

Used Car Inspection Checklist

A used car is a wise option when you want value for money. To avoid the risk of ending up with a used car that's going to leave you stranded - we suggest inspecting it on your own or asking for a professional used car inspection.

Used Car Inspection Checklist:

Follow these 9 steps to ensure you cover all your bases and find a vehicle that's worth your hard-earned money.

1. Check Mileage

13,000 miles per year is the average most people drive a car according to available data. Any more than that is going to start putting the vehicle at above average mileage for its model year and should warrant a discount to its less-driven peers. Edmunds and KBB are the sources you can use to your advantage when determining the market value of a used vehicle.

2. Check the vehicles' history report

Investigate the Car's History - to see if there has been any previous damage. The seller might have the history report ready to view. If not, you can download buy it online or ask an inspection company to provide it.

Please note that a CARFAX report is a good idea, but it doesn't always tell the full story. It might be missing information if there wasn't an insurance claim made etc. But, the good news is there are other ways to find out more about a car.

3. Examine for Rust and Paint discoloration

A close look at the paint job can reveal history. Compare panels for color uniformity. If the color of the panels doesn't match, the vehicle was probably in an accident. Rust If you find rust on the bodywork of the vehicle, it may just be an aesthetic problem, but it might also indicate deeper issues that are costly to repair. Frame rust, for example, could impact the integrity of the vehicle and poses a threat to the car's longevity. If you see rust on the body of the vehicle, check under the hood and the undercarriage for further signs.

4. Tire Inspection

Coin Tread Depth test is a quick way to check a tires tread. Insert a coin in the tread to and examine it – repeat for every tire. Please don't forget the spare. If the grip is worn down, the tires may need to be replaced soon at extra cost to you. There may also be an alignment issue if the wear on the tires do not look even.

5. Undercarriage and Ground Leaks

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Check the ground and undercarriage for any signs of leakage while you're examining the tires. Look closely at the condition of each of the components. If you find something that looks newer than the rest, and the seller hasn't told you of any repairs, he's probably hiding something. Also, inspect the framework and floor pans for rust, and check the ground for signs of drips and leakages. Leak repairs – can be costly.

6. Open the Hood

- **Check oil levels.** Remove the dipstick and wipe it clean. Push the dipstick in again and then withdraw it. A light oil color usually means a recent service, if dark or muddy - it hasn't been changed in a while. Add the service cost to the price.
- **Look for signs of rust or corrosion under the hood.** These signs are a good indication of the car's past treatment, current condition, and life expectancy.
- **Inspect belts for signs of wear.** If any of the belts are frayed or torn, they may need to be replaced soon.
- **Check transmission fluid.** Ensure that levels are high. The fluid should be a clear reddish color
- **Brake fluid.** You can predict how worn your brakes are based on how much fluid is left in your reservoir. Low brake fluid levels mean the brakes need some repairs.
- **Check antifreeze.** Make sure there's no oil contamination and that the color is clear.
- **Check the battery.** Look for leaks, damaged cables, poor contacts or corrosion.

7. Lights: Headlight, Taillights and Signal Lights

Ensure brake lights, turn signals, headlights, and taillights are all in working order. Also, check for all interior lights are working too.

8. Driving Test

Listen for any strange sounds, vibrations. When you start the engine does it sound normal? Do any Warning /Check Engine lights (indicating DTC Error Codes) light up? Check the performance when you press the throttle. Does the steering wheel vibrate or turn to one side? Check how the vehicle handles on different road surfaces. Brakes can give you a good feel for their wear or if they pull to one side. Don't forget to check the parking break. If it's a manual shift – feel the gear's shift to see if it's smooth. Car diagnostic scanners for used are important to read DTC error codes – If you have the more expensive ones – they can tell you if the error codes have been recently reset. To mask problems short term.

9. Professional Inspection

If you're not feeling comfortable performing items on this inspection checklist, ask a knowledgeable friend. It's also a good idea to take it to a mechanic to get it checked out. Any problems the mechanic identifies can be used as points of negotiation if you decide to make an offer. The professional inspection fee is a small price to pay compared to buying a problem-ridden vehicle. When selecting a service check for the comprehensiveness, OBD scan tool and peer comparison.

If you pick it well – you are certain to enjoy your new “used car purchase”.

Used Car Inspection Checklist

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN):		
Vehicle Model:		
Vehicle Year:		
Vehicle Mileage:		
Brakes	Yes	No
Do the brakes make grinding noises?		
Does the car pull to one side when applying the brakes?		
Does the parking brake work properly?		

Engine	Yes	No
Do the battery terminals have signs of corrosion?		
Do the exhaust pipes emit blue or black smoke?		
Does the engine emit an odor?		
Does the engine leak oil or fluids when it is on or off?		
Does the engine make any strange noises, such as knocks, ticks or hisses?		
Exterior	Yes	No
Are there any cracks in the windshield?		
Are there any dents or scratches on the body?		
Do all doors, trunk and hood open and close properly?		
Do the headlights, brights, directional lights and taillights work?		
Is there any rust in the door edges, hinges or trunk?		

Interior	Yes	No
Are there any dashboard warning lights illuminated? DTC/ML Codes		
Can you adjust the seats?		
Do all the gauges work?		
Do all the power windows work?		
Do the hazard lights work?		
Do the locks all work from the inside and outside?		
Do the windshield wipers, blades and fluid work?		
Does the air conditioner work?		
Does the heater work?		
Does the stereo work?		
Speakers?		

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Other Things:	Yes	No
Does the car alarm work?		
Does the sunroof work?		
Manual: does each gear shift smoothly?		
Manual: does the car make noises when in reverse?		

Steering	Yes	No
Does the car or steering wheel shake or vibrate at any speed?		
Does the steering wheel align with the wheels?		
Is there any resistance from the steering wheel when turning?		

Tires	Yes	No
Do the tires have any cuts or cracks?		
Is the spare tire inflated?		
Is the tread unevenly worn?		
Are all the tires of the same brand?		
Is there a functional spare tire and jack?		

Notes:

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Your Overall Rating:
Ask price:
Book Value of the Car:
Inspection Report: a prior CarDr.com Car Inspection Report – look by VIN #
Is Seller flexible to permit a third party inspection?
Car History: CarFax/Auto Check: ?

What should a Good Pre-Purchase Used Car Inspection include:

- **Car's History:** prior accidents etc.
- **Standardized Inspection Process** – by a qualified inspector
- **OBD - On Board Diagnostic/ DTC Error Codes Check**
- **Comparison to similar brand/mileage Peers**

	CarDr.com	CarFax	Other's
Car History Based	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	☑️⬇️
Standardized Inspection Process	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	❌⬆️
Realtime Inspection Scheduling	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	❌⬆️
App Based Recorded Inspection	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	?
DTC Error Code Check	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	❌⬆️
On Board Diagnostic Check	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	❌⬆️
Comparison to Peers	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	❌⬆️
AI Overseen	☑️⬇️	❌⬆️	❌⬆️