a little extra research before you buy."

TxDMV offers the following "Smart Buyer" tips:

- **Examine the interior and exterior of the vehicle carefully:** Look for clues that might indicate the vehicle has higher mileage such as wear on the tires, seats, seat belts, carpeting and other interior items.
- **Write down the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN):** Each vehicle has a unique VIN which serves as the car's fingerprint. You can find the VIN by looking from outside at the lower portion of the window on the driver's side.
- **Obtain a vehicle inspection report:** Use the VIN to obtain a free vehicle inspection report from [www.mytxcar.org](http://www.mytxcar.org). The report shows vehicle's safety and emissions testing history from DPS and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. If the report shows a decrease in mileage, the odometer may have been rolled back.
- **Check vehicle history reports:** Use the VIN to purchase a vehicle history report from a third-party provider such as CARFAX or AutoCheck. Make sure the report shows a steady increase in mileage, and look for any "flags" which may indicate problems.

- **Do a Title Check:** Use the VIN to do a [Title Check](#) on the vehicle which shows the vehicle's title history, including odometer information.

If you believe you may be the victim of odometer fraud, you may take one or more of the following actions:

- If you purchased your vehicle from a dealer, file a [dealer complaint](#) with TxDMV.
- File a complaint with local law enforcement.
- You may have a civil action and should consult an attorney.

For additional information on odometer fraud prevention, visit [TxDMV.gov/odometer-fraud](http://TxDMV.gov/odometer-fraud).

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**The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles** serves, protects and advances the citizens and industries in the state with quality motor vehicle related services. For every \$1 it spends, the TxDMV returns \$11 to the state. Each year the agency registers more than 24 million vehicles; issues more than 8 million vehicle titles; licenses approximately 34,000 motor vehicle dealers and distributors; credentials more than 60,000 motor carriers; issues more than 650,000 oversize/overweight permits; investigates approximately 13,000 complaints against dealers and motor carriers; and awards grants to law enforcement agencies to reduce vehicle burglaries and thefts. Learn more at [www.TxDMV.gov](http://www.TxDMV.gov).