

RCW 46.96.105 Warranty work. (1) Each manufacturer shall specify in its franchise agreement, or in a separate written agreement, with each of its dealers licensed in this state, the dealer's obligation to perform warranty work or service on the manufacturer's products. Each manufacturer shall provide each of its dealers with a schedule of compensation to be paid to the dealer for any warranty work or service, including parts, labor, and diagnostic work, required of the dealer by the manufacturer in connection with the manufacturer's products. The schedule of compensation must not be less than the rates charged by the dealer for similar service to retail customers for nonwarranty service and repairs, and must not be less than the schedule of compensation for an existing dealer as of June 10, 2010.

(a) The rates charged by the dealer for nonwarranty service or work for parts means the price paid by the dealer for those parts, including all shipping and other charges, increased by the franchisee's average percentage markup. A dealer must establish and declare the dealer's average percentage markup by submitting to the manufacturer one hundred sequential customer-paid service repair orders or ninety days of customer-paid service repair orders, whichever is less, covering repairs made no more than one hundred eighty days before the submission. A change in a dealer's established average percentage markup takes effect thirty days following the submission. A manufacturer may not require a dealer to establish average percentage markup by another methodology. A manufacturer may not require information that the dealer believes is unduly burdensome or time-consuming to provide, including, but not limited to, part-by-part or transaction-by-transaction calculations. In calculating the retail rate customarily charged by the dealer for parts and labor, the following work must not be included in the calculation:

(i) Repairs for manufacturer or distributor special events, specials, or promotional discounts for retail customer repairs;

(ii) Parts sold at wholesale or at reduced or specially negotiated rates for insurance repairs;

(iii) Routine maintenance not covered under warranty, such as fluids, filters, and belts not provided in the course of repairs;

(iv) Nuts, bolts, fasteners, and similar items that do not have an individual part number;

(v) Tires;

(vi) Batteries and light bulbs; and

(vii) Vehicle reconditioning.

(b) A manufacturer shall compensate a dealer for labor and diagnostic work at the rates charged by the dealer to its retail customers for such work and for any documentation work required by the manufacturer to authorize or verify the work including, but not limited to, photographs, paperwork, and electronic data entry. However, a manufacturer is not required to compensate a dealer more than once for the same documentation work. If a manufacturer can demonstrate that the rates unreasonably exceed those of all other franchised motor vehicle dealers in the same relevant market area offering the same or a competitive motor vehicle line, the manufacturer is not required to honor the rate increase proposed by the dealer. If the manufacturer is not required to honor the rate increase proposed by the dealer, the dealer is entitled to resubmit a new proposed rate for labor and diagnostic work.

(c) A dealer may not be granted an increase in the average percentage markup or labor and diagnostic work rate more than once in one calendar year.

(2) All claims for warranty work for parts and labor made by dealers under this section must be submitted to the manufacturer within ninety days of the date the work was performed. All claims submitted must be paid by the manufacturer within thirty days following receipt, provided the claim has been approved by the manufacturer. The manufacturer has the right to audit claims for warranty work and to charge the dealer for any unsubstantiated, incorrect, or false claims for a period of nine months following payment. However, the manufacturer may audit and charge the dealer for any fraudulent claims during any period for which an action for fraud may be commenced under applicable state law.

(3) All claims submitted by dealers on the forms and in the manner specified by the manufacturer shall be either approved or disapproved within thirty days following their receipt. The manufacturer shall notify the dealer in writing of any disapproved claim, and shall set forth the reasons why the claim was not approved. Any claim not specifically disapproved in writing within thirty days following receipt is approved, and the manufacturer is required to pay that claim within thirty days of receipt of the claim.

(4) A manufacturer may not otherwise recover all or any portion of its costs for compensating its dealers licensed in this state for warranty parts and service either by reduction in the amount due to the dealer or by separate charge, surcharge, or other imposition. [2014 c 214 s 6; 2010 c 178 s 4; 2003 c 21 s 2; 1998 c 298 s 1.]

Application—2014 c 214: See note following RCW 46.70.045.

Captions not law—2003 c 21: See note following RCW 46.96.020.

Severability—1998 c 298: See note following RCW 19.118.021.