

# Consumer Alert!

## Don't Get Soaked Buying A Used Car

(NAPSA)—Literally thousands of cars are submerged each fall during floods. During the post-flood cleanup, auto insurance claims adjusters “totaled” thousands of flood-damaged vehicles.

Unfortunately, that doesn't stop unscrupulous sellers from putting these cars back up for sale. In many instances, these mechanically unsound and frame-damaged vehicles undergo minor repairs and are resold with no notice to the buyer.

To help consumers avoid these waterlogged wrecks, the following tips have been compiled by Carfax, the nation's leading provider of vehicle history information:

- Check it out—Examine the trunk, glove compartment, and beneath the seats and dash for signs of mud, rust or water damage. Look for discolored, faded or stained upholstery and carpeting. Carpeting that has been replaced may fit too loosely or may not match the interior color.

- Take a seat—Check all gauges on the dashboard to make sure they are accurate and look for signs of water damage. Turn on the ignition key to make sure all the warning lights and gauges work.

- Turn it on—Test the lights, windshield wipers, turn signals, cigarette lighter, radio, heater and air conditioner several times to make sure they work.

Also, flex some wires under the dash to see if they bend or crack, since wet wires become brittle upon drying and can crack or fail at any time.

- Take a whiff—Smell for musty odors resulting from mildew and look for a well-defined line or watermark.



**When buying a used car, a vehicle history report may reveal hidden problems, including if the car has been exposed to a flood.**

- Check it out—Always visit a trusted mechanic for a pre-purchase inspection.

- Ask for a detailed vehicle history report—A vehicle history report can reveal many hidden problems including flood titles and whether a vehicle has been titled/registered in at-risk areas during flood and hurricane seasons. Also, thousands of car dealers list their cars for sale on the database at [www.carfax.com](http://www.carfax.com).

If the seller does not have a report, consumers can run a report themselves, using the 17-digit Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), available on the dashboard of all vehicles.

Carfax uses its computerized database of 3.5 billion vehicle records to provide a detailed history report on virtually every registered used car and light truck since 1981 and can alert consumers to problems that can severely affect the safety, performance and value of a used vehicle.

To learn more, visit the Web site at [www.carfax.com](http://www.carfax.com).