



# news

Motor  
Vehicle Sales Authority  
of British Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Unlicensed car dealer convicted on 15 counts of fraud

(SURREY, B.C. 25 June, 2010) - Parveen Kumar Saini of Delta has been convicted of fraud in the sale of used motor vehicles. The 15 specific charges brought before the court date back to 2005 with evidence documenting odometer tampering, inaccurate vehicle histories, sales tax violations and other deliberately deceptive practices.

The accused pleaded guilty to all charges. Judge Paul Dohm imposed a one-year conditional sentence (effectively house arrest, except for medical emergencies or to work, with the terms easing as the year progresses). He also agreed to perform 100 hours of community service and to make restitution in three of the cases.

Presenting an exhaustive summary of Saini's fraudulent business Crown Prosecutor John Ahern told the Court: "What is absolutely clear in these cases is the deliberate planning to perpetrate each fraud: finding the appropriate low price vehicle, rolling back the odometer, detailing to improve appearance, creating a false history, finding a suitable victim, forging official documents, tax fraud and other deception, not just once, but a consistent, repetitive pattern."

Ahern said Saini targeted the most vulnerable consumers, particularly recent immigrants, who had little knowledge of English or the local culture.

The Crown Prosecutor described the accused as a "curber", the colloquial term for unlicensed salespeople who pretend they are private sellers, but who are actually dealers. He read into the record an excerpt from the Motor Vehicle Sales Authority of B.C.'s Victim Impact Statement, with respect to curbing:

***"It is a black market business rife with misrepresentation of vehicle histories, odometer rollbacks and dishonest practices such as falsifying sales documents to minimize sales taxes payable, corrupting consumers into illegal activity and therefore ensuring their conspiratorial co-operation if later problems develop. . . licensed dealers are fully accountable under law and are expected to strive to maintain best standards of practice; pay all appropriate taxes; and, most contribute substantially to their community ... while illegal sellers, known as "curbers" give nothing back, cannot be held accountable unless the focus of an investigation by the VSA, police or both and usually engage in predatory practices, exploiting vulnerable consumers. These consumers are often people in financial distress or new immigrants."***

The VSA is the independent regulatory agency delegated by the B.C. government to administer statutes and regulations concerning the retail sale of motor vehicles, with a mandate to serve both consumers and industry

## **15 counts /2 . . .**

Denis Savidan, the VSA's Manager of Compliance and Investigations, said the case is an example of the multi-agency co-operation that is now addressing the fraud-riddled curber sector of the car sales business. (It is believed that 50 percent of so-called private vehicle sales advertised in newspaper classifieds are actually curbers.) Earlier this year, the VSA hosted the first ever multi-agency conference on curbers. Among the participants in the conference were the RCMP, ICBC, Canada Revenue Agency, Crown Counsel (Commercial Crime), Canada Border Services Agency, municipal bylaw enforcement officers, and the B.C. Transportation Ministry's Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement.

"The case this week is important because it clearly demonstrates that curbing is far more serious than a mere licensing issue, and it also shows what can be achieved when various agencies work together," Savidan said. "I want to particularly commend ICBC's Special Investigations Unit for their work here. They were exceptional."

Several times during the presentation of evidence, the Crown Prosecutor pointed out that the accused took advantage of a weakness in the registration system. In this province, different than in most others, private sellers do not need to attend or identify themselves. They must make formal declarations but the vehicle registry system does not verify this documentation.

Ahern, who said the facts certainly warrant the "imprisonment" of Saini, also cited several mitigating factors the Judge might consider in the imposition of sentence. The accused has been on tight bail since September 2009; and, some restitution will be made as ordered by the Judge.

Savidan added that it is important to note that in 12 of the 15 counts there will be no restitution, because the buyers were "complicit" in the fraud. They agreed to false documentation with a lower purchase price, to save sales taxes, a common practice used by curbers to corrupt customers, leaving them fearful of any complaint to the authorities.

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