



# Department of Justice

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## **SANDEN CORP. AGREES TO PLEAD GUILTY TO PRICE FIXING ON AUTOMOBILE PARTS INSTALLED IN U.S. CARS**

### *Company Agrees to Pay \$3.2 Million Criminal Fine*

WASHINGTON – Sanden Corp., an automotive parts manufacturer based in Gunma, Japan, has agreed to plead guilty and to pay a \$3.2 million criminal fine for its role in a conspiracy to suppress and eliminate competition for the purchase of compressors used in air conditioning systems sold to Nissan North America Inc. for installation in vehicles manufactured and sold in the United States and elsewhere, the Department of Justice announced today.

According to a one-count felony charge filed today in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in Detroit, Sanden conspired to fix the prices of compressors sold to Nissan. In addition to the criminal fine, Sanden has agreed to cooperate in the department's ongoing investigation. The plea agreement is subject to court approval.

"Today's charge is the latest in the Antitrust Division's ongoing investigation of automobile parts suppliers," said Brent Snyder, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement program. "The division continues to vigorously prosecute companies and individuals that seek to maximize their profits through illegal, anticompetitive means."

The department said that Sanden and its co-conspirator held meetings and conversations to discuss and agree upon the bids and price quotations submitted to Nissan for the purchase of compressors used in automotive air conditioning systems. Sanden's involvement in the conspiracy lasted from as early as August 2008 until at least April 2009.

Including Sanden, 33 companies and 50 individuals have been charged in the department's ongoing investigation into price fixing and bid rigging in the automotive parts industry. All of the charged companies have pleaded guilty or have agreed to plead guilty and to pay a combined total of more than \$2.4 billion in fines.

Sanden is charged with fixing prices in violation of the Sherman Act, which carries a maximum penalty of a \$100 million criminal fine for corporations. The maximum fine may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

Today's charge is the result of an ongoing federal antitrust investigation into price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct in the automotive parts industry, which is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement sections and the FBI. Today's charges were brought by the Antitrust Division's New York Office and the FBI's New York Field Office, with the assistance of the FBI headquarters' International Corruption Unit. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct related to the automotive parts industry should contact the Antitrust Division's Citizen Complaint Center at 1-888-647-3258, visit [www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html](http://www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html) or call the FBI's New York Field Office at 212-384-1000.

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