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# CAR BUYERS CHECKLIST

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## PART 1: ABOUT YOU

First name

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Email address

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Last name

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Mobile Phone number

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## PART 2: VEHICLE BASICS

Rego number

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Rego expiry

---

Vin or chassis number

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Year

---

WOF expiry

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Make

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Model

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Model variant

eg: Subaru

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Body style

eg: Legacy

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Asking price

eg: Sport

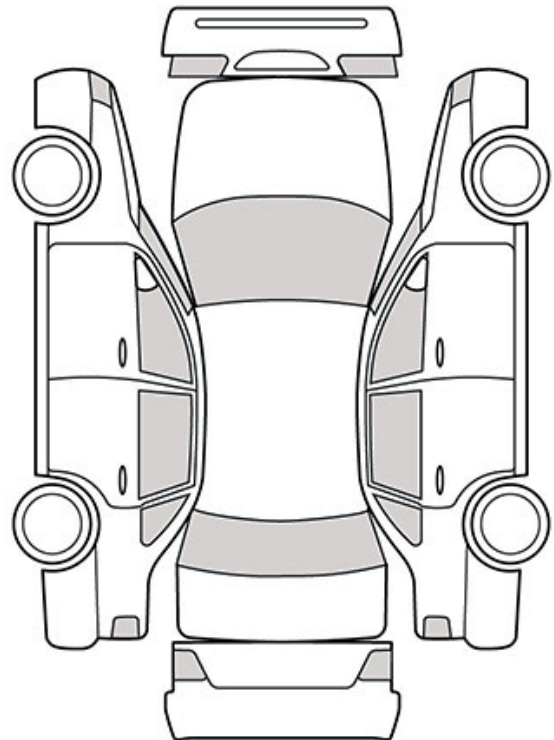
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## PART 3: EXTERNAL INSPECTION

Check systematically around the car for damage, poor condition and rust. Use good light and a dry day if possible. Look for poor panel fit (uneven gaps around doors, bonnet and boot, etc., which could indicate poor crash repairs in the vehicle's past. Look for paint defects like hail damage on the roof, bonnet and boot, and parking-type scrapes as well as bumper damage and poor fit there.

Check the rubber seals around doors for cuts and perishing the edges of the wheels for any curbing and the plastic light lenses for oxidising and cracking. Check that all external lights work properly, and inspect the tyre tread faces for legal tread depth and uneven wear (which could indicate poor wheel alignment). Look under the car and inside the wheel wells and door frames, as well as under the boot and bonnet for 'overspray', which is often evidence of any previous crash repair. Check for missing badges and mouldings on the body.



- Panel fit check - even gaps
- Parking scrapes and scratches check
- Rubber door seals check
- Lenses - cracks and oxidising check
- External lights all working
- Wheels - scrape damage check
- Tyres - legal tread depth
- Tyres - even wear across tread
- Tyres - check sidewalls for damage
- Overspray check
- Check paint for colour variation
- Badges & mouldings all present
- Glass free of scratches / stone chips
- Check wing mirrors for damage / operation

**Note defects here**

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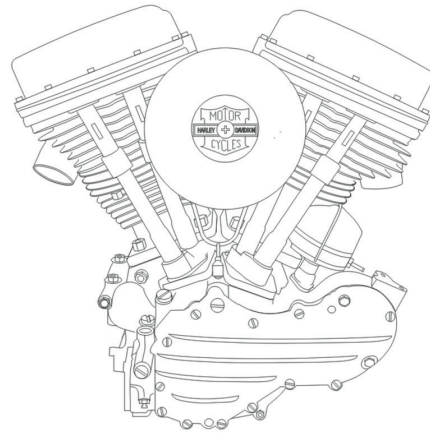
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# PART 4: UNDERBONNET / UNDER-VEHICLE INSPECTION

If you don't know much about cars mechanically, bring someone with you who does for this part of the inspection. Engine bays are potentially hazardous places: don't wear a tie or other loose clothing (or long hair) near a running engine - it could become entrapped in the running belt system. Never remove the radiator cap when the engine is hot. Ensure the car is in 'Park' with the handbrake applied firmly.



- Check the VIN number under the bonnet matches the rego label
- Check for any frayed or burnt wiring
- Check for oil leaks
- Check condition of radiator coolant
  - \*Rusty or oily coolant could indicate problems
- Check engine oil via dipstick
  - \*Correct level
  - \*Thick black oil could indicate poor servicing
  - \*Milk coffee-coloured oil could indicate severe mechanical defect
- Check sundry fluid levels:
  - \*Brake fluid, clutch master cylinder, power steering
- Check battery
  - \*Terminals corroded?
  - \*Corrosion nearby? Possible battery acid leak?
  - \*Date of manufacture if legible
- Radiator cooling fins
  - \*Check for bent, clogged or damage to core
- Radiator tanks & hoses
  - \*Check for leaks or bulging/cracked hoses
- Idle the engine
  - \*Rattles or poor idle quality could indicate problems
- Oil fume check
  - \*Remove oil filler cap with engine idling - fumes emerging from the engine indicate wear.
- Check under vehicle for oil leaks
  - \*Oil often blows back towards the rear
- Check under vehicle for sundry leaks
  - \*Brake system, transmission, dampers, etc
- Check under the vehicle for damage
  - \*Look for evidence of impact or scrapes
- Check brake condition
  - \*Remaining pad material + check condition of discs or drums

