

Car buying checklist

Tick when complete	Some things to think about when car hunting
<input type="radio"/>	Take someone with you – A second person could notice other things while you concentrate on how the car feels to drive.
<input type="radio"/>	Always insist on a test drive – include some speed driving (100K zones) and hill work so you can really take the vehicle through its paces. Note: before you test drive ask about insurance. You may be liable if you have an accident.
<input type="radio"/>	Collect as much information as you can about the car's history – for example, any accidents? how many owners?
<input type="radio"/>	Is the Warrant of Fitness up to date? – a dealership by law needs to supply a Supplier Information Notice which contains this info. A car can't be sold with a WOF less than one month old.
<input type="radio"/>	Is the Registration up to date?
<input type="radio"/>	Make sure the certificate of registration (this shows the current owners details, the details of the car and also any previous owners) is made out to the current owner or dealership.
<input type="radio"/>	Have a pre-purchase inspection – before you buy ensure the car has been given a full mechanical inspection, such as an AA inspection.
<input type="radio"/>	Check for Debt – make sure there is no previous debt owing on the car.
<input type="radio"/>	If you buy – Notify Land Transport New Zealand of transfer of ownership within seven days of the sale of the vehicle.

The best option is to have the car thoroughly checked by a mechanic but here are a couple of quick checks you may be able to do yourself.

Tick once checked	Quick mechanical checks
<input type="radio"/>	Use a magnet to check for bog – if you run a magnet over the car and it does not stick, this may mean that this part of the car has been repaired and could be evidence of an accident. Ask the seller if you find something.
<input type="radio"/>	Tyres – tyres need to have a minimum tread depth of 1.5mm – equivalent to a match head. Most tyres are required to have minimum tread depth indicators in the centre groove. Have a look to check.
<input type="radio"/>	Rust – check for rust on the main structural supports of the car, this could be dangerous and costly to fix.
<input type="radio"/>	Shock absorbers – Push the corner of the car up and down. Check whether the car still moves when you let go – if so, it may be time to replace those shock absorbers.
<input type="radio"/>	Lights and indicators – jump inside the car and turn on all the lights. Ask a friend to stand outside and check whether all the lights (including brake and reverse) and indicators are working.
<input type="radio"/>	Handbrake – check the handbrake on a hill. Does it hold the car stationary?
<input type="radio"/>	Seatbelts – check the seatbelts all work and that they are not fraying in any way.