

- Exhaust System Components: Mufflers and other exhaust system components are designed to meet a variety of performance and legal requirements. Again, any modification risks both deteriorating overall performance and voiding the warranty.

There are some excellent aftermarket component manufacturers. Volkswagen works with some of these manufactures to create accessories specifically designed to work with your vehicle as a part of the system.

If you're interested in modifying your Volkswagen, look first at the factory accessories in Driver/Driver Gear Magazine.

We want your ownership experience to be enjoyable and rewarding. Please help us to make this a reality.

Aftermarket Parts and Accessories and Your Volkswagen



Drivers wanted! 

Volkswagen vehicles are designed for people who are passionate about driving. It's not surprising, then, that many Volkswagen owners want to get the most out of their driving experience by customizing or modifying their vehicles. Volkswagen understands and encourages this enthusiasm but wants to help ensure that any vehicle modifications maintain the high level of safety, performance, and quality designed into our vehicles from the beginning.

The Vehicle is a System, Not Just a Collection of Parts

It's easy to think of a vehicle as a collection of parts. Decades ago that was not far from the truth, but vehicles of today are sophisticated systems, not unlike the human body.

If you change one element of the system, even if you make that one element "better", you can change the balance of the system and usually create problems in several areas.

Our engineers spend thousands of hours making sure that all the components in the vehicle system work together in an optimal way. Manufacturers of aftermarket parts simply don't have the resources to ensure sure their parts perform to the same standards. They typically manufacture parts for many makes and models and can't possibly know our vehicles as well as we do.

Some Important Considerations

Here are just a few of the areas commonly modified on vehicles of today and some of the drawbacks and problems that can result:

- **Suspension Components:** All of the "work" a vehicle does – starting, stopping, turning, etc. – happens based on the relatively small contact area between the four tires and the road. The components that work together in the

suspension system of a vehicle are tuned to provide the best overall performance across a wide range of operating conditions. Suspension performance is highly dependent on the geometry – the mathematical relationship – between the sizes and lengths of various components. Modifying the suspension can cause handling to become erratic. Suspension components can wear and fail prematurely.

- **Tires and Wheels:** One of the most common vehicle modifications is to change tires and wheels. Like suspension components, changing the size, offset or weight of a wheel, or the diameter, width or aspect ratio of a tire, usually results in compromised suspension performance. A poor choice, especially when the motive is usually purely cosmetic. Even acceleration and braking performance can be negatively affected.
- **ECM Modifications or "Chips":** A growing trend is to change chips in the ECM (electronic control module) to enhance performance. Once again, those who market these modified components rarely take the same care as Volkswagen to ensure that your vehicle operates well in a variety of driving conditions. What you may gain in a small percentage improvement in acceleration will likely be offset by decreased durability and reliability, poor drivability, increased fuel consumption, and so forth. Not to mention that these modifications may be illegal or void your warranty.
- **Sound Systems:** Very popular today is the trend to modify sound systems. Aside from electrical system incompatibility, there are risks from drilling holes to install the system such as increased likelihood of corrosion and possibly puncturing other components, like the fuel tank. Perhaps even more dangerous are systems that utilize speakers in separate housings that simply lay loose in the vehicle. In a collision these heavy speakers become lethal projectiles inside the vehicle.