

Thousands Of China-Made Cars Recalled In Australia

The Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — An Australian importer recalled 23,000 Chinese-made cars after asbestos was found inside engine and exhaust gaskets, the nation's consumer watchdog said Wednesday.

Ateco Automotive, which imports the cars made by Great Wall Motor Co. and Chery Automobile, ordered dealers to stop selling the affected vehicles and recalled gaskets that were distributed as spare parts, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said in a statement.

"The asbestos is bound into gaskets in the engine and exhaust system and does not present any risk to consumers during use of the vehicle," the watchdog agency said. "However, consumers should not perform do-it-yourself maintenance that might disturb these gaskets."

Australia has prohibited the importation of asbestos — a known carcinogen — since 2004.

The recall is a blow to Great Wall and Chery, which have been looking to expand their businesses beyond the domestic market.

Customs officers initially detected the asbestos in imported spare parts, which sparked a wider investigation, the consumer commission said.

Ateco did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

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