



Tips for Buying a Used Vehicle

~ A message from the Vermont DMV Enforcement Division ~



Purchasing a vehicle can be fun and exciting. It can be easy to get caught up in the fever of acquiring a new set of wheels. Here are a few recommendations to protect yourself with this process.

1. If a person tells you they work for a dealer and you're not at their place of business, ask to verify their dealer license.

Illegal car dealers may tell you they work for a legitimate dealer. Verify this by making a phone call, especially if you are considering the purchase from someone you met via newspaper or on-line advertisement venue, such as "Craig's List."

2. Always ask to see the vehicle title.

All vehicles 15 years and newer are required to be titled in the State of Vermont. You cannot register a vehicle without the certificate of title and selling a vehicle without a title is illegal. Don't get conned if the person tells you the title is at home, or being held up at the bank. No title, no sale!

3. Ask if the vehicle has ever been branded as salvaged, rebuilt or totaled and check to see if the title is marked as such.

Vehicles branded as salvaged, rebuilt, totaled, flood car, reconstructed etc. are worth approximately 50% of the book value for the same vehicle without a branded title. It is illegal to sell a vehicle in Vermont without disclosing this verbally and in writing on the bill of sale and other pertinent sale documents prior to the sale being made.

4. Ask if the vehicle's odometer reading is accurate.

If a vehicle's odometer reading is inaccurate, the vehicle must be declared "true mileage unknown." Vehicles in this condition are generally worth approximately 50% of their book value. Furthermore, a vehicle cannot be inspected in Vermont if the odometer does not function properly.

5. Ask if you can have your mechanic take a look at the vehicle.

It never hurts to have a properly trained auto technician look over a vehicle prior to making your purchase. This can save you time, money and frustration and will ensure the vehicle is safe and can meet all Vermont safety inspection requirements.

6. Check the vehicle's inspection sticker.

If the vehicle is displaying a Vermont inspection sticker, check to ensure the sticker is valid and has been assigned to the vehicle it is affixed to. By looking at the sticker on the inside of the car, you will

be able to verify it belongs to the car you're considering buying by comparing the make, year and vehicle identification number.

7. If you are buying a vehicle from a dealer, make sure the vehicle displays a "Buyer's Guide."

Federal and Vermont law require all used vehicles to display a Buyer's Guide in one of its windows when being offered for sale. The Buyer's Guide will tell you whether or not the vehicle has any type of warranty or is being sold "as is." "As is," means exactly that, and if you have a problem after the sale has been finalized, you have little recourse.



8. Run a Carfax, Autocheck or similar on-line vehicle inquiry by entering the vehicle's identification number.

Although Vermont DMV does not endorse any particular on-line vehicle history vendor, we believe using one can be a viable tool when considering the purchase of a vehicle. These reports will generally provide a comprehensive history on a vehicle and warn a prospective buyer of potential problems, such as branded titles, odometer issues and prior crashes.

9. Ask the seller if the vehicle you are considering has ever been in a crash.

Just because a vehicle title isn't branded, doesn't mean it's never been in a collision. A vehicle involved in a crash may not have ever been declared a total loss by an insurance carrier. In these cases, the title will still be free of any brands. If a vehicle has been in a crash, it could have potential structural integrity problems and should be checked by a certified automotive technician to ensure it is safe.



Should you have any questions regarding the safe purchase of a used car or wish to report suspicious or illegal activity surrounding the purchase or sale of a vehicle, please call the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles Enforcement & Safety Division at 802-828-2067.