

Used Car Inspection

Tools required: Bring your flashlight. Locate the owner's manual.

Steps: Each checklist step sets the stage for the next check. Write down any faults.

If all steps pass your inspection, take the car to an auto technician for a "pre-purchase" inspection.

Model :	Year:	VIN
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm Cold Engine	Open the hood and confirm that the engine is COLD. If the engine was warmed up prior to your arrival, the seller may be hiding a cold start problem. Do NOT start the car just yet.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior	Look at the reflections in the paint on all sides, if it is the same texture throughout then the paint is likely all original. Feel the paint with your hand, smooth and slick is good, rough and dull is bad. Rock chips on the front bumper and leading edge of the hood would also indicate the paint is original. Factory applied paint lasts longer and looks better than a body shop paint job.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Body Crash Damage	Open all the doors, trunk, and hood to check for wrinkled metal and cracked paint that reveals bare metal. Check the thresholds, jambs and hinges. Look behind the headlights and taillights.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tools and Spare	While in the trunk check that the spare tire, jack and tools are present.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flood Damage	Use a bright flashlight to look under the seats or any area that normally would not be cleaned. Caked-on mud in any part of the interior could mean it was flooded. Water-damaged cars suffer from intermittent and chronic electrical issues.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Systems Check	Turn on the ignition but DON'T START THE ENGINE. In 2-5 seconds all of the warning lights will come on (the "wow" display) when the computer runs a self-test. If some don't come on, check the owner's manual to see if it has ABS, SRS, or TCS and get a description of the proper warning light action. Cycle the key as many times as needed to get a good look at all the lights.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cold Start, 30 sec.	Now start the engine and observe carefully. Does it sound, feel and smell normal? Did all the warning lights turn off? After 30 seconds, snap the throttle by popping it sharply (almost to the floor and back) and quickly. There should be no tailpipe smoke. Observe the temperature gauge as it rises. Don't start driving yet. Listen for the radiator fan to come on.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Warm-up, 3 minutes	While engine warms, use owners manual to familiarize yourself with the controls by checking the A/C, heater, radio, seat and mirror adjustments, etc. Wait 2 more minutes to make sure the temperature is stable. Use this time to look underneath the engine, check for drips and leaks.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Road Test	Turn off all accessories and roll up the windows. Drive carefully at city speeds, if the engine stumbles or stalls, stop now and go back. Drive over manhole covers and speed bumps while listening for clunks, squeaks, and vibrations. Roll down the windows and drive next to a wall or solid fence, using it to bounce the sound back to you. Apply the brakes, shift into neutral/park, snap the throttle--any strange noises? Back from the road test, park the car over a clean spot. Wait 10 minutes, then do the next step.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hot Restart	Start the engine and observe carefully – does it sound, feel and smell normal? Snap the throttle by popping it quickly and sharply (to the floor and back). Any tailpipe smoke? Get out and look for new leaks. (Clear water dripping under the car behind the front wheels and directly below the windshield is simply the A/C system.)	

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