

Questions About Buying a Vehicle

When buying a vehicle, you need to make sure that this important investment is worth the price. When buying a USED car (and I strongly recommend buying a used car, especially as you start out), you want to gather as much information on the car as you can find. Some questions you may want answered: Has it been involved in an accident? How can I trust the information the dealer is providing?

Thankfully, Carfax or Autocheck can provide this information for you. Both companies provide important data on most vehicles such as accurate odometer readings, number of owners or possible involvement in accidents. And most reputable car dealers will provide you with one of these reports free upon request. ASK for a report on the vehicle and review it prior to buying the car. Don't buy a used car without a Carfax or Autocheck report.

If you're buying from an individual, you can purchase a Carfax or Autocheck report. You'll need the vehicle identification number (VIN). The cost of the report is approximately \$40 for a Carfax report or \$30 for an Autocheck report. The Carfax report is more extensive and a bit easier to understand, but both are reliable resources.

Additional thoughts:

- Beware of "Salvage Titles" or "Brand Titles" which designate extensive damage. Though a dealer may claim that the vehicle has been fully repaired, flood damage or damage caused by an accident may be hard to detect. (All Carfax or Autocheck reports should provide this information.) Carfax will also provide information from many police or fire departments.
- Smaller accidents aren't guaranteed to show up on Carfax reports. Some accidents simply aren't reported, and others may be reported to agencies that don't provide Carfax with data. (<https://www.autolist.com/guides/autocheck-vs-carfax>)
- Never buy a used car without getting the vehicle's title or pink slip in person; and double check the vehicle identification number with the number listed on the title, the registration papers and the federal certification label on the driver's side door.
- Ask to see identification of the person who is selling you the car; write down his/her name, address, phone number and driver's license number for your records. (<https://scambusters.org/vinswitching.html>)