

Automotive Answers

Tips On Buying A Used Vehicle

(NAPSA)—Whether you're in the market for a used car, truck, van or SUV, the key to finding a good vehicle involves looking into its past.

That's the advice from experts who say there are a few steps people can take to be more confident that the used vehicle they buy is worth the money they pay. Try these tips:

Know The Signs

Check the car over for signs of damage or wear and tear. Look for excessive rust or mismatched parts. Also, check to see if there is water damage to the interior of the car. If there is, the vehicle may have been in a flood.

Get A Second Opinion

Before purchasing a used car, take it to a trusted mechanic to have it checked over. A quick inspection can tell you the kind of shape the vehicle is in and if it's been well maintained over the years.

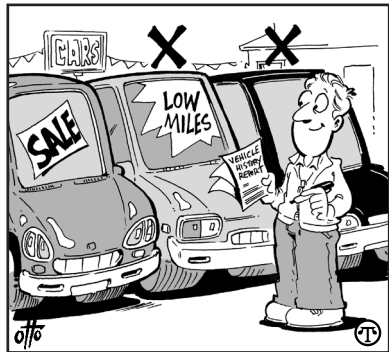
Check The Records

Ask to see maintenance records showing oil changes, brake work, tire rotation and other maintenance. If the seller does not have the records or is unwilling to share them, you may want to consider walking away.

Get A Report

You can get unlimited Carfax Vehicle History Reports for 30 days by entering the vehicle identification number (VIN) of any used car at www.carfax.com. The reports pull information from nearly 5 billion records reported by more than 20,000 sources including DMVs, auto auctions, manufacturers, dealers and repair shops. Among other things, the reports indicate:

- If a car has been in an accident—more than 5 million cars are considered total losses from wrecks



A vehicle history report can keep used-car buyers from being taken for a ride.

each year

- If the car has been in a flood
- The number of previous owners
- If the odometer has been rolled back and if the mileage reported on the car is truthful
- If the car has ever been turned in under the lemon law
- If there are open recalls on the car.

The reports also tell you when a dealer took ownership of the car, making it easier to haggle over price (the longer a dealer has held a car, the less leverage he has). Additionally, they include a free Safety & Reliability Report, which provides useful information on the car you are considering—including facts about crash tests, safety recalls and reliability ratings.

There's also a service called Carfax Xpert, which elaborates on a variety of information included in the vehicle history report. The service can be a good way to avoid a number of curbside car sale scams.

For more information, visit www.carfax.com.