

CAR CORNER

Buyers Steer Clear Of Cashed-In Clunkers

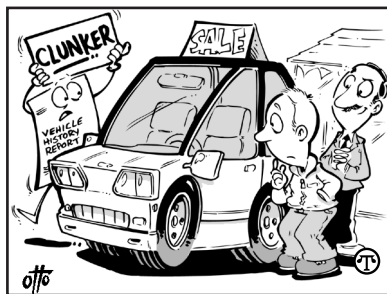
(NAPSA)—Nearly 700,000 used cars were traded in and sent to be scrapped under the federal Car Allowance Rebate System, or “Cash for Clunkers.” But how many of those autos actually made it to the scrap yard? Experts say it could pay for used car buyers to ask just that.

Some now warn that although it is illegal to resell any car traded in under the Cash for Clunkers program, many of the used cars that were supposedly scrapped may in fact be resold around the country.

Protecting Yourself

Fortunately, there are ways for car buyers to protect themselves. For instance, working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Carfax recently added the vehicle identification number (VIN) of every car included in the Cash for Clunkers program to its database.

The information is available for free at www.carfax.com/clunkers. After plugging in the 17-digit VIN, the free check alerts buyers and sellers to any vehicle that was supposed to be scrapped as part of the initiative. The company’s vehicle history reports also include the clunker information in addition to other important facts about a car’s past—facts that a seller may be unaware of or choose not to reveal. Carfax Reports can indicate if a car was in a flood, fire or wreck or if its odometer may have been illegally rolled back.



A vehicle history report could keep car buyers from purchasing a leftover clunker from the “Cash for Clunkers” program that’s being illegally resold.

It’s also smart for shoppers to give a car a visual inspection and have the car inspected by a trusted mechanic before they buy. A few things to look for:

- Make sure the seller’s name and the vehicle identification number matches on all documents and the car itself.
- Be aware of malfunctioning air bag indicator lights. The light should turn on briefly when you start the engine and then turn off.
- Cracked wires or interior rust; cars that were once under water will rot from the inside out. Wet wires become brittle and metal bolts and brackets will start rusting when they dry out.

Learn More

For more information on the Cash for Clunkers program and guidelines, visit www.cars.gov. For more information on vehicle history reports, visit www.carfax.com.