

# Checklist for buying a used vehicle

Following this checklist won't guarantee that you won't be a victim of vehicle crime, but it will help reduce the risks by making sure you know which questions to ask about the seller, the registration certificate (V5C) and the identity of the vehicle. For the full details why these checks are important see the advice at [www.direct.gov.uk/buyer beware](http://www.direct.gov.uk/buyer beware)

## Before seeing the vehicle:



- Ask the seller for the registration number, make and model of the vehicle, the expiry date of the tax disc and the MoT test number. You can then use this information to get a vehicle history check **before** arranging to see the vehicle.
- Arrange to see the vehicle in daylight at the seller's home and not in a public place. Ask the seller if they are the registered keeper and whether you will be viewing the vehicle at the registered keeper's address (shown on the V5C). If the seller is not the registered keeper, have they satisfied you that they have the right to sell the vehicle?
- Consider arranging a vehicle inspection by a qualified engineer.

## Checking the Seller:



- Can the seller show you the V5C? Do the details shown on it match all documentation provided?
- Is the seller the registered keeper on the V5C?
- Have you asked to see ID?
- Can the seller satisfy you that they own or have the right to sell the vehicle? e.g. do they have a bill of sale/receipt? (remember the V5C does not prove this).

## Checking the V5C:



- Is there a DVL watermark in the V5C when you hold it up to the light? There should be.
- If the seller has the blue version of the V5C, is the serial number in the range BG8229501 to BG9999030 or BI2305501 to BI2800000?  
If so, **DON'T** proceed with the sale and contact the police when it's safe to do so.  
**(Even if the serial number is not in this range, you still need to be careful of forged documents.)**
- Has the serial number been altered or tampered with, or is part of the V5C missing?  
If so, don't buy.

## Checking the vehicle:



- Does the vehicle identification number (VIN), engine number and colour match those shown on the V5C? Look for signs of alteration or tampering.
- Do the number plates match the registration number shown on the V5C?
- Is the VIN number and/or registration number etched on glass? If so do they match those on the V5C and all other etched glass on the vehicle? Check they haven't been tampered with or covered by stickers.
- Do all the locks open with the same key? Is there a spare key?
- Check that the locks haven't been forced or replaced.
- Check the vehicle condition. Does the mileage seem reasonable for the age and condition of the vehicle?

**Remember, it's your money and your decision whether or not to buy. Don't feel pressured to buy if you're not sure, there will always be another vehicle.**

**Above all - trust your instincts. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is!**