## Note defects here

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## PART 5: LUGGAGE COMPARTMENT INSPECTION

- Check spare tyre condition or run flat kit present
- Check tool kit condition
  - \*Wheel brace,jack, tow hook
- Look for overspray
  - \*Possible crashdamage
- Look for water damage in wheel well

**Note defects here**

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## PART 6: PASSENGER COMPARTMENT INSPECTION

- Check seats & trim for damage
- Check all driver's controls
  - \*Ignition switch, high beam, lights, power mirrors, cabin lighting, etc.
- Check audio system
  - \*Cycle through all functions, insert CD, connect MP3 player, etc.
- Check Bluetooth if fitted
  - \*Confirm phone &music streaming works
- Check heating and aircon
- Check interior lights
  - \*Dash light + dimmer, map lights, vanity mirror
- Check wipers & windscreen washers
- Check power window controls
  - \*Note thumping or scraping noises
  - \*Use all internal switches
- Check central locking
  - \*Use both key fobs & internal switches
- Confirm both keys are present
  - \*Lost key scan be very expensive

- Check open/close for all doors
  - \*Confirm solid, positive closure
- Check all seatbelt s
  - \*Check buckle engagement and inspect belts for wear or fraying
- Inspect head lining for damage
  - \*Check buckle engagement and inspect belts for wear or fraying
- Inspect carpet for wear
- Check all warning lights on start-up
  - \*All should activate - especially airbag, ESC & ABS warning lights (if fitted)
- General interior check
  - \*Missing or broken components
- Confirm presence of owner's manual
  - \*Check service history
- Check function of alarm system
  - \*If fitted

**Note defects here**

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# PART 7: TEST DRIVE

**Warning:** confirm the vehicle is insured before you test drive it. If you have an accident, you may be liable for the cost of repairs.

- Check for engine noise  
\* Rattles/vibrations
- Check smooth transmission shifting  
\* Rough gear shifts indicate problems
- Check rapid transmission engagement  
\* Check P-R, P-D, D-R & R-D - delayed engagement indicates problems
- Check brake pedal  
\* Pedal must be firm
- Check straight braking  
\* Pulling to one side under brakes indicates problems
- Check smooth braking  
\* Vibrations or squeaks/squeals indicate problems
- Check steering doesn't pull  
\* Steering must track straight ahead on smooth, level road
- Check suspension rattles/thumps  
\* Note any rattles or thumps over bumps
- Check smooth steering  
\* Steering should feel smooth from lock to lock, with minimal free play straight ahead
- Check positive handbrake engagement  
\* Test on a steep hill
- Check cruise control functionality  
\* Confirm the cruise engages and disengages properly
- Check gauges  
\* All should function
- Check temperature in normal range  
\* Engine should warmup quickly and remain in the mid-range
- Check engine cold start  
\* Note cold starting problems
- Check engine hot start  
\* Note hot starting problems
- Confirm smooth shutdown  
\* Engine should not 'run on' after the ignition is switched off
- Confirm energetic cranking on startup  
\* Lethargic cranking could be a battery problem
- Assess for vibrations  
\* Test at a range of engine speeds up to 100kms
- Confirm heating and air-con works  
\* Test both, regardless of weather

## Note defects here

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## PART 8: CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Note:** Few used cars are perfect. Defects listed above don't necessarily mean you shouldn't buy the vehicle. But they could have a potential impact on the price you are prepared to pay. It's important to assess the fair value of the vehicle inclusive of the cost of repairs (if any are needed). You also need to protect yourself commercially from fraudulent sellers.



Check NZ's two largest vehicle websites to work out a fair average price for the vehicle.

- [www.autotrader.co.nz](http://www.autotrader.co.nz)
- [www.trademe.co.nz/a/motors](http://www.trademe.co.nz/a/motors)

Fair price \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Protect Yourself

- Car history report all-clear**  
[www.checka.co.nz](http://www.checka.co.nz)
  
- Need an independent mechanical inspection?**  
Organize one here: [www.aa.co.nz/cars/buying-a-car/car-buying-guide/pre-purchase-vehicle-inspections/](http://www.aa.co.nz/cars/buying-a-car/car-buying-guide/pre-purchase-vehicle-inspections/)
  
- Don't drive the car without appropriate insurance cover**  
Organize insurance here: [www.glimp.co.nz/car-insurance](http://www.glimp.co.nz/car-insurance)
  
- Don't get ripped off by expensive dealership finance**  
Get competitive finance here: [www.nzvehiclefinance.co.nz](http://www.nzvehiclefinance.co.nz)
  
- Get your new car serviced now - make sure it won't let you down**  
Get expert service here: [www.mta.org.nz/find-an-mta](http://www.mta.org.nz/find-an-mta) or use a mechanic you can trust.
  
- Do you have mechanical insurance?**  
Get it here: [www.nzvehiclefinance.co.nz/page/insurance](http://www.nzvehiclefinance.co.nz/page/insurance)

## PART 9: DECIDED TO BUY?

### *Seller's information*

First name

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Last name

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Mobile Phone

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Home Phone

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Seller's address

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Seller's driver's license number

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- Seller's name and address matches driver's license
- Confirm the vehicle has two keys
- Confirm the service book is in the car
- I have paid the seller

**Collection date**

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**Collection time**

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- I have been given a receipt for purchase
- I have noted the car finance company on the insurance policy
- I have filled in the 'buyer' part of the rego papers
- I have paid the registration transfer fee - [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz)