

BUYING A USED VEHICLE CHECKLIST



Before You Buy A Car – Do Your Research

- What is your budget? Work out how much you are able to afford and spend.
- Will your car be insured? Consider the best option for you and obtain a few quotes, as insurance varies from model to model.
- What are your needs? Work out what you will be using the car for.
- How will the environment fair? It's worth a look into what the car's fuel consumption and emission rating is like.
- Will you be purchasing the car from a dealer or private seller? It is important to decide where and how you will buy the car.
- Do you know your rights and responsibilities? It's useful knowing what your state or territory's regulations are around the buying and selling of used cars. There are many things to look for, e.g. if there is money owing on the car or a particular history associated with the car.

Know Your Rights And Responsibilities

Check with your state or territory's motoring organisation, fair trading or consumer affairs department for the different regulations that apply for the purchase and sale of used cars.

- ACT - www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au
- NSW - www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
- NT - nt.gov.au/law/rights/buying-a-new-or-used-vehicle
- QLD - www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights
- SA - www.sa.gov.au/topics/transport-travel-and-motoring/motoring
- TAS - www.consumer.tas.gov.au/fair_trading/motor_vehicles
- VIC - www.consumer.vic.gov.au/motor-cars
- WA - www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection

Checking The Car's History

You can find out about a car's history by checking the car's VIN number against various databases in the state which the vehicle is registered in. For a small fee (free in some states) you can review a car's history, check if it is stolen, encumbered or even if it has been written off previously, via the Personal Property Securities Register service — transact.ppsr.gov.au/ppsr/QuickVINSearch.

Shopping Around – Ask Plenty Of Questions!

- How many owners has the vehicle had previously?
- Why is it up for sale?
- What is its mileage?
- Has it ever been damaged or involved in any accidents?
- Is the vehicle currently registered and/or insured?
- Does it have any safety features or 'bad habits'?
- Will it pass a road worthiness or safety check? Does it need one done?



Inspecting A Car

There's a lot to check when inspecting a car and aside from asking a lot of questions, check the following:

Paperwork

- For private sales make sure that the seller is the owner, check their drivers licence and check that their details match their registration papers.
- Check the car's compliance plate (usually found fixed to the engine bay, door pillar or footwell of the vehicle).
- Make sure the vehicle's VIN number, date of manufacture, engine number and number plates match the vehicle's registration papers. If there are any details that don't line up, double check with the seller as to reasons why this is the case.

Checking the Outside

- Always look at the car in full daylight. This will enable a better view of the car.
- Check the car's paintwork and panelling, look for bubbles, dents, rust, colour differences or other defects.
- Check the car's tyres. What condition are they in? Check for enough tread and uneven wear. Is there a spare tyre?
- Check that doors, windows, the boot and bonnet open and close properly.
- Take a look under the car. Are the tyres aligned? Are there any oil leaks?

Checking Under the Bonnet

- Look for signs of oil leaks.
- Look at the dipstick, use this to check the oil levels.
- Check the coolant, radiator cooling fans, battery and its mounting platform. Look for any signs of corrosion or other damage.

Checking the Inside

- Look at the upholstery, carpet and trim for any wear and tear or signs of rust.
- Check that all seatbelts and buckles are in working order.
- Check that all lights and other accessories, e.g. visors, glove box, mirrors, radio and so forth, are there as stated and working properly.

Start the Engine

- Try this with the bonnet open.
- Watch for exhaust fumes or leaks.
- Listen for excessive or irregular noises, e.g. rattling or knocking in the engine.

Test Drive

- Ensure the car is adequately insured for you to take it for a test drive.
- Take the car for a test drive somewhere quiet (if possible) to allow you to focus on the car, its noises and feel on various turns or surfaces.
- Check and watch the dashboard for indicators and any warning lights.
- Test the gears, handbrake, acceleration and deceleration – these should change smoothly.
- Check the car's headlights, indicator lights and brake lights. Are they all working?
- Check the car's mirrors and windows. What is your visibility like?
- Test the car's alignment. Do this on a straight road – ease your grip on the steering wheel and see if the car pulls to one side.
- Listen for any irregular noises, particularly any rattling sounds when turning, going over speed humps or driving uphill.
- Take your time.

