



DIY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU DRIVE TO SEE THE CAR:

You're about to invest your time. Maybe a tank of gas. Possibly a hotel room. And if everything goes well... Thousands of dollars.

I've bought and sold around 100 vehicles over the years. The biggest mistakes I've made weren't because I didn't know enough about cars. They happened because I got excited. I call it wearing "excitement goggles." When you really want a vehicle, it's amazing what your brain is willing to overlook. That rust? "Probably not a big deal." The funny transmission shift? "Maybe they all do that." Missing service records? "I'm sure they're around somewhere."

We've all done it.

The problem is...those excitement goggles usually come off after you've bought the car.

That's why I created Reality Check™.

Not to talk you out of buying a great vehicle.

To help you see it clearly before you spend your hard-earned money.

So before you drive across town—or across the state—use this checklist.

Better yet... If you'd rather have someone with more than 30 years in the automotive business review the listing, seller, vehicle history, known issues and pricing before you ever leave the driveway, that's exactly why I created Reality Check™.

It might be the best \$64.95 you spend during your entire car search.

Now... Let's go look at a car.

-David

Founder, Certified Auto Inspections

Before You Leave Home

- ☐ Get the VIN
- ☐ Verify the seller's name
- ☐ Confirm the title status
- ☐ Tell seller you'd like to cold start the car upon arrival
- ☐ Request underside photos
- ☐ Ask for maintenance records
- ☐ Confirm there are two keys
- ☐ Verify the address
- ☐ Check market value
- ☐ Confirm the vehicle is still available

AUTO INSPECTION CHECKLIST

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PAINT & BODY

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Obvious damage/scratches/repairs | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Body lines, panel gaps consistent | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Rust on body panels | ☐ ☐ |

ENGINE BAY

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Battery terminals clean | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Belts not cracked or rotted | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Hoses not too hard or worn | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Evidence of fluid leaks/odd smells | ☐ ☐ |

LIGHTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ All lights working | ☐ ☐ |
|---|---|

INTERIOR

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Odors/mold/moisture | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Rips/tears/stains | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Seats all function properly | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Interior lights all work | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Check all buttons-windows/locks/etc | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ All gauges and radio function | ☐ ☐ |

TRUNK

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Trunk/liftgate opens smoothly | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Evidence of water in trunk | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Spare tire and hardware present | ☐ ☐ |

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TIRES

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ All same brand | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ All even wear | ☐ ☐ |

VIN NUMBER & TITLE

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Clear/visible VIN tag | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ VIN on car matches VIN on title | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Seller has title in their name | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Seller has copy of current registration | ☐ ☐ |

TEST DRIVE

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Engine starts easily when cold/idles smooth | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Engine starts easily again after test drive | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Steering tight/no noises | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ All gauges in normal range | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Odd noises/clunks/rattles | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Transmission shifts are smooth | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Brake pedal solid, no pulse/squeaks | ☐ ☐ |

UNDERCARRIAGE

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Evidence of leaks | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Metal lines rusty or damaged | ☐ ☐ |
| ☐ Frame clean/free of rust | ☐ ☐ |