

# LETTER OF THE LAW

JOHN VARETIMIDIS ANSWERS YOUR ENGINEERING  
AND LEGISLATION QUESTIONS

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION RELATING TO THE LEGALITY OF MODIFICATIONS MADE TO YOUR COMMODORE, EMAIL [BENSTREETCOMMODORES.COM](mailto:benstreetcommodores.com) OR WRITE TO: ASK JOHN, STREET COMMODORES MAGAZINE, 50 SILVERWATER RD, SILVERWATER NSW 2128

## G'DAY JOHN,

I'm currently in the process of installing Coulsen seats into my Clubby. Being a VS, obviously VT seat rails will not be a straight bolt up. I've also heard that that when changing seats/rails you must get them engineer certified, is this correct? Is there a certain protocol I need to follow to keep the RTA and men in blue happy?

Frank Stallone

*Fitting Holden Commodore VT seats in your VS Commodore can be made legal provided a few simple guidelines are followed.*

*Firstly, ensure that the seats will fit without obstruction when moved forward and rearward throughout the entire travel of the seat rails. Ensure the seats do not interfere with any of the permanent body work or operation of the original seatbelts.*

*Since the VT seats are from a later-model Commodore, they will comply with later Australian Design Rules for seat anchorage strength and head restraints, so they are approved seats.*

*Where possible, try to use the original seat rails because they are bolted to the seat frame by the manufacturer. If it is suitable, try to construct a frame or seat adaptor to allow the seats to bolt into the original VS Commodore anchor points in the floor pan. If this is not possible, then new anchor points may be located provided the underside of the floor pan is reinforced with steel plates of no less than 75x75x3mm. All connections should be secured with high-tensile grade 8.8 bolts and locking nuts.*

## HI JOHN,

I have a VR Calais and I am waiting to get it converted to LPG. It is the V6 version and will run petrol and gas. Since I already have a Chevy 350 running on straight LPG in an HX ute, if I were to use only LPG in the Calais (removing petrol altogether), what other problems will I face if I want to transfer the 350 into my Calais?

Do I need a half-chassis kit? Do I need to change the K-frame to a V8 one? I realise I will need the V8 version of the T700 gearbox to handle the grunt. The Calais already has FE2 suspension, but will I need to beef up the rear springs to handle the extra weight of a full gas tank?

Great job with the magazine guys! I think I am subscribed until next decade! Any help with my questions will be appreciated.

David Banks

*Fitting an earlier-model engine such as a pre-pollution Chevrolet 350 engine to a later-model Holden Commodore VR is generally*

*not recommended because it will not comply with the later emission standards applicable to the VR. The only option you have is to run the Chevrolet 350 on 100 percent LPG, which requires removal of the original fuel system and fuel tank assembly. Original emission-control equipment fitted to the VR Commodore should be retained including the catalytic converter.*

*The chassis of the VR Commodore will not require reinforcement for a standard-power-output Chevrolet 350 engine, but it is strongly recommended that you upgrade the front cross-member, driveline, suspension and braking components to suit the increased weight, power and torque output.*

## HI JOHN,

I have a VL Exec that I am restoring to original, but I want to change the power plant. What I have in mind is the supercharged V6 donk and was planning on following the 'flying banana' build-up.

I have contrasting reports on whether the Super 6 needs to be engineered in this vehicle. Commonsense says that it does considering the power output, but I have seen VLs with NA V6 motors installed where the owner has said it doesn't need to be engineered.

Can you please confirm whether this is the case and what other components would need to be re-engineered to suit?

Mark Grogan

*Any replacement engines fitted to vehicles that were not available by the manufacturer as an option must be engineer certified. The vehicle must be inspected to ensure that the engine is suitable for emissions compliance, is satisfactorily fitted and continues to meet compliance with braking performance and suitable drivability.*

*The conversion to a supercharged or naturally aspirated Holden 3.8L V6 fuel-injected engine can be engineered provided a few guidelines are followed.*

*The replacement engine must retain all original emission-control equipment as fitted to the donor vehicle. The engine must be satisfactorily fitted with suitable engine mounts and adequate clearance for all moving and existing components. The remaining driveline must be rated for the increased power and torque output, including upgrading of the braking and suspension system where necessary.*

*Since the Holden 3.8 V6 engine is locally released, it will be suited for emissions compliance, have availability of replacement parts and be easy to service. sc*