

Spanish police probe garages offering emission cheating

October 4 2015, by Harold Heckle

Spanish police have cracked down on a string of garages that allegedly provided customers with mechanical and software services that enabled their cars to cheat emission checks in a scam similar to that which has engulfed Volkswagen, a statement said Saturday.

Police said a tip-off led them to discover that eight garages in Madrid had been removing diesel filters and reprogramming software so that motors could deliver more power, be cheaper to service and fool emissions testing equipment.

The garages charged customers 100-200 euros (\$112-224) to remove diesel particulate filters, thus improving performance and reducing servicing costs that can amount to 1,200 euros (\$1,345), they said.

The reprogrammed software offered as part of the package then made the [harmful emissions](#) issued by the tampered-with engines undetectable, a police statement said.

Police did not immediately say how many people were arrested in the investigation, which is ongoing. So far, police have gathered enough information to suggest that more than 80 garages throughout Spain have been offering performance-enhancing and emission test cheating services.

Investigators discovered that some garages specialized in the removal of filters, whose function is to collect [diesel soot](#), while others concentrated

on manipulating the vehicles' electronics systems.

Diesel engines that have the filter removed freely emit particles into the air, "something that degrades the atmosphere considerably," the statement said.

The [police](#) statement, issued by the Interior Ministry, said the software that reprogrammed the cars' computers was so effective it was able to make the pollution produced undetectable to machines supplied to government testing centers and even to the specialized equipment developed by the vehicles' manufacturers.

All of the exhaust-tampering services were advertised openly online and inside the garages, the statement said. Some garages worked on car computers that were delivered to them regularly by post.

